

APLAC Multilateral Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA)



Signatories of the APLAC MRA

<u>NATA</u>	Australia
<u>SCC</u>	Canada
<u>CNAL</u>	People's Republic of China
<u>HKAS</u>	Hong Kong, China
<u>NABL</u>	India
<u>KAN</u>	Indonesia
<u>JAB</u>	Japan
<u>VLAC</u>	Japan
<u>IAJAPAN</u>	Japan
<u>KOLAS</u>	Republic of Korea
<u>DSM</u>	Malaysia
<u>IANZ</u>	New Zealand
<u>SAC</u>	Singapore
<u>CNLA</u>	Chinese Taipei
<u>TLAS</u>	Thailand
<u>DMSc</u>	Thailand
<u>A2LA</u>	United States of America
<u>ICBO</u>	United States of America
<u>NVLAP</u>	United States of America
<u>BOA</u>	Vietnam

- **APLAC MR001 (12/03) *Procedures for establishing and maintaining mutual recognition agreements between laboratory accreditation bodies***
- **ISO/IEC Guide 58:1993 *Calibration and testing laboratory accreditation systems - General requirements for operation and recognition* (ISO 17011 in future)**

APLAC MR-001, 3.3, National Accreditation Bodies (NABs) require their accredited laboratories to participate in proficiency testing (PT) schemes where available.

As results from proficiency testing schemes may be used in accreditation decisions, it is important that both the accreditation bodies and participating laboratories have confidence in the design and operation of the schemes.

Also important for participating laboratories and laboratory accreditation assessors to have a clear understanding of:

- **the accreditation bodies' policies for participation in such schemes,**
- **the criteria they use for judging successful performance in proficiency testing schemes, and**
- **their policies and procedures for following up any unsatisfactory results from a proficiency test.**

The requirements for ISO/IEC Guide 58:

- **accreditation bodies shall encourage laboratories to participate in proficiency testing;**
- **accredited labs shall participate in proficiency testing as required for the accreditation body and shall meet the performance requirements;**

- **the proficiency testing may be organized by the accreditation body or by another body that is judged competent;**
- **proficiency testing should be consistent with ISO/IEC Guide 43: “Proficiency testing by inter-laboratory comparisons”.**

- **An applicant body needs to demonstrate that the proficiency testing its accredited or applicant laboratories undertake is effective, linked to the assessment process and that the appropriate corrective action is carried out when necessary.**

- **APLAC runs proficiency testing programs and inter-laboratory comparisons (ILCs) in some fields of testing and calibration. Every applicant body or signatory to the MRAs for calibration and testing shall participate, as far as available and practicable, in order to verify the competence of its accredited laboratories.**

The APLAC Proficiency Testing Committee have developed for the APLAC MRA Advisory Committee a document on *Proficiency Testing Requirements* (revised Feb 2000) which outlines appropriate levels of proficiency testing for MRA purposes.

This policy is now incorporated in the revision of APLAC MR001 - and evaluation teams are now required to report of the degree of compliance with these requirements.

The 5th APLAC General Assembly held in New Delhi during November 1999 reaffirmed the policies agreed in Auckland in October 1998 with respect to proficiency testing. It also endorsed a proposal for an implementation date of January 2002, i.e. when compliance would be required by all signatories to APLAC MRA.

Accreditation bodies seeking to join the APLAC MRA need to demonstrate the technical competence of their accredited testing and calibration laboratories by satisfactory participation in proficiency testing activity where such activity is available.

The minimum amount of appropriate proficiency testing¹ required per laboratory is:

- **one activity prior to gaining accreditation;**
- **one activity relating to each major sub discipline of a laboratory's scope of accreditation at least every four years².**

Note 1 Appropriate proficiency testing activity includes any proficiency program, interlaboratory comparison or measurement audit which monitor the laboratory's performance i.e. those conducted by regional or national accreditation bodies, government or industry bodies or any other external commercial PT operator. Preference should be given to international interlaboratory comparisons (i.e. APLAC, EA or equivalent) where these are available.

***Note 2 Four years is the maximum interval.
Accreditation bodies are encouraged to shorten
that interval where there are significant changes to
laboratory's staff or scope of accreditation.***

Accreditation bodies need to demonstrate that the proficiency testing their laboratories undertake is effective³, linked to the assessment process⁴ and that appropriate corrective action is carried out when necessary.

Note 3 *Accreditation bodies should use proficiency programs which comply with the operational procedures detailed in ISO/IEC Guide 43-1 (1997).*

Note 4 *The accreditation body should fully document its policies and procedures in relation to the selection and use of proficiency testing programs [refer ISO/IEC Guide 43-2 (1997)].*

Prior to an MRA evaluation visit, the accreditation body being evaluated shall provide the following information to the team leader:

- **the scopes of accreditation for all laboratories;**
- **policy on participation and use of proficiency testing;**
- **a summary listing of the types of proficiency testing activity undertaken by their accredited and applicant laboratories;**

- **operational and corrective action procedures related to proficiency testing;**
- **a summary listing of international comparisons that the economy's national measurement institute has been involved in (e.g. APMP, BIPM);**
- **a list of applicant or accredited participants that have participated in APLAC⁵ and/or other international interlaboratory comparisons and details of any associated corrective actions.**

Note 5 The APLAC Proficiency Testing Committee will also provide a brief summary report on the laboratory participation and performance in APLAC PT programs to the team leader prior to an evaluation.

After the evaluation, the APLAC PT Committee Chairman will review the evaluation report with respect to Proficiency Testing activity and provide feedback to the team leader, if required. The aim of this review is to harmonise both the amount (and quality) of PT activity undertaken by all signatories to the APLAC MRA.

List of APLAC Programs

Programs Completed

Program	Coordinator	Starting Date	Final Report Distribution
M001 Dimensional Metrology	NATA	May 94	October 96
M002 Mass	NATA	November 94	November 96
M003 Resistance	CNLA	November 94	December 00
M004 AC/DC Voltage	HKAS	January 95	December 98
M005 Thermometer	SAC	May 96	October 98
M006 Pressure	NATA	July 96	January 99
T001 Metals in Water	NATA	April 96	October 96
T002 Tensile	NATA	October 96	March 97
T003 Dust in Air	CNLA	November 96	August 99
T004 Food Additives	HKAS	November 96	July 97
T005 Aluminium Alloys	NATA	February 97	July 97
T007 Milk Powder	IANZ	June 97	December 97
T008 Textiles	NATA	July 97	November 97
T009 Fish	NATA	December 97	July 98
T010 Electrical Safety	NATA	February 98	August 98
T011 Concrete	NATA	June 99	January 00
T012 Plastics	A2LA	May 98	July 99
T013 Toy Safety	HKAS	August 98	July 99

Program	Coordinator	Starting Date	Final Report Distribution
T014 Pharmaceutical	SAC	September 98	April 99
T015 Tensile	NABL	October 99	July 00
T016 Toy Safety	HKAS	November 99	June 00
T022 Toy Safety	HKAS	June 00	August 02
T023 Electrical Safety	NATA	March 00	January 01
T024 Coal	NATA	October 00	February 01
T025 Flour	SAC	December 00	December 01
T026 Low Alloy Steel	JAB	February 01	October 01
T027 Rockwell Hardness	IAJapan	December 01	December 02
T028 Egg Powder	NABL	August 03	March 03
T029 Food	NATA	July 01	November 01
T030 Food Microbiological	CNAL	June 02	January 03
T032 Dairy	NATA	June 02	October 02
T033 Geochemical	KOLAS	April 02	January 04
T034 Genetically Modified Organism	CNAL	Sep 03	May 04
T035 Food Additives	CNAL	May 03	August 04
T037 Rice Flour	NATA	May 03	November 03

Programs Underway

Program	Coordinator	Starting Date	Final Report Distribution (Tentative Date)
M007 Force	NATA	October 99	Late 2004
M008 Capacitance/Inductance	A2LA/NVLAP	December 99	Late 2004
M009 RF Power	NATA	May 01	Late 2004
M010 Sound Level	NATA	May 01	Early 2005
M013 Internal Cylindrical Standards	NATA	April 02	Mid 2005
M014 High Resistance	SCC	March 02	Late 2004
M015 Resistance	JAB	August 04	Early 2006
M016 Watt-Hour Meter	IANZ	April 04	Early 2005
T006 Asbestos	NVLAP	January 00	Late 2004
T018 ADSL Transport Unit	CNLA	April 04	Late 2004
T019 Telephone Set	CNLA	April 04	Late 2004
T031 Cement	IAJapan	January 02	Late 2004
T036 Food Veterinary Drug Residues	CNAL	March 2003	Late 2004
T038 Pharmaceutical	HKAS	July 03	Late 2004
T039 Toy Safety	HKAS	December 03	Late 2004
T040 Coal	VILAS	March 04	Late 2004
T041 Coliforms	NATA	May 04	Late 2004
T042 Paper	A2LA	July 04	Mid 2005

Programs Planned

Program	Coordinator	Starting Date
M011 Thermocouples	SAC	Late 2004
M012 Screw Thread Gauges	NATA	Late 2005
M017 Mass	HKAS/KAN	Late 2004
M018 Short Gauge Blocks	IAJapan	Late 2004
T017 Mobile Phones - SAR	CNLA	Early 2005
T020 WLAN Card	CNLA	Early 2005
T021 Modem	CNLA	Early 2005
T043 Herbal Medicine	HKAS	Late 2004
T044 Textiles	HKAS	Late 2004