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**EA Conditions for the  
use of Accreditation Symbols,  
Logos and other claims  
of accreditation and reference  
to the EA MLA Signatory status**

***PURPOSE***

This document sets out the minimum conditions which shall be included in the rules governing reference to EA MLA signatory status and the use of accreditation body's logos, symbols and other claims of accreditation status.

### *Authorship*

This document has been prepared by the EA Horizontal Harmonization Committee.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

In this text the term “shall” is used throughout this document to indicate those provisions which are mandatory. The term “should” is used to indicate those provisions which, although not mandatory, are provided by EA as a recognized means of meeting the requirements (i.e. guidance). Accreditation bodies whose systems do not follow this guidance in any respect will only be acceptable if they can demonstrate that their solutions meet the relevant clause in an equivalent way. The term “may” indicates a permission and the term “can” indicates a possibility or a capability.

This document takes into account the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011, as well as applicable IAF and ILAC mandatory documents and resolutions.

## 2 SCOPE

This document addresses the various aspects a National Accreditation Body (NAB) shall cover when setting out the rules applicable to accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies (CABs) for use of its accreditation logo, symbol and other claims of accreditation and for reference to its EA MLA signatory status.

## 3 DEFINITIONS

The definitions of **accreditation body logo** and **symbol, conformity assessment activity and body** are given in EN ISO/IEC 17011.

**Accreditation field:** The unique combination of a conformity assessment field (EA MLA Level 2) and a standard containing requirements for CABs performing that activity (EA MLA Level 3), e.g.: Testing & EN ISO/IEC 17025.

**Reference to accreditation:** It is one example of a claim of accreditation status and consists of a text or a statement used by an accredited CAB to refer to its accreditation, identifying the accreditation number/code and the NAB.

**Reference to EA Multilateral Agreement (MLA) signatory status:** It is a statement or text used by a NAB or an accredited CAB to refer to the NAB signatory status of the EA MLA for a given accreditation field.

**Accredited report/certificate:** General term used to refer to the means by which the CAB presents the result(s) of conformity assessment according to the applicable standard used for accreditation. This contains results covered by the CAB's accreditation scope and displays the accreditation symbol or an equivalent reference to accreditation. Throughout the text it should read report and/or certificate and/or statement as applicable, even if only report is mentioned.

## **4 REFERENCES**

- **EN ISO/IEC 17011** Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies.
- **EA-1/06** EA Multilateral Agreement. Criteria for signing. Policy and procedures for development.
- **ILAC P8** ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (Arrangement): Supplementary Requirements for the Use of Accreditation Symbols and for Claims of Accreditation Status by Accredited Conformity Assessment Bodies.

## **5 ACCREDITATION SYMBOL**

### **5.1 General rules**

NABs shall have an accreditation symbol per accreditation field to indicate the type of conformity assessment activity (CAA) an accreditation is related to. The indication of the accreditation field shall give an unambiguous reference to the type of CAA (see Table 1 of EA-1/06). It may also display the EA MLA level 3 standard. The accreditation symbol shall be accompanied by a unique reference to the accredited CAB (number, code or other identifier), so that a reader can identify/confirm the corresponding accreditation scope and the NAB can control any undue use, misuse or abuse.

The NAB may have a logo to identify itself and communicate its name to the public. The use of the NAB logo shall be restricted to the NAB.

The logo used by the NAB shall be different from the accreditation symbol.

The NAB logo and accreditation symbol shall be legally protected. Formal registration covering the countries where the NAB operates is recommended.

### **5.2 Conditions for Use**

#### **5.2.1 NAB accreditation symbol(s)**

The NAB shall set out conditions for the use of its accreditation symbol(s) by accredited CABs, according to the transparency concept below.

When a CAB's customer requires an activity, which is covered by the CAB's scope of accreditation, it is an implicit expectation of the customer to get an accredited report/certificate. So, for conformity assessment activities that are covered by the CAB's scope of accreditation, the CAB shall issue an accredited report/certificate unless explicitly agreed in a legal or documented arrangement between the CAB and its customer. In these cases, the CAB shall inform its customer that such reports/certificates are not accredited reports/certificates and are consequently not covered by EA MLA.

However, this last possibility cannot be applied when the reports/certificates containing results covered by the accreditation scope are in an area where accreditation is mandatory by law or under contractual conditions (e.g.: under a conformity assessment scheme) or when they are to be displayed or sent to third parties (public or authorities). In such cases, the use of the

accreditation symbol or a claim of accreditation status is mandatory, unless prevented by legal or regulatory requirements.

In the case of certification of management systems, certification bodies (CBs) shall issue accredited certificates if they concern scopes for which they are accredited.

In the case of certification of products, CBs shall issue accredited certificates if they concern scopes for which they have been accredited.

In the case of certification of persons, CBs shall issue accredited certificates if they concern scopes for which they have been accredited.

Validation and verification bodies shall issue accredited statements if they concern scopes for which they have been accredited.

The NAB shall set out such conditions to ensure that the accreditation symbol is not used in such circumstances as may be considered to mislead clients or to bring accreditation and/or EA MLA recognition into disrepute. In particular, it shall not mislead as to what is accredited (scope) or who holds accreditation.

The NAB shall require that the CAB informs it of any misuse or abuse of the accreditation symbol or logo that it encounters.

The NAB shall set out minimum requirements regarding such use on:

- documents directly related to an accredited service such as reports/certificates (including electronic reports/certificates);
- communication media (e.g. websites and social media, letterheads, promotional material).

### **5.2.2 NAB logo**

The NAB shall set out conditions for use of the NAB logo by, where applicable, its permanent staff members, assessors and other personnel working for the NAB, so that it does not mislead or confuses who is the NAB and the authority/function of the users.

## **5.3 Reproduction of the accreditation symbol**

### **5.3.1 General display rules**

The NAB shall set out the rules for display of the accreditation symbol including information on:

- format, proportions, size and colours;
- positioning of the accreditation number or code or other identifier of the accredited CAB;
- indication of the accreditation field;
- relative positioning of the accreditation symbol and the accredited CAB's logo in order to prevent misleading information;
- the possibility to combine several accreditation symbols (see 5.3.2);
- the possibility to use embossed, relief or die-stamped versions or other graphical or digital variations;

- the prohibition that any other body or entity that is not accredited uses the accreditation symbol - however they can display documents provided by the accredited CABs - exceptions may be allowed as stated in section 9.

### **5.3.2 Multiple accreditations**

The NAB may have rules allowing accredited CABs being accredited for several accreditation fields to use a combined accreditation symbol where similar accreditation symbols are used for each accreditation field. The combined accreditation symbol shall be used with reference to each type of CAA and each accreditation number or code only in communication media. The combined accreditation symbol cannot be displayed on conformity assessment reports/certificates.

### **5.3.3 Association rules**

The NAB shall also set out the conditions for the CABs displaying together with the NAB accreditation symbol, other symbols or marks in reports/certificates or in communication media, in order to avoid undue associations or misunderstandings regarding what or who is accredited and who provided the accreditation. This may include informing on the relative positioning of the accreditation symbol and the accredited CAB's logo and other marks.

## **6 GENERAL RULES FOR OTHER CLAIMS OF ACCREDITATION**

The same conditions and rules regarding the use of the accreditation symbol shall apply for the reference of the accreditation status other than the use of the accreditation symbol (see 5.2.1 and 5.3 above) provided such references include a mentioning of the NAB and the accreditation number/code. If there is a difference, the NAB shall specify the conditions. In particular, the use of other claims of accreditation status shall not mislead as to what is accredited (scope) or who holds the accreditation or who has provided the accreditation.

The NAB shall set out rules for using a written statement to make reference to accreditation instead of using the accreditation symbol. The NAB shall propose a typical phrase to be used, for example, "<CAB> accredited by <NAB> under accreditation/registration number/code <XXX> for <accreditation field>".

## **7 GENERAL RULES FOR REFERENCE TO EA MLA SIGNATORY STATUS**

According to EA-1/06, NABs having signed the EA MLA and bilateral signatories to the EA MLA for one or more activities are obliged to promote the EA MLA and the acceptance by the marketplace of reports/certificates issued by CABs for CAA covered by the EA MLA.

NABs shall have a policy for promotion of the EA MLA and the acceptance of CAA provided by accredited CABs.

The use of a reference to the EA MLA signatory status shall not mislead as to who is the EA MLA signatory or what is covered by the EA MLA.

## **7.1 Rules for NABs referring to EA MLA signatory status<sup>1</sup>**

Under the policy adopted by NABs for promotion of the EA MLA it shall be mandatory for the NAB to refer to the EA MLA on accreditation information (see clause 7.8 of ISO/IEC 17011) provided to the CAB on its accreditation. The policy shall contain rules for:

- use of a statement e.g. “EA MLA Signatory” near the NAB logo on accreditation certificates issued to accredited CABs for activities covered by the EA MLA; or
- use of a text referring to the EA MLA on accreditation certificates e.g. “<NAB name> is a signatory of the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA) Multilateral Agreement for accreditation in this field”;
- when the accreditation information includes activities that are covered and not covered by the EA MLA, a disclaimer shall be used to identify the activities covered by the EA MLA.

The NAB policy shall also contain rules for reference to the EA MLA on letterheads, promotional materials and publications etc.

## **7.2 Rules for CABs referring to EA MLA signatory status of the NAB**

NABs are encouraged to develop a policy allowing accredited CABs to make a reference to the EA MLA on accredited reports/certificates. The policy shall at least contain provisions which specify how accredited CABs may refer to the EA MLA by including a statement or text reference to the EA MLA on accredited reports/certificates issued to clients. A policy allowing accredited CABs to refer to the EA MLA shall contain rules for the use of:

- Reference to the EA MLA by a statement in combination with the NAB accreditation symbol for example “EA MLA Signatory”;
- Combination of text reference to accreditation and reference to the EA MLA, for example “<CAB> accredited by <NAB> under registration number/code <XXX> for <accreditation field> covered by the EA MLA”.

Reference to the NAB’s EA MLA signatory status shall be restricted to accredited reports/certificates under the signed EA MLA activity(ies).

# **8 RULES FOR USE OF ACCREDITATION SYMBOL, OTHER CLAIMS OF ACCREDITATION AND/OR REFERENCE TO NAB’S MLA SIGNATORY STATUS BY ACCREDITED BODIES**

## **8.1 Rights to use**

The NAB shall specify the terms under which accredited CABs are entitled to and expected to use its accreditation symbol and make other claims of accreditation and reference to the NAB’s EA MLA signatory status.

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<sup>1</sup> NABs may also include a reference to the ILAC MRA or the IAF MLA for activities covered under the applicable scopes if the NAB has signed these arrangements/agreements.



To be entitled to use the accreditation symbol and to make reference to the EA MLA signatory status of its NAB, an accredited CAB shall be accredited and comply with the rules set out by the NAB.

Results issued by an accredited CAB without an accreditation symbol or a reference to accreditation cannot claim presumption of conformity with the relevant standards used for the accreditation of CABs, nor with the provisions of the EA MLA.

The accredited CAB shall inform its customers of any undue use or misuse of the accreditation symbol or other claim of accreditation status by its customers and shall take the necessary steps to ensure proper use.

Whenever an accredited CAB operates from several sites among which at least one has not been granted accreditation, only those accredited sites shall be entitled to use the accreditation symbol or make claims of accreditation status. When a common document is issued, a disclaimer printed close to the accreditation symbol shall enable to identify the sites covered by accreditation, for instance: «List of accredited sites and scopes available on request” or “List of accredited sites and scopes available on www....».

An accredited CAB which holds accreditation for only part of its activities may use the accreditation symbol or make claims of accreditation status provided there is no confusion as to which activity of the CAB is accredited.

#### **8.1.1 Suspension of accreditation**

The NAB shall have rules specifying that an accredited CAB shall upon suspension, including partial suspension, immediately cease to issue reports/certificates, or labels bearing the accreditation symbol or any type of claims of accreditation and reference to the NAB's MLA signatory status, as well as on any document related to activities falling under its suspended accreditation.

#### **8.1.2 Termination of accreditation**

The NAB shall have rules specifying that upon termination or withdrawal of accreditation, the CAB shall immediately stop making any claim that it is accredited or distributing any document bearing the accreditation symbol or other claims of accreditation and/or reference to the NAB's MLA signatory status.

#### **8.1.3 Non accredited activities**

The NAB shall have rules specifying that accreditation shall not be stated, implied or suggested for non-accredited activities delivered by the CAB.

### **8.2 Documents and Communication Media**

#### **8.2.1 General rules**

For written claims of accreditation status by accredited CABs, the NAB's rules shall provide a typical phrase to be used preferably without variation (see clause 6).

For reference to the NAB's EA MLA signatory status, the text shall at least contain information about the EA MLA activity(ies) for which the NAB has signed the EA MLA.

### **8.2.2 Publicity Materials and Websites**

The rules shall set out the conditions under which the accreditation symbol, other claims of accreditation status or NAB's EA MLA signatory status may be used on promotional and publicity material. In essence, they shall permit such a use only on material which refers at least in part to an accredited activity.

### **8.2.3 Letterheads**

The rules shall set out the conditions under which the accreditation symbol or other claims of accreditation may be used on letterheads.

On commercial documents such as quotations or proposals (including associated stationery) containing CAA which do not fall into the CAB's accreditation scope, it should be clearly and unambiguously identified which CAA are covered by the scope of accreditation and which are not.

However, it is forbidden to use letterheads or other corporate paper bearing the accreditation symbol if none of the CAA mentioned in the document are within the CAB's accreditation scope.

### **8.2.4 Other uses**

The use of the accreditation symbol and other claim of accreditation and/or NAB's EA MLA signatory status on items other than those described in the NAB rules shall not be discouraged if it is in line with the requirements of ISO/IEC 17011 and it is not forbidden by the relevant legal or regulatory requirements. The CAB shall be invited to seek approval from the NAB prior to any release.

## **8.3 Reports and certificates**

### **8.3.1 General rules**

The rules of the NAB shall set out appropriate requirements to include the accreditation symbol or other claims of accreditation or NAB's EA MLA signatory status on reports/certificates.

The NAB's rules shall not allow use in such a way as to state, imply or suggest that the NAB accepts responsibility for the truthfulness of the conformity assessment results covered by accreditation.

For the accreditation symbol, other claims of accreditation status or reference to the NAB's EA MLA signatory status to be used, reports/certificates shall include accredited results. Results and other outcomes from the accredited and non-accredited CAA shall be clearly distinguished.

The accreditation symbol, other claims of accreditation and/or reference to the NAB's EA MLA signatory status shall not be included in reports/certificates themselves containing no accredited results.

### **8.3.2 Specific rules**

Specific rules for:

- using accreditation symbols on calibration and inspection labels, reference material documents and labels, proficiency testing documents, and biobanking documents and labels have been established in ILAC P8;
- use of more than one accreditation symbol in one report/certificate shall be regulated by the NAB (see in particular clause 10.3 of ILAC-P8);
- not using certification marks in conformity assessment reports/certificates have been established in ISO/IEC 17021-1.

## **9 USERS OF ACCREDITED CERTIFICATION ACTIVITIES**

In the case of Certification Bodies, the NAB may allow for use of its accreditation symbol or other claim of accreditation status by the certified client of an accredited management system or product certification body, to promote accreditation. The NAB shall then set out specific rules for this use and ensure that accredited CBs have in place policies and procedures for use by its clients of their logo or certification mark in combination with the accreditation symbol or other claims of accreditation status. The accredited CB shall be responsible and monitor the appropriate and correct use of the accreditation symbol by its clients.

Such a use of the accreditation symbol shall be strictly limited to the activity certified by the certification body under its accreditation. The accreditation symbol shall only be used in combination with the certification body's logo or mark.

The NAB may also establish a distinct "accredited user" symbol for these cases and allow its use instead of the combination of the logo or certification mark and accreditation symbol to improve the perception on the accredited CB.

## **10 MISUSE**

The NAB shall have a clear policy as well as procedures describing the measures to be taken in case of misuse of its logo, accreditation symbol or name, or false or misleading claims of accreditation or NAB's EA MLA signatory status by an accredited body or any other party.

The NAB shall provide for sanctions whenever improper use or claims of accreditation status is evidenced. The NAB rules shall clearly state that when appropriate and justified legal sanctions under copyright or fair-trading laws will be considered.