



AFRAC REPORT TO THE PAC PLENARY MEETINGS HONG KONG, JUNE 2012

1. OVERVIEW

The African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) is one of the four pillars of the Pan-African quality infrastructure established by the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Planning and Coordinating Agency to support intra-African trade, improve the competitiveness of African goods and services and to facilitate health and safety of the public and the environment.

AFRAC's establishment was partially funded by the Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) Germany, and its ultimate aim is to facilitate capacity building in accreditation across the continent with the goal of sustaining an internationally acceptable Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA).

2. AFRAC LAUNCH

AFRAC was launched on 29 September 2010 and held its first General Assembly from 29 – 30 September 2012, in Cairo, Egypt. The General Assembly elected:

- The Chair, Eng. Hassan Shaarawi from the Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC);
- The Treasurer, Mr Mensan Lawson-Hechelli from the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS); and
- The Secretariat, which is hosted by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS).

The AFRAC Bylaws were approved and enforced on 30 September 2010.

3. AFRAC STRATEGY AND BUSINESS PLAN

AFRAC is currently focusing on the operationalisation of its MRA and as such the AFRAC Secretariat is currently in the process of drafting a five Strategy and Business Plan. The two main aims of the Strategy and Business plan will be to operationalise the Cooperation and to establish and roll-out an MRA including cooperating in building capacity in accreditation across the continent with the goal of sustaining an internationally acceptable MRA which will support socio-economic development.

4. APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRS

The AFRAC General Assembly appointed the AFRAC Technical and MRA Committee Chairs in October 2011, and these Committees are currently being constituted. Mr Moez Boughalmi from the Tunisia Accreditation Council (TUNAC) was elected as MRA Committee Chair and Mr Sammy Milgo from the Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS) was elected as Technical Committee Chair.

5. AFRAC MEMBERSHIP

AFRAC's Membership has not been formalised to date, and the procedures to formalise its Membership are in the final stages, however various African Accreditation Bodies as well as other bodies with an interest in accreditation in Africa have signed formal letters of intent in support of participating in AFRAC.

AFRAC's Membership is made up of the following African Accreditation bodies:

- Tunisia Accreditation Council (TUNAC);
- Libya National Centre for Standardisation and Metrology (LNCSM);
- Egyptian Accreditation Council (EGAC);
- Ethiopia National Accreditation Office (ENAO);
- Kenya Accreditation Service (KENAS);
- Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS);
- Southern African Development Community Accreditation Service (SADCAS);
- South African National Accreditation System (SANAS).

Other bodies that participate in AFRAC include:

- Systeme Ouest Africain D'Accreditation (SOAC);
- Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Secretariat;
- East African Community (EAC) Secretariat;
- Southern African Development Community (SADC) Secretariat;
- Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Secretariat;
- New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD);
- Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB);
- InterAmerican Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC);
- European Accreditation Cooperation (EA).

6. TRAINING OF PEER EVALUATORS

At the African Accreditation Cooperation (AFRAC) meeting held in Cairo, Egypt in April 2010, a Working Group was appointed and tasked to draft and implement criteria for Selecting and Training Peer Evaluators. All African Accreditation Bodies and Regional Economic Communities were requested by the Secretariat to nominate candidates to be trained as peer evaluators.

The Secretariat secured funding for the course which was provided by PTB. The Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) provided the training of 12 peer evaluators and Mr Barry Ashcroft and Ms Roxanne Robinson were the two experts identified by APLAC to provide the training. The course took place from 6 – 8 June 2011 in Pretoria, South Africa.

The second part of the peer-evaluator training is exposing the trained peer evaluators to pre-peer evaluations. KENAS has expressed a desire to be pre-peer evaluated by AFRAC, and APLAC has indicated the availability of one of its Lead Evaluators to undertake the pre-peer evaluation exercise. The MRA Committee is currently looking into AFRAC's peer evaluation procedures.

7. TECHNICAL COOPERATION

AFRAC is in the process of concluding a Technical Cooperation Agreement with APLAC, and the APLAC Secretariat has advised that the Agreement's format is being amended into the APLAC format. Once the Agreement has been approved within the APLAC structures, AFRAC looks forward to the conclusion and signing of the Agreement.

8. UPCOMING AFRAC EVENTS

The third AFRAC General Assembly meetings will be hosted by SANAS and will take place from 30 September – 3 October 2012 in Johannesburg, South Africa.

9. CONTACT DETAILS

AFRAC SECRETARIAT

Ms Nonhlanhla Halimana (SANAS)

Tel: +27 12 394 3788

Fax: +27 12 394 4788

Email: nonhlanhlah@sanas.co.za

AFRAC ILAC REPRESENTATIVE

Mr Robin Gopee – AFRAC Vice-Chair (MAURITAS)

Tel: +230 210 7100

Fax: +230 210 6101

Email: rngopee@mail.gov.mu

Website : www.intra-frac.org or www.intra-frac.com