



*National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation*

**NACLA MRA**

**NATIONAL COOPERATION**

**FOR**

**LABORATORY ACCREDITATION**

**MUTUAL RECOGNITION**

**ARRANGEMENT**

**APPROVED BY NACLA BOARD/OPERATIONS COUNCIL – August 29, 2000**

**INITIAL SIGNINGS – September 29, 2000**

## PREAMBLE

The National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation (NACLA) is a nonprofit membership organization incorporated in the United States of America.

This document describes the elements of a Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) as a means by which the signatories can formally recognize each other's accredited laboratories.

Members of NACLA have expressed a desire to cooperate so as to develop and administer common recognition procedures, to provide coordination and focus for laboratory accreditation bodies in the United States and to serve other national and international needs in laboratory accreditation.

This MRA does not supersede other recognitions required by other national laws and regulations.

The principal elements of this NACLA MRA meant to establish confidence among the participating systems are listed below. These elements are designed to ensure conformance with the requirements in order to build and maintain mutual confidence in the technical competence of NACLA laboratory accreditation body members and their accredited laboratories.

## PRINCIPAL ELEMENTS OF MUTUAL CONFIDENCE

1. Exchange of information on the development and operation of NACLA member laboratory accreditation bodies;
2. Participation in relevant NACLA activities, including provision of qualified persons to serve on evaluation teams;
3. Participation in relevant interlaboratory comparisons and proficiency testing programs;
4. Participation in meetings of NACLA committees to discuss problems related to testing and calibration in various technical fields;
5. Evaluation of applicants to join this Arrangement shall include but not be limited to visits by teams of evaluators constituted in accordance with and operating in accordance with the provisions of the NACLA document "NACLA Recognition Procedure."
6. Evaluation of signatories to the NACLA MRA will take place in accordance with the NACLA AB Recognition Procedure.
7. Observation of applicant bodies' assessments of their laboratories to determine if these laboratories meet the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 25, "General requirements for the competence of calibration and testing laboratories" (ISO/IEC 17025 in the future);
8. Application, assessment, decisions, and maintenance pertaining to the NACLA MRA will be conducted in accordance with "NACLA Recognition Procedure."
9. Appropriate information developed during evaluation of applicants and periodic evaluation of signatories will be shared among the signatories on a confidential basis; and
10. Confidence in national measurement institutes to which traceability is claimed by accredited laboratories and support for the measurement comparison activities of Bureau International de Poids et Mesures (BIPM) and regional metrology organizations.

## ARRANGEMENT

Upon fulfilling the requirements described in the Principal Elements of Mutual Confidence described above, each signatory to the NACLA MRA agrees to the following:

1. The NACLA Signatories shall:
  - i) use equivalent procedures in the accreditation of laboratories under ISO/IEC Guides 58 and 25 (ISO/IEC 17025 in the future);
  - ii) recognize the test reports and calibration certificates issued by testing and calibration laboratories accredited by these signatories as being technically equivalent;
  - iii) promote the acceptance by all users of test reports and calibration certificates issued by their accredited testing and calibration laboratories;
  - iv) investigate all complaints resulting from test reports and calibration certificates issued by their accredited testing and calibration laboratories; and
  - v) inform the other signatories as soon as possible, through the NACLA Secretariat, of any significant changes that have occurred or will occur in the status and/or operational practices of their accreditation body.
2. The addition of new signatories to the NACLA MRA or the withdrawal of a NACLA signatory will not change the terms of this MRA.
3. The conclusion of a further agreement between the NACLA MRA signatories and a laboratory accreditation body not a member of NACLA, or another regional or international MRA, does not change the terms of this MRA.
4. This MRA will be null and void if NACLA is dissolved.
5. This MRA may be amended at any time by agreement in writing among the signatories.
6. In the event of a dispute between signatories to this Arrangement or with applicants concerning elements, objectives, procedures, and requirements, the matter shall be handled in accordance with the appropriate section of the NACLA Recognition Procedure.
7. This MRA will come into force upon signature of the recognized parties.
8. This MRA by itself does not provide any recognition or accreditation under any law or regulation in the United States. However, the signatories intend to promote to government agencies the use of this MRA in support of recognition agreements in the regulated sector.