



**INSTITUTE FOR ACCREDITATION OF THE
REPUBLIC OF MACEDONIA**

**Long-term Programme for
Development of the Institute for
Accreditation of the Republic of
Macedonia for the period 2015-
2020**

Introduction

The Law on Accreditation (“Official Gazette of the Republic of Macedonia”, No. 120/09, 53/11 and 41/14) shall regulate the constitution, organization and operation of the Institute for Accreditation of the Republic of Macedonia (hereinafter: IARM) as a public institution performing tasks and activities of a national accreditation body, as well as the procedure for accreditation pursuant to this and other laws and the supervision over the fulfillment of the requirements for accreditation.

Accreditation is a powerful tool which indirectly provides product quality and development of trade relations at a national and international level. In addition, accreditation reduces, and also, to a great extent, it eliminates the technical barriers in the exchange of goods and services. The accreditation contributes to higher quality and better competitiveness of products and services with lowest costs. Accreditation is conducted at the request of domestic and foreign legal entities and it is based on the Accreditation Law and other laws as well as in accordance with the requirements of the respective Macedonian, European and international standards and documents of national, European and international organizations.

In general, accreditation is voluntary and in a non-discriminatory manner, it is accessible to each entity (conformity assessment body) which will submit an Application for Accreditation and for which, through the accreditation procedure, it will be determined that it meets all the requirements for accreditation. Similarly, the accreditation is the basis for obtaining authorization by the Ministries in order to perform certain activities.

The IARM performs accreditation procedures of the following types of conformity assessment bodies:

- testing and calibration laboratories and medical laboratories,
- product/ process/ service certification bodies,
- management system certification bodies,
- inspection bodies.

The accreditation procedures are based on the standards from the MKC EN ISO / IEC 17000 and MKC EN ISO 15189 series.

The IARM actively participates in the work of the European and international accreditation organizations and represents the interests of the Republic of Macedonia there. The IARM is a full-fledged member of the European cooperation for Accreditation EA and the International Laboratory Accreditation - ILAC.

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Vision of the IARM

Once accredited by the Accreditation Institute of the Republic of Macedonia (IARM) accepted everywhere.

Mission of the IARM

The mission of the IARM is to ensure confidence in the results and services delivered by the conformity assessment bodies in the Republic of Macedonia.

In addition to the affirmation and confirmation of the accreditation system at home, the fulfillment of the vision and mission of the IARM is in unbreakable causal connection with the maintenance and upgrading of the internationally acquired reputation and status of the IARM as a single national accreditation body - a full-fledged member of the European and global accreditation family and the status of signatory of the EA-MLA¹ and ILAC-MRA² Agreements.

The mission and vision of the IARM follow or rather elaborate the visions of the Government of RM for: having a strong national infrastructure for quality, construction and development of an open and economically competitive society, as a condition for achieving the strategic goal of the foreign policy of the Republic of Macedonia or full membership in the European Union.

The vision and motto of the IARM are summarized into one thought: "Accredited once, accepted everywhere".

Strategy of the IARM

In order to fulfill the mission and vision, it is a strategic priority and objective of the IARM to constantly provide efficient and effective accreditation system equal to the systems in the developed countries in Europe and worldwide.

Hence, to achieve this objective, the IARM will strive to realize the tasks and principles of operation, both in terms of accreditation activities and in terms of cooperation at a national and international level. The mechanism to achieve them is in the hands of the management and qualified staff.

¹EA-MLA (European cooperation for Accreditation – Multilateral Agreement) is an agreement signed between the EA accreditation body members to recognize the equivalence and reliability and therefore acceptance of accredited certification, inspection and calibration certificates and test reports across Europe.

²ILAC-MRA (International Laboratory Accreditation for Cooperation – Mutual Recognition Agreement) is an agreement signed between the ILAC accreditation body members to recognize the equivalence and reliability and therefore acceptance of accredited inspection certificates and test reports across the world.

In this direction, the IARM will primarily fulfill the following activities:

- *The IARM will maintain a system of accreditation in the Republic of Macedonia according to the series of standards ISO 17000 and ISO 15189 and will observe the EA, ILAC and IAF documents*

To achieve this activity, the IARM will completely follow the requirements and the news of the relevant documents at an international and European level and will incorporate them in its accreditation system.

- *Maintaining and developing the agreements on mutual recognition within the EA, ILAC and IAF*

This will provide facilitation of the international trade by eliminating the technical barriers in the trade as well as an easy and unobstructed access and marketing of domestic products and services under the accreditation sign. In this regard, in 2015 the IARM plans to maintain its status of a signatory of the agreements for recognition within the EA and ILAC for: testing and calibration laboratories, certification bodies for products and inspection bodies and officially to become a signatory in the field of medical laboratories. In May 2015, it is expected the EA MLA Agreement to formalize for this field as well. By 2020, the IARM plans to maintain the aforementioned status of a signatory and to expand the field of accreditation to management system certification bodies.

- *The IARM will ensure the accreditation to become a unique and universal means of verifying the competence of the conformity assessment bodies*

In this direction, the awareness of domestic entities will be constantly evolving that accreditation is a unique and universal means of verifying the competence of the conformity assessment bodies. In this respect, the role of the state is also very important as it needs to practice the principle of granting authorization more, but only on the basis of a previously granted accreditation.

- *Participation in the activities of the European and international accreditation organizations and representation of the interests of the Republic of Macedonia there*

The missionary vision of the IARM regarding its international activities has its confirmation through evaluation by the European and international accreditation organizations which started several years ago by submitting applications for membership in the accreditation families to reach the level of full membership with an equal and reputable right to vote, which includes participation in the work of bodies of the organizations. Moreover, these activities internationally mean affirmation of the Republic of Macedonia, or representation and promotion of its interests.

Therefore, in the period 2015-2020, the IARM will continue to expand its participation in the European and international accreditation organizations and to represent the interests of the Republic of Macedonia there.

As a full-fledged member of both organizations, the IARM will mandatorily participate in the annual meetings of the General Assemblies of EA and ILAC, as it is a member with an active right and duty to participate and vote for new measures and resolutions in the field of accreditation worldwide, which it should later transcribe vertically in an appropriate legal form on a national level.

In 2015, the IARM will file an application for membership in the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). Applying for membership in another world accreditation organization is a challenge plus, yet an obligation of the IARM as well on the path of upgrading and strengthening its international reputation and status, which will have a direct effect at home, since it means one more benefit for the local economy.

- *The IARM will develop and maintain bilateral cooperation with the accreditation bodies in the region and beyond*

Within its activities at an international level, the IARM will pay special attention to the bilateral relations with the national accreditation bodies from the region above all. The IARM will maintain and upgrade its cooperation with the national accreditation bodies in the region pursuant to the signed Bilateral Agreements with: Serbia, Montenegro, Bulgaria, Albania, Croatia, Turkey, Kosovo, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Moldova.

Also, the IARM will maintain and upgrade the cooperation agreements concluded with the United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) and Germany's National Accreditation Body (DAKKS).

On the basis of the signed Memorandum of Cooperation between the IARM and the Federal Accreditation Service of the Russian Federation (RusAccreditation), the cooperation between the two bodies shall be carried out according to the Annual Activity Program which will be prepared jointly.

- *Development of an appropriate accreditation system and optimal organization depending on the specific needs of the Republic of Macedonia*

The IARM will continuously adjust its acts for organization and systematization depending on the specific needs of the Republic of Macedonia, but at the same time it must provide compatible organization with the organizations of the accreditation bodies at an international and European level, in a manner that independence, objectivity, impartiality and competence in the work will be ensured.

- *Adjustment and optimization of the accreditation procedures and acting to meet the needs of beneficiaries of its services*

So far, the IARM has accredited 149 conformity assessment bodies and has 30 new pending applications for accreditation. According to the annual work plans and surveillance of the IARM, regular surveillances over the already accredited bodies will be performed and at the same time, the IARM shall work on the newly submitted applications for accreditation which means increase in the number of accredited conformity assessment bodies. In this respect, the IARM will respond to the requirements for accreditation of the conformity assessment bodies pursuant to the projects of the Government of RM.

- *The IARM will consistently provide objective, impartial, non-discriminatory and competent accreditation procedure with lowest costs*

When performing the accreditation procedures, the IARM will adhere to the accreditation principles regarding objectivity, impartiality and non-discriminatory treatment of all interested parties and will mind to reduce the costs to a lowest level.

- *Developing new accreditation schemes in accordance with the requirements of the beneficiaries of its services and the requirements of the regulators*

Within the activities for development, the IARM shall develop new accreditation schemes pursuant to the specific needs of the Republic of Macedonia above all, such as the accreditation schemes of certification bodies for personnel and for organizers of qualification testing. The development of these schemes shall be in cooperation with the interested parties, supported by the work of the Technical Committees of the IARM.

- *Developing a procedure for accreditation of notified bodies along with the negotiations for Macedonia's membership in the European Union and the initiative to sign the European Agreement on Conformity Assessment (Agreement on Conformity Assessment and Acceptance - ACAA)*

By signing the ACAA agreement, accreditation becomes a prerequisite for notification of the conformity assessment bodies by the ministries. The IARM will continue to observe the EA rules on accreditation of notification bodies and will develop appropriate procedures as needed.

- *Providing optimal pool of assessors and experts who will be involved in the assessment of the conformity assessment bodies*

The IARM will continue its practice, whenever possible, in the assessment of the conformity assessment bodies, to include local assessors and experts, which will reduce the costs of accreditation.

- *Training of assessors as well as other trainings intended for potential accredited bodies can be carried out*

The IARM will constantly organize trainings for assessors as needed in order to expand the pool of assessors and to maintain their skills. If necessary, the IARM will perform and participate in trainings for potential accredited bodies and other interested parties, which will contribute to a better understanding of the requirements for accreditation.

- *Cooperation with the public administration bodies and other economic entities in the area of accreditation and performance of procedures for conformity assessment*

The IARM will continue to deepen its cooperation through participation in the work of several working groups established by the Government of the Republic of Macedonia, the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Environment and Physical Planning, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Water Management and other ministries.

The IARM will continue to operate within the Market Monitoring Committee and cooperate with the Economic Chambers in the Republic of Macedonia;

- *Cooperation with institutions of quality infrastructure such as: the Bureau of Metrology (BM), the Institute for Standardization of the Republic of Macedonia (ISRM) and the conformity assessment bodies*

Considering the exceptional importance of building a strong national infrastructure for quality, the IARM will continue to strengthen and expand its cooperation with other institutions in the area of quality infrastructure as a significant factor in the construction.

- *The IARM will promote the accreditation system in the Republic of Macedonia*

To meet this goal, the IARM performs its affirmation at home by raising the awareness of the economic entities, regulators and citizens of the importance and benefits of accreditation by promoting the accreditation system in the Republic of Macedonia.

The IARM will continue to expand its promotional activities since it is evident that they produce results given the growing interest of the conformity assessment bodies in the Republic of Macedonia with respect to accreditation and the awareness strengthening regarding the importance and benefits of accreditation by the public. The promotion is ensured in adequate methods of organizing open meetings and forums, publishing and distributing printed material on a variety of topics related to accreditation, informing the public through press conferences, supporting and actively participating in the celebration of the World Accreditation Day, participating in various meetings, conferences with presentation of topics from the aspect of accreditation, regular publication of news in the work and other informative-promotional contents on its web site and in other media, cooperation with other entities that have a common or similar goal by affirmation of accreditation etc.

- *Strengthening the total material-technical resources and capacities in terms of working conditions, especially human resources by hiring new skilled and competent staff, motivated to perform the mission of the IARM impartially, objectively and competently*

In order to perform all its activities, it is a necessary prerequisite for the IARM to have ensured independence, professionalism, competence and objectivity of the institutional capacities involved in its operation: the IARM Council as the highest management body, the Director of the IARM, the employees, some of whom are leading assessors in the accreditation procedures, the sector and technical committees as well as other bodies, external associates (assessors and experts).

Here it should be mentioned that there is necessity of holding trainings to upgrade the competence of the staff, as one of the basic conditions for quality and successful implementation of the accreditation procedures.

Also, in order to meet the modern requirements and challenges in its operation, the IARM should:

- maintain and develop an advanced information and communication technology system (ICT), and
- maintain and upgrade an appropriate electronic database for the accreditation procedures and for the pool of assessors and experts and to save a backup of it, with full respect for the provisions on protection of personal data with which it disposes of and operates.

The IARM must perform all these tasks continuously, whereas their implementation will take place through the detailed Annual Work Programme of the Institute for Accreditation of the Republic of Macedonia adopted by the Government of the Republic

of Macedonia for each calendar year and by providing sufficient funds from Budget of the Republic of Macedonia for unobstructed operation.

Therefore, the cooperation among the top management of IARM: the Council of the IARM, the Director of the IARM, the Quality Manager and the managers in the IARM, needs to function flawlessly.

The measurability of the realization of objectives set shall be regularly evaluated through two mechanisms such as: conducting regular Internal Audit in the IARM and Annual Management Review of the IARM in compliance with the requirements of the ISO 17011 standard according to which the IARM operates.

Director,
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