

Document and Records Control

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**AUTHORSHIP**

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1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this procedure is to define the general requirements and procedures for APAC document and records control including publication of new documents, the revision or withdrawal of existing documents, and the management, maintenance, storage and deletion of documents, records, reports, correspondence and files. All APAC documents and records are stored in electronic format.

1. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all persons involved in the management of all APAC controlled documents including but not limited to manuals, policies (including Codes), procedures and forms.

Lists or directories of members, signatories or other organisations may be up-dated by the APAC groups owning that document without the need to follow these procedures.

1. RESPONSIBILITIES

The APAC Secretariat is responsible for implementing document control according to the minimum requirements of this procedure.

The master copy of all APAC documents shall be held and controlled by the APAC Secretariat.

The responsibility for the authorship of APAC documents is detailed in APAC MS-000. It is the responsibility of the Chair of the APAC Committee specified or the APAC Quality Manager in the case of the Management System Manual, to ensure that the procedures for developing, reviewing and withdrawing documents are followed irrespective of how, in practice, documents are drafted or revised. For example, it may be more practical to establish a drafting group and appoint a convenor to prepare drafts, review comments, etc within a Committee. It however remains the responsibility of the Chair of the APAC Committee or the APAC Quality Manager as appropriate to maintain oversight of the preparation and revision of documents and to be the point of contact with the APAC Secretariat.

The responsibility for approving documents shall be decided on a case-by-case basis by the Executive Committee, noting that the APAC Constitution requires the General Assembly to approve documents that involve major policies and procedures affecting strategy and/or the direction of APAC.

The APAC Secretariat is responsible for the maintenance and retention of all documents, records, reports, correspondence and files, and for their archiving.

The APAC Secretariat is responsible for publication of the approved document. As part of the process, the APAC Secretariat shall ensure that the format of the manual or document complies with APAC MS-002 APAC Style Manual.

1. DOCUMENT NUMBERING SYSTEM

The numbering of APAC documents shall be determined by the Committee or individual responsible for maintenance of the individual document in accordance with the following alphanumeric numbering system:

Governance

1. GOV-xxx Governance documents, processes and procedures
2. FGOV-xxx Forms related to governance

Management System

1. MS-xxx Management system documents, processes and procedures
2. FMS-xxx Forms related to the management system

Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA)

1. MRA-xxx MRA related documents, processes and procedures
2. FMRA-xxx Forms related to the MRA

Finance

1. FIN-xxx Financial management and fee related documents, processes and procedures
2. FFIN-xxx Forms related to project proposals and financial management

Personnel

1. PER-xxx Personnel documents, processes and procedures
2. FPER-xxx Forms related to personnel

Capacity Building

1. CBC-xxx Capacity building related documents, processes and procedures

Communications and Promotion

1. COM-xxx Communications and promotion related documents, processes and procedures

Technical

1. TECx-xxx Technical related documents, processes and procedures (TEC1 = Laboratories and inspection, TEC2 = Proficiency Testing, TEC3 = Reference Materials, TEC4 = Certification, TEC5 = Validation and Verification)
2. FTECx-xxx Forms related to technical committees
3. Procedure for the Development and Adoption of APAC Documents

Proposals for a new APAC controlled document may be initiated by any APAC member via the Chair of the relevant committee. The Committee shall review the initiative against current objectives for priority, coordination and assignment. The Committee Chair shall allocate the work of preparing the draft as appropriate.

Within the Committee, the first draft shall be submitted to the Committee Chair, who shall circulate it to all members of the Committee for comment. The Chair may, if appropriate, circulate the draft to a wider group, or all members of APAC.

All comment received shall be reviewed for appropriate action.

A second draft shall be prepared if required. All changes shall be clearly tracked in the revised document and each issue should be clearly marked with a Draft No. in the top left-hand corner of the document header.

A short report should accompany the new draft, listing comments received and the rationale for their inclusion or exclusion in the revised document.

The second draft shall be circulated to all members of the committee and others as appropriate, together with the short report, inviting comment.

Further drafts may be prepared as necessary and circulated in accordance with the above-mentioned process. A final draft shall be approved by the Committee.

Upon approval, the Committee Chair shall forward the final draft document, together with a short report summarising the document’s development/amendment to the APAC Secretariat for distribution to the Executive Committee who shall decide whether to approve the document or that it needs approval by the General Assembly.

For documents requiring General Assembly approval, the APAC Secretariat shall distribute the document to APAC Members and Affiliates for a 30-day comment period. The draft shall be in the format described in APAC MS-002.

It is important to ensure that where a new policy or procedure references an associated form(s), that these are also drafted and forwarded to the APAC Secretariat.

The APAC Secretariat shall either send out the draft document by email as a PDF file, together with the APAC document comments template (APAC FMS-004), or (if available) utilise the facility within the APAC website for collecting comments.

Comments received by the APAC Secretariat after the due date may be considered at the discretion of the convenor or the author.

The APAC Secretariat shall edit the comments into a consolidated table and forward to the relevant author to record responses to the comments received.

After reviewing the comments, the final draft document shall be prepared and forwarded, with the record of comments and responses, to the APAC Secretariat.

The APAC Secretariat will distribute the final document to APAC Members for 30-day ballot either using the ballot process on the APAC website or by hard copy.

On completion of the approval process (either by the Executive Committee or General Assembly), the APAC Secretariat shall enter the issue date in the footer of the document, convert the documents to a PDF file or editable format where needed and post it on the website. The APAC Secretariat shall also send an email to all APAC Members and Affiliates advising that the document has been published on the website.

This procedure will be adapted appropriately if the draft document is reviewed or approved for issue during an APAC General Assembly meeting.

1. Revisions to Existing APAC Documents

The author shall make the proposed revisions to the current issue of the document in ‘track change’ and send it to the APAC Secretariat. The process described above in Section 5 shall then be followed. All revisions shall have all changes clearly tracked in the copy sent for ballot.

The APAC Executive Committee may approve revisions to existing APAC documents without adhering to the procedures described in section 5, in the following circumstances:

* The changes are editorial or administrative in nature; or
* The changes are necessary to implement mandatory IAF or ILAC requirements; or
* The changes are of a minor nature and do not alter APAC policy, membership requirements and obligations or APAC MRA requirements.

When a document is revised the entire document is to be re-issued. The same document number shall be retained, but a new issue number and a new issue date shall be shown on the revised document. The effective date or implementation date, if needed, shall also be given in the document.

The APAC Secretariat shall archive a copy of the superseded issue of the up-dated document.

1. Procedure for Withdrawal of Existing APAC Documents

When the need to withdraw an APAC document is identified, the author responsible shall provide a brief written justification for withdrawal (for the APAC Executive Committee, or the APAC General Assembly for documents relating to strategy or policy), and forward this to the APAC Secretariat.

For documents requiring APAC General Assembly approval, the APAC Secretariat shall send out a copy of this justification and a copy of the current version of the document to APAC Members for 30-day ballot.

APAC documents may be withdrawn by resolutions at meetings of the APAC General Assembly.

On completion of the ballot period in which the APAC General Assembly agrees to withdraw the document or following a decision by the APAC Executive Committee, the APAC Secretariat shall remove the document from the website and send an email to all APAC members, advising that the document has been withdrawn.

The APAC Secretariat shall archive a copy of the withdrawn document.

1. Register of Controlled Documents

The APAC Secretariat shall maintain a register of controlled documents that details the issue status and date of issue (and effective/implementation date if applicable) of all APAC documents (APAC FMS-002).

1. OWNERSHIP

APAC is the owner of all documents, records, reports, correspondence and related documentary information arising from its activities.

The current issues of documents and forms required by APAC Members, Committees and MRA evaluators shall also be published on the APAC website.

1. RETENTION PERIODS

The retention period for all documents, records, reports, correspondence, etc shall be as listed in Appendix 1.

1. DISPOSAL OF DOCUMENTS

APAC records shall be deleted from the APAC electronic filing system and APAC website as necessary. A record of documents disposed by the APAC Secretariat shall be kept using form APAC FMS-008.

The APAC Secretariat shall keep a copy of each superseded document to provide a historical record of revisions and amendments as per the Retention Periods specified above. These documents shall be made available on request.

1. SECRETARIAT FILING SYSTEM

The APAC electronic filing system is maintained by the APAC Secretariat. Sub folders may be created by the APAC Secretariat as required. Folders are identified with a file number and brief description.

All correspondence and files are saved in the APAC electronic filing system.

* 1. File Access

The APAC Secretariat and APAC Quality Manager have access to all folders and files.

All persons having access to MRA records shall sign the Confidentiality Declaration (APAC FGOV-007) prior to access being granted.

Other individuals (such as IAF or ILAC evaluators) requesting access to records or other information shall also sign the Confidentiality Declaration (APAC FGOV-007) prior to access being granted.

* 1. Maintenance of Files

All incoming correspondence and documents received, including emails, will be identified with the date received and appropriate file name. The correspondence and documents shall be scanned and filed as soon as possible after receipt.

Critical documents and correspondence shall be recorded in the Mail Register on receipt or at time of sending.

The following critical documents and correspondence shall be registered:

* Pre-evaluation and evaluation reports, including responses and evaluation team recommendations
* Complaints
* Appeals
* Official correspondence
* Audited financial statements
* Audit reports

Complaints received by the APAC Executive Committee shall also be recorded in the Complaints Register (APAC FMS-006).

Appeals received by the APAC Executive Committee shall also be recorded in the Appeals Register (APAC FMS-009).

Receipt of the following evaluation documents will be recorded in the MRA Evaluation Control Record (APAC FMRA-005)

* Final Evaluation Report
* Letter of Recommendation by the evaluation team
* Supporting Information of the evaluation and findings
* List of CABs witnessed by the evaluation team
* Evaluator & Technical Expert Performance Logs
  1. Archiving APAC Files

The APAC Secretariat shall regularly review files for the need to close and archive (electronic).

Closed electronic files shall be archived in the APAC electronic filing system.

* 1. Back-Up and Retrieval of Electronic Documents and Files

All electronic documents and files shall be backed-up on a weekly basis with the back-up stored in a separate location, physically removed from where the parent data is stored.

The APAC Secretariat can use the search and retrieve function for electronically archived files.

The APAC Secretariat shall ensure archived files are backed-up to any new computer operating system when the computer operating system is changed or upgraded.

The APAC electronic filing system has a Cloud Disaster Recovery solution that provides for the recovery of stored data with a maximum of two hours lost data.

1. LIST OF DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS MAINTAINED BY THE APAC SECRETARIAT

The APAC Secretariat shall prepare, and keep up-to-date a list of all APAC documents that are covered by this procedure. This list shall identify the Document Number, Document Name, Issue Number, Issue Date and Application Date. That list shall be copied to the APAC Website.

1. AMENDMENT TABLE

This table provides a summary of the changes to the document with this issue.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Section(s)** | **Amendment(s)** |
| All | New issue on establishment of APAC. Document based upon:  APLAC MS 001 Document Control Issue No. 2,  PAC-EXEC-003 PAC Document Control Procedure (Issue 3.0),  PAC-EXEC-015 PAC Records Management Procedure (Issue 2),  and APLAC SEC 100 File Maintenance and Record Keeping. |
| End |  |

APPENDIX 1 - RETENTION PERIODS FOR DOCUMENTS AND RECORDS

| ***Document, etc*** | ***Retention Period*** |
| --- | --- |
| List of APAC controlled documents | Current |
| APAC documents | Permanent |
| Applications for membership | Permanent on Member’s file |
| Application to join APAC MRA | Permanent on Member’s file |
| Evaluation reports and supporting information | Permanent |
| Membership list (GA and MRA Council) | Permanent |
| APAC MRA Signatories list | Permanent |
| Committee Membership lists | 10 years |
| Mail Register | Permanent |
| Complaints Register | 5 years after resolution of complaint |
| Appeals Register | 5 years after resolution of appeal |
| Records related to complaints | Permanent |
| Internal audits | 10 years |
| Management review | 10 years |
| Evaluation schedule | Permanent |
| Evaluation competencies | Permanent |
| Evaluator biographies | For 4 years after person ceases to be an evaluator |
| Evaluator performance log | For 4 years after person ceases to be an evaluator |
| Evaluation feedback form | Permanent |
| GA Agenda papers | Permanent |
| GA Minutes | Permanent |
| Executive Committee Agenda papers | Permanent |
| Executive Committee Minutes | Permanent |
| MRA Council Agenda papers | Permanent |
| MRA Council Minutes | Permanent |
| Committee Minutes | Permanent |
| APAC PT program reports | Permanent |
| Notification of changes to documents | Permanent |
| Executive Committee correspondence, general | 5 years |
| GA correspondence, general | 5 years |
| MRA Council correspondence, general | 5 years |
| Committee correspondence | 5 years |
| Documents related to establishment of APAC | Permanent |
| Documents related to incorporation of APAC | Permanent |
| APAC budget and accounts | 10 years |
| Contracts | 10 years |
| General correspondence with members | 5 years |
| Other correspondence (IAF, ILAC, regions, etc) | 5 years |
| Evaluation of APAC | Permanent |