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Accreditation: A global tool to support Public Policy

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Standards and Accreditation

Standards are an agreed way of doing something;

Accreditation determines the technical competence and integrity of organizations offering conformity assessment services such as testing, certification, inspection and calibration based on international standards. Accreditation can thus be used to verify compliance with a standard.




What benefit does accreditation provide?

Accredited conformity assessment bodies can support, amongst others, the following functions:

- Verification of conformity with standards and regulations
- Demonstration of competence
- Assessment of risk and its management
- Enforcement of safety regulations such as building codes
- Safety of food and drinking water
- Environmental protection
- Oversight of health and social care services
- Control of commerce and trade
- Trade facilitation
- Efficient delivery of public services
- Conduct of forensic investigations
- Investigation of product or process failures









How can accreditation support public policy?

- Government can help improve the performance of business by encouraging the use of conformity assessment
- Government can rely on accreditation bodies to minimize risks and promote trade
- Accredited conformity assessment can help government deliver and enforce its policies
- Private sector uses accreditation in order to deliver confidence in the market place
- Accredited conformity assessment helps regulators regulate
- Government can improve its own performance by using conformity assessment in its own departments.




Forensic Science to meet the needs of the Criminal Justice System

- The UK Home Office approved Codes of Practice and Conduct requires forensic science providers submitting evidence to be carried out by 'competent' organizations.
- Approved Codes of Practice and Conduct builds on ISO/IEC17025, the internationally accepted laboratory testing standard with additional focus on validation, contamination control and information security.
- Public and private laboratories implement the Code of Practice to ensure they comply.
- Accreditation of these laboratories provides confidence to the Regulator and the Criminal Justice System.




Hong Kong Housing Authority specifies the use of certified products

- The Hong Kong Housing Authority builds an average of 20,000 flats per year for the public sector of Hong Kong.
- The quality of building materials and components is a prime concern to the Housing Authority and the industry since rework of any non-complying building products would have time & cost implications to the housing projects.
- The Housing Authority specifies the requirement to use certified products for ten major building materials in its construction projects.
- Accredited Product certification provides a reliable means for assuring production quality throughout the whole production process from incoming raw materials, production, inspection, sample selection and testing.






Supporting sustainable animal health in Africa

- The Botswana Vaccine Institute (BVI) is a public company established through the technical cooperation between MERIAL, a leader in the research, manufacture and supply of livestock vaccines, and the Government.
- Accredited testing and certification ensures the quality of the vaccines that they manufacture, generates internal efficiencies, reduces waste and saves money.
- It also improves market access and the eligibility for new tenders, which is demonstrated by year-on-year growth.
- Two thirds of all vaccines produced at BVI are exported annually to over 15 countries in Africa and the Middle East.





Food safety in Victoria, Australia

- The Prime Safe scheme in the Australian state of Victoria works across all areas of the meat, poultry and seafood supply chain.
- Operating a risk-based system of audits, where, ‘the frequency of audits for licensees is set in line with the level of risk inherent in the product processed at the facility. The greater the assessed risk, the greater the number of audits required’.
- The scheme recognizes the benefit of accredited certification to ISO 9001 as, ‘Any meat processing facility subject to a quarterly audit schedule and has incorporated into its operations an accredited ISO 9001 quality assurance system can have their audit frequency adjusted to a bi-annual audit schedule.’



The New Approach in the European Union

- The European “New Approach” to technical harmonization involves over 4,000 standards that are used to support regulation.
- Under the New Approach, accreditation is used to ensure the competence of those organisations that check compliance with the standards (‘Notified Bodies’).
- In line with the World Trade Organization’s Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (WTO TBT Agreement), compliance with regulation is mandatory and compliance with standards remains voluntary.





Gulf Coast Countries (GCC) operate single Market Regulatory System

- GCC Member states (United Arab Emirates ,Kingdom of Bahrain, Kingdom of Saudi Arabia,Sultanate of Oman, State of Qatar, State of Kuwait and the Republic of Yemen) operate a single regulatory system to control products in the GCC market.
- The System is comprised of two sets of Technical Regulations (TR) – Horizontal Regulations applied to all products wishing to access the GCC Single market, and Vertical Regulations each addressing a Category of Products such as Toys and low voltage devices.
- Accreditation is an essential tool for the implementation of this regulatory system as it is used in all regulations to assure the competence of notified bodies.




Italian Government and leading business leaders promote accredited services as a tool for inward investment

- [Invitalia](#), the national agency for attracting investment in Italy and for the development of business, invest in projects to promote the increased use of accredited certification, testing reports and calibration reports to facilitate inward investment in Italy. They work in association with ICE (the Italian association for the promotion of Italian business abroad), with international Chambers of Commerce, and with the [Ministry of Economic Development](#). The aim is to create opportunities for the development of Italian products and services. (Italy)




Italy's Ministry of Economic Development promotes accredited certification to ISO 25639 of Trade fairs

- The italian [Ministry of Economic Development](#) allocated €900,000 for the quality certification of international trade fairs against standard [ISO 25639-2](#). This will provide greater value to trade fairs in Italy by providing insight into the statistical data such as the number of visitors, exhibitors, and related fringe activities. (Italy)




ENERGY STAR US energy efficiency programme

- ENERGY STAR is a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) voluntary program that promotes energy efficiency.
- The ENERGY STAR programme includes requirements that third-party laboratories providing test data are accredited by signatories to the ILAC MRA.
- No need for the EPA to develop its own set of agency-specific rules or to create duplicative laboratory requirements, thereby limiting costs to the agency.
- The ILAC MRA provides assurance to consumers that products carrying the ENERGY STAR label meet strict programme requirements.








Accreditation ensures quality of steel imports into India

- The Indian Directorate General of Foreign Trade relaxes its import rules for steel and steel products and relies on the ILAC and IAF arrangements to maintain quality assurance.
- Steel imports are used to support projects in sectors such as infrastructure, petroleum, nuclear reactors and defence without the need for additional local certification or inspection.
- Quality certification should be either from a product certification body (ISO Guide 65/ISO 17065) accredited by an IAF MLA signatory, or from an inspection body accredited in accordance with ISO/IEC 17020 by an ILAC MRA Signatory.
- Accredited conformity assessment provides confidence to the local developer and the regulator.




Reliability of Soil testing results supported by accreditation

- The [UK's Environment Agency](#) has established a Monitoring Certification Scheme (MCERTS) to deliver high quality environmental measurements involving the chemical testing of soil. The scheme involves the accredited product certification of instruments, the competency certification of personnel and the accreditation of laboratories based on international standards.




Singapore – Public Utilities (Water Supply) Regulations

- A water fitting shall be treated as conforming with a standard stipulated by the Board if it is certified or tested as complying with such standard by — [a product certification body or a testing laboratory accredited by the Singapore Accreditation Council or any of its Mutual Recognition Arrangement partners;](#) or
- such other product certification body or testing laboratory as the Board may allow.





How does using an Accredited Laboratory benefit Government and Regulators?

Government bodies and regulators are constantly called upon to make decisions related to:

- Protecting the health and welfare of consumers and the public
- Protecting the environment
- Developing new regulations and requirements
- Measuring compliance with regulatory and legal requirements
- Allocating resources, both technical and financial

In order to make informed decisions, they must have confidence in the data generated by laboratories carrying out testing, measurement or calibration in these fields. Using an accredited laboratory can help establish and assure this confidence.




The Benefits of using Accredited Certification

- Allowing Regulators to set overall policy requirements or detailed technical requirements yet rely on the accredited certification bodies in the private sector to evaluate compliance
- Reducing uncertainties associated with decisions that affect the protection of human health and the environment
- Removing the need for Regulators to employ its own audit personnel, and the elimination of duplicate audits
- Increasing public confidence because accredited certification is a recognisable way of demonstrating conformity.
- Providing confidence on which to base public sector procurement decisions




Accreditation in support of Regulation

- In the early days of accreditation in the 20th Century, it was predominantly seen as a voluntary activity. However, now, in many economies, accreditation has been widely embraced by governments and accreditation has become “mandatory” in many regulated areas as more and more governments and regulators appreciate the benefits that accreditation brings to help governments meet their responsibilities
- Accreditation is now used to underpin the conformity assessment component of the APEC agreements.
- ASEAN (the Association of Southeast Asian Nations) with its ten member states, has included accreditation in the ASEAN sectoral MRA for electrical and electronic equipment as a means of meeting the mandatory requirements of each member and to facilitate the implementation of the ASEAN Free Trade Area (AFTA).




Accreditation in support of Regulation

- In Europe, the Council of the European Union and the European Parliament have agreed on a Regulation that provides a legal framework for the provision of accreditation services across Europe.
- In the Americas, regulators and government entities throughout the region are increasingly relying on results from accredited laboratories to meet their mandatory requirements in areas as diverse as food safety, environmental protection, toy safety, and the quality of concrete, steel, electrical products and a variety of other products and services.
- The mainstream acceptance of accreditation by pan-regional bodies, and domestic regulators within individual governments, also helps member governments of the World Trade Organisation (WTO) to meet their responsibilities of the Technical Barriers to Trade Agreement (TBT Agreement), and Sanitary and Phyto Sanitary Agreement (SPS Agreement).





The benefits of accreditation

- Accreditation offers an alternative to regulation, or can support regulation and enable its simplification. It is already being used to support policy delivery across a wide range of Government and regulatory activities. Accredited conformity assessment can be used to address a wide range of regulatory requirements – it is a flexible tool that can be applied to all sectors and to any kind of assessment, approval, validations or evaluation process.
- Accreditation can reduce costs for Government by relying on the private sector. Accredited conformity assessment is market driven and funded by fees from these organisations, thereby removing the need for Government to operate and fund its own laboratories and inspectorates.




The benefits of accreditation

- Accreditation can support risk-based regulation by providing information to help target Government intervention where it is most needed.
- Through openness and independence, standards and accreditation have the necessary legitimacy and degree of market acceptance to be used as tools for policy delivery. Through international agreements on mutual recognition of accreditation, they are becoming more widely used as tools for regulators in both the developed and developing world.



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Questions?

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