



# Accreditation

## To Improve Food Safety In Bangladesh

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*Accreditation is the independent evaluation of various conformity assessment bodies against recognized standards for specific activities such as testing, calibration, inspection or certification to ensure their integrity, impartiality and competence. Through the application of national and international standards, government departments, businesses and wider society can therefore have confidence in the test results, inspection reports and certifications provided.*

The 9th June marks World Accreditation Day, a global initiative, jointly established by International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), to raise awareness of the importance of accreditation among stakeholders & beneficiaries. The theme of World Accreditation Day 2020 focuses on the role of accreditation in improving food safety.

Worldwide food sector is largely a regulated sector and the assurance of safety and quality of food supply is traditionally a prerogative of governments through the development of regulations and inspections. Conformity assessment demonstrates compliance with legislative requirements for regulated food and food products.



However, following a number of global food safety incidents during the 1990s, consumer confidence in the capacity of regulators to guarantee food safety has declined in many parts of the world. In response, the private sector has moved to implement more and more specific standards with higher requirements than regulations in order to ensure the quality, safety and traceability of their products and processes. In the voluntary sector, conformity assessment provides assurance to consumers that the food and food products they buy meet specification of safety.

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There are a vast range of ways that accreditation helps improving food safety involving testing, calibration, certification and inspection. Food chain management is the key factor for improving food safety. This is a complex network of processes, resources, activities and technology involved in the production and sale of food, from sourcing of raw materials from

the supplier to the manufacturer, through to ultimate delivery to the end consumer. To ensure credibility and reliability in food chain, accredited testing, inspection and certification to food and food products are highly required. That is how, the theme of this year "Accreditation: Improving Food Safety" fits well with current need and context of the world scenario. Accreditation offers a range of services that can identify and manage the potential risks of becoming food unsafe through the assessment of certification, inspection and testing.

The production and distribution of food involves complex food chains and processes. Conformity assessment, including activities such as testing, certification, and inspection, is used to verify that food meet standards or technical specifications and thereby provides a means for preventing unsafe food from entering the market place. Supermarket chains and retailers should demand that their suppliers demonstrate that food meet relevant standards by requiring accredited test reports, inspection reports and certifications. Preparing ready-to-eat food and serving those in restaurant, café and food corners need to go through a minimum system of conformity assessment as such.

In the context of Bangladesh, there are 76 locally produced and 23 imported food items fall into the regulatory specifications that

need mandatory certification before release to the market. As a handsome as compared to other countries available in the market, most of the mandatory certification offers voluntary certification items that still does not meet the market. The newly formed Bangladesh should have all food items must go through conformity assessment to ensure safer and nutritious food for consumer protection, it is reliable and sustainable food chain management through implementation of conformity assessment including testing, inspection and certification to support supply, and certification and their manufacturer conformity assessment to ensure acceptable standard assurance of food safety in the entire food supply chain, through food packaging, storage and catering.

BAB is established as a competent, signatory, inspection bodies working in the country by itself. BAB is inter-regional and international as Asia Pacific Accredited (APAC) (formerly Asia Pacific Laboratory Accredited) since 2015, which has as a competent, signatory in that facilitate the accreditation products including food meeting the local requirements and removes regulatory and arbitrary national food export by improving and transparency in the chains.

BAB is very much active in providing accreditation services to food bodies in the country actively in improving Bangladesh.

*(The writer is Director (retired) of Bangladesh Ministry of Industries.)*