



The ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement



PURPOSE

The purpose of the ILAC Arrangement is to develop a global network of accredited testing and calibration laboratories that can be relied on to provide accurate results.

The ILAC Arrangement, which entered into effect on 31 January 2001, provides technical underpinning to international trade by promoting cross-border stakeholder confidence and acceptance of accredited laboratory data. Previously, there had been no international mutual recognition agreement in laboratory accreditation. This has been a hindrance for some types of international trade, particularly those products which have had to undergo re-testing or re-calibration upon entry to importing countries. The Arrangement should facilitate this trade.

BACKGROUND

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) first started as a conference in 1978 with the aim of developing international cooperation for facilitating trade by promotion of the acceptance of accredited test and calibration results. In 1996, ILAC became a formal cooperation with a charter to establish a network of mutual recognition agreements among accreditation bodies that would fulfil this aim. The ILAC Arrangement is the culmination of 22 years of intensive work.

Currently, 56 laboratory accreditation bodies of ILAC have signed the multi-lateral, mutual recognition arrangement (the "ILAC Arrangement") to promote the acceptance of accredited test and calibration data. (A list of these signatories is printed at the end of this brochure and can also be found on the ILAC website at www.ilac.org).

The "ILAC Arrangement" provides significant technical underpinning to international trade. The key to the Arrangement is the developing global network of accredited testing and calibration laboratories that are assessed and recognised as being competent by ILAC Arrangement signatory accreditation bodies. The signatories have, in turn, been peer-reviewed and shown to meet ILAC's criteria for competence. Now that the ILAC Arrangement is in place, governments can take advantage of it to further develop or enhance trade agreements. The ultimate aim is increased use and acceptance by industry as well as government of the results from accredited laboratories, including results from laboratories in other countries. In this way, the free-trade goal of "a product tested once and accepted everywhere" can be realised.

HOW DOES THE ARRANGEMENT WORK?

The Arrangement is based on the results of an intensive evaluation of each body carried out in accordance with the relevant rules and procedures contained in several ILAC publications.

Each accreditation body that is a signatory to the Arrangement agrees to abide by its terms and conditions and by the ILAC evaluation procedures and shall:

- ◆ Maintain conformance with ISO/IEC 17011 (and future versions thereof), related ILAC guidance documents, and a few, but important, supplementary requirements, and
- ◆ Ensure that all accredited laboratories comply with ISO/IEC 17025 (and future versions thereof) and related ILAC guidance documents.

The signatories have, in turn, been peer-reviewed and shown to meet ILAC's criteria for competence.

The ILAC Arrangement builds upon existing or developing regional arrangements established around the world. The bodies participating in these regional arrangements are responsible for maintaining the necessary confidence in accreditation bodies from their region that are signatories to the new ILAC Arrangement. Each recognized Regional Cooperation Body must abide by the procedures defined in ILAC requirements documents. Currently, the European cooperation for Accreditation (EA) and the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) are the only ILAC-recognized regions with acceptable mutual recognition arrangements (MRAs) and evaluation procedures. The Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC) and Southern African Development Cooperation for Accreditation (SADCA) are still developing their MRA evaluation processes before requesting recognition and approval by ILAC. Other regions being developed in other parts of the world are in their infancy. Bodies that cannot be affiliated with a recognised region may apply directly to ILAC for evaluation and recognition.

MAINTENANCE OF THE ARRANGEMENT

In order to maintain the value and meaning of the Arrangement, the signatories agree to notify each other about any significant changes in the status or operation of the body. Issues of significance include changes in name or legal/corporate status; new agreements negotiated with other

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accreditation bodies or the revision, suspension or termination of any agreements; changes in key senior staff or the organisational structure; or significant changes in the operations of the body. Each signatory to the Arrangement must also designate a liaison officer to afford a consistent channel of communication between the accreditation bodies.

FUTURE STEPS

Now that the Arrangement is in place, the next crucial step is for governments and industries to take advantage of this Arrangement. Governments can use it to further develop or enhance trade agreements. Another important step that is already underway involves government acceptance of the results from accredited laboratories. Regulatory agencies around the world are beginning to accept the results from testing and calibration laboratories that are accredited by bodies, such as the ILAC Arrangement signatories, without direct government review, including results from laboratories in other countries.

Many specifiers, like government agencies, have come to appreciate the importance of credible accreditation programs that are based on internationally recognised standards. With restricted budgets, many Government agencies can no longer do it all themselves; increasingly, they must rely on third-party laboratories to support their regulatory efforts. When they do so, they need a fair and meaningful basis for identifying qualified providers. Accreditation provides that and the Arrangement provides a means for recognition of acceptable accreditation bodies.

Industry users of test and calibration data similarly can take advantage of the ILAC Arrangement. Users will have greater confidence in the accuracy of the test or calibration report they are purchasing because it is been generated by a competent facility. This is particularly true for an educated client, one who is conscious of the scope of the laboratory's accreditation. Manufacturers also gain efficiency because of accreditation; instead of their own on-site assessments, they can defer to the assessments of competent accreditation authorities that are ILAC Arrangement signatories.

SUMMARY

The ILAC Arrangement builds confidence among accreditation bodies and their ability to determine a laboratory's competence to perform testing or calibrations. Confidence facilitates the acceptance of testing and calibration results between countries when the results can be demonstrated to come from accredited laboratories. This ultimately helps to reduce some technical barriers to trade. Through the ILAC Arrangement, the foundation for realising the ideal of having products “tested once and accepted everywhere” has been established.

MORE INFORMATION ABOUT ILAC

ILAC is the peak international authority on laboratory accreditation, with a membership consisting of accreditation bodies and affiliated organisations throughout the world. It is involved with the development of laboratory accreditation practices and procedures, the promotion of laboratory accreditation as a trade facilitation tool, the assistance of developing accreditation systems, and the recognition of competent test and calibration facilities around the globe. ILAC actively cooperates with other relevant international bodies in pursuing these aims.

ILAC also publishes a range of literature on topics covering accreditation, testing, trade facilitation and related subjects. Its internet site at www.ilac.org can provide a range of information on laboratory accreditation, as well as the location of its members world-wide. A brochure, entitled What Is ILAC?, provides detailed information on ILAC and its activities, and is available on request.

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ILAC encourages the reproduction of its publications, or parts thereof, by organisations wishing to use such material for areas related to education, standardisation, accreditation, good laboratory practice or other purposes relevant to ILAC's area of expertise or endeavour.



Signatories to the ILAC Arrangement

as at 1 November 2006



Argentina

Organismo Argentino de Acreditacion (OAA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Australia

National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Austria

Bundesministerium für Wirtschaft und Arbeit (BMWA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Belgium

BELAC
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Brazil

Diretoria de Credenciamento e Qualidade/Instituto Nacional de Metrologia,
Normalizacao e Qualidade Industrial (INMETRO)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Canada

Standards Council of Canada (SCC)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Canada

Canadian Association for Environmental Analytical Laboratories (CAEAL)
SCOPE: Testing

People's Republic of China

China National Accreditation Service for Conformity Assessment (CNAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Cuba

National Accreditation Body of Republica de Cuba (ONARC)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Czech Republic

Czech Accreditation Institute, o.p.s. (CAI)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Denmark

Danish Accreditation (DANAK)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Egypt

National Laboratories Accreditation Bureau (NLAB)
Scope: Testing and Calibration

Finland

Finnish Accreditation Service (FINAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

France

Comite Francais d'Accreditation (COFRAC)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Germany

Deutsches Akkreditierungssystem Profwesen (DAP)
SCOPE: Testing

Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle Chemie GmbH (DACH)
SCOPE: Testing

Deutscher Kalibrierdienst (DKD)
SCOPE: Calibration

DATEch Deutsche Akkreditierungsstelle Technik GmbH
SCOPE: Testing

Greece

Hellenic Accreditation Council (ESYD)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Hong Kong, China

Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

India

National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Indonesia

National Accreditation Body of Indonesia (KAN)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

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Signatories to the ILAC Arrangement

as at 1 November 2006



Ireland

The Irish National Accreditation Board (NAB)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Israel

Israel Laboratory Accreditation Authority (ISRAC)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Italy

Sistema Nazionale per l'Accreditamento (SINAL)
SCOPE: Testing

Servizio di Taratura in Italia (SIT)

SCOPE: Calibration

Japan

Japan Accreditation Board for Conformity Assessment (JAB)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

International Accreditation Japan (IA Japan)

SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Republic of Korea

Korea Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (KOLAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Malaysia

Department of Standards Malaysia (DSM)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Mexico

entidad mexicana de acreditacion a.c. (ema)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

The Netherlands

Dutch Accreditation Council (RvA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

New Zealand

International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Norway

Norwegian Accreditation (NA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Philippines

Philippine Accreditation Office (PAO)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Poland

Polish Centre for Accreditation (PCA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Portugal

Instituto Portugues de Acreditacao (IPAC)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Romania

Romanian Accreditation Association (RENAR)
SCOPE: Testing

Singapore

Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Slovakia

Slovak National Accreditation Service (SNAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Slovenia

Slovenian Accreditation (SA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

South Africa

South African National Accreditation System (SANAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Spain

Entidad Nacional de Acreditacion (ENAC)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

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As at 1 November 2006, there are 56 signatories to
the ILAC Arrangement



Signatories to the ILAC Arrangement

as at 1 November 2006



Sweden

Swedish Board for Accreditation and Conformity Assessment (SWEDAC) SCOPE:
Testing and Calibration

Switzerland

Swiss Accreditation Services (SAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Chinese Taipei

Taiwan Accreditation Foundation (TAF)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Thailand

Thai Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (TLAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Bureau of Laboratory Quality Standards, Department of Medical Sciences,
Ministry of Public Health, Thailand (BLQS-DMSc)
SCOPE: Testing

Bureau of Laboratory Accreditation, Department of Science Service, Ministry of
Science and Technology, Thailand (BLA-DSS)
SCOPE: Testing

Turkey

Turkish Accreditation Agency (TURKAK)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

United Kingdom

United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

USA

American Association for Laboratory Accreditation (A2LA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation program (NVLAP)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

International Accreditation Service, Inc (IAS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Assured Calibration and Laboratory Accreditation Select Services (ACLASS)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration

Vietnam

Bureau of Accreditation (BoA)
SCOPE: Testing and Calibration