



Memorandum of Understanding between ILAC and ICSCA

The International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation, (**ILAC**), the international forum for accreditation bodies which evaluate and recognise the competence of testing and calibration laboratories and inspection bodies world-wide, and supports international acceptance of testing and calibration data through a global, mutual recognition arrangement (MRA) between those of its members who have demonstrated compliance with international best practice,

and

the Industry Cooperation on Standards and Conformity Assessment (**ICSCA**), with participation of globally active enterprises from Europe, North America and Asia-Pacific, with the objectives of maintaining cost-efficient and reliable international standards and conformity assessment arrangements that foster international trade and innovation without unnecessary barriers, while protecting consumers' interests, needs and safety,

have agreed to cooperate based on the following:

Agreement on Principles

ILAC and ICSCA :

1. Recognise :

- the value of a sectoral approach to conformity assessment processes and to their global acceptance;
- that such conformity assessment approaches must be tailored to the needs of industry sectors and, where relevant, regulatory authorities and other specifying bodies. (Variations from sector to sector will reflect the nature of the risk, risk assessment and risk management, in each case based on open, transparent consultation with all stakeholders); and
- that ILAC has established a global Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) which commits signatory accreditation bodies to accept and promote the equivalence of accredited test data from all members of the ILAC Arrangement within their own economies, thus reducing or eliminating the need for repetitive testing of traded goods and services.

Historically, the existence of MRAs between ILAC members has already led to acceptance of foreign test data by a number of national regulatory bodies and further acceptance is being pursued in a number of regulated sectors, including the telecommunications, electrical and electronic goods, EMC, energy efficiency, pressure vessels, food, machinery etc sectors;

ILAC is committed to development of an additional global MRA for inspection bodies in conjunction with IAF with the objective of similar global acceptance of inspection data.

2. Support the objective "one standard, one test, accepted globally", on a sectoral basis, with options for first-party, second-party and third-party conformity statements.

"Accepted globally" means that conformity assessment results shall provide assurance of conformance that is consistent in meaning and substantiation to the global marketplace and suitable for its requirements, and do not require iterative local assessments.

3. Support the role of laboratory accreditation bodies, as a means for substantiation of the conformity assessment options identified above with respect to competent calibration, testing and inspection.

Conformity assessment schemes should employ the least onerous methods necessary to address public safety and other objectives to deliver the greatest benefit to the community. For certain sectors and coverage, accreditation of testing laboratories may be deemed necessary, and must be proportional to the risk to public health or to meet the intended objective, by offering greater substantiation of a first-party, second-party or third-party conformity assessment and subsequent conformity statement.

Where accreditation is believed to be of value by companies and regulators, the objectives must be to:

- Provide substantiation for a first-party, second-party or third-party conformity assessment process and subsequent conformity statement;
- Provide international acceptability from economy to economy of the laboratory and inspection body accreditation results;
- Keep the number of accreditations, tests, audits, and records to the minimum necessary to achieve objectives;
- Provide for flexibility in choosing conformity assessment service providers, including the geographic location of the testing laboratory.

4. Support ILAC as a model for acceptance of accredited laboratories and inspection bodies and test and inspection data worldwide in the voluntary and regulated areas.

5. Where an industry sector desires a greater role for laboratory and inspection body accreditation bodies in conformity assessment activities, support involvement of ILAC, and encourage expansion by those accreditation bodies presently not participating.

6. Support discussion between ILAC and other bodies involved in assessment of competence of laboratories and inspection bodies, with the objectives of providing complementary rather than duplicated processes and reducing multiple evaluations of affected laboratories and inspection bodies to reduce the overheads for verifying their competence.
7. Support outreach to promote international understanding and recognition of the global objectives of conformity assessment, and the benefits thereof.
8. Where accredited conformity assessment is mandatory, promote the ILAC MRA model in lieu of government-to-government bilateral agreements.

Signatures:

On behalf of ICSCA *[Signature]*

On behalf of ILAC *[Signature]*

Title *US Co-Chair ICSCA*

Title *ILAC-APC-Chair*

Date *27 February 2002*

Date *27 Feb. 2002*

