



ACCREDITATION COMMISSION FOR CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT BODIES

CAB Accreditation Advisory Document

Document Title: Advisory Document on Tenders For Systems, Processes & Product Certifications

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AD-7.1	Purpose:
AD-7.1.1	<p>The World Trade Organization (WTO)'s Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade takes a position that the objective of Conformity Assessment (CA) is to provide the parties with sufficient trust and confidence for commerce to occur. It further states that CA provides:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A way for consumers (and regulators) to gain confidence in the products and services offered by suppliers and differentiate between them; • A way for legitimate suppliers to build confidence in their products or services and differentiate themselves from competitors; • And this “process” – known as Brand Building – is critical to business survival because it ensures ongoing commerce.
AD-7.1.2	<p>However, there are wide spread misconceptions related to the CA such as testing , calibration , management systems, processes and product standards certificates/test and reports that these certification activities are mandatory, and accreditation & certification activities such as ISO 9001:2008, ISO 14001:2004, OHSAS 18001, ISO 22000:2005, ISO 17025:2005, ISO 15189:2012 etc are Government controlled.</p>
AD-7.1.3	<p>This advisory note makes a sincere attempt to put forward neutral information without any commercial bias.</p>
AD-7.2	Scope:
AD-7.2.1	<p>This advisory note is published for the informative use for the Conformity Assessment Bodies(Testing & Calibration Laboratories, Medical Laboratories, Inspection Bodies and Certification Bodies) accredited by the ACCAB, Certificated Organizations certified by the Certification Bodies accredited by the ACCAB, All ACCAB Accreditation Regime Stakeholders such as Private and Public Enterprises, Government Departments & Agencies, Trans National organizations, NGOs and the Global Communities of Businesses and Consumers.</p>
AD-7.3	Details:
AD-7.3.1	Introduction to ISO:
AD-7.3.1.1	<p>ISO (International Organization for Standardization) is the world's largest developer of voluntary International Standards. ISO is a network of national standards bodies. These national standards bodies make up the ISO membership and they represent ISO in their country.</p>
AD-7.3.1.2	<p>ISO develops International Standards, including management system standards such as ISO 9001, ISO 14001 and ISO 31000. ISO itself does not carry out conformity assessment. This is a matter of suppliers and clients in the private sector, and of regulatory bodies when ISO standards have been incorporated into public legislation. Certification is performed by external certification bodies/conformity assessment bodies, which are largely private. Therefore a company or organization cannot be certified by ISO.</p>
AD-7.3.1.3	<p>ISO is believed to take a stand that international standards give state of the art specifications for products, services and good practice and its standards which are</p>

	developed through global consensus help to make industry more efficient and effective and also help to break down barriers to international trade.
AD-7.3.1.4	<p>ISO on its website further states that a company may decide to seek certification for many reasons, as certification may:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a contractual or regulatory requirements; • Be necessary to meet customers preferences; • Fall within the context of a risk management programme, and • Help motivate staff by setting a clear goal for the development of its management system.
AD-7.3.2	Selecting Conformity Assessment Bodies:
AD-7.3.2.1	Conformity assessment is the process used to show that a product, service or system meets specified requirement .These requirements are likely to be contained is an ISO standard. But, ISO itself does not perform conformity assessments
AD-7.3.2.2	The main forms of conformity assessment are certification, inspection and testing. Although testing is the most widely used, certification is the best known.
AD-7.3.2.3	Conformity assessment activity in reality is nothing but a voluntary value added technical discussions between technically competent peers about list of things to do as per the consensus standard. It is believed to enhance the credibility of the organization undergoing conformity assessment. And having done that successfully, they get to use the LOGO of conformity assessment body.
AD-7.3.2.4	<p>ISO recommends that while choosing a conformity assessment body it is a good idea to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate several conformity assessment bodies; • Bear in mind that the cheapest could be more costly in the long run if it auditing/inspection/testing/calibration services is below standard; • Ask whether the conformity assessment body implements relevant standards (e.g. Management System Certification Body: ISO/IEC 17021:2011,Product Certification Body: ISO/IEC 17065:2012, Personnel Certification Body: ISO/IEC 17024:2012, Inspection Bodies: ISO/IEC 17020:2012, Testing & Calibration Laboratories: ISO/IEC 17025:2005, Medical Laboratories: ISO 15189:2012; • Ask whether conformity assessment body would be able to demonstrate that it is impartial and that it and its personnel are free from any undue commercial, financial or other pressures which might influence their technical judgement; • Check whether conformity assessment body is not engaged in any activities (e.g. providing consultancy services) that may endanger assessment activities.; and • Ask whether the body is accredited. Accreditation is not an obligation and if an organization is not accredited it does not necessarily mean it is not reputable. Nonetheless, accreditation remains an independent confirmation of competence.
AD-7.3.3	Selecting an Accreditation Body:
AD-7.3.3.1	Accreditation means third-party attestation related to a conformity assessment body conveying formal demonstration of its competence to carry out specific conformity assessment tasks

AD-7.3.3.2	Accreditation Body is an authoritative body that performs accreditation. Accreditation Body could be a private, government or government supported organization.
AD-7.3.3.3	Accreditation Body works for conformity assessment bodies. They are service providers to the conformity assessment bodies.
AD-7.3.3.4	If an Accreditation Body checks conformity assessment body's standards then it also must walk the talk by implementing its own quality management system as per the standard ISO/IEC 17011:2004 in order to provide competent accreditation services in impartial, ethical, professional and transparent manner.
AD-7.3.3.5	As per the Completion Appellate Tribunal (India) Order dated 17 th January 2014: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Accreditation business international and there are already several international bodies operating in India; 2. Accreditation Bodies are not required to be covered under any network of law and are free to grant certificates of accreditation to the laboratories in India, this also means that ACCAB does not require any permission, sanction or approval of any ministry/government department/agency to operate as an independent accreditation body; 3. All the government notification were prior to the business set up by ACCAB, and even in these notifications it is suggested that any other accreditation body comparable were acceptable to the government companies; 4. No Accreditation Body enjoy the monopolistic position as accreditation bodies in India as government supported accreditation bodies have no objection or have not indulged in activity to keep any competitors out of the market. And any-body including ACCAB would have an authority to act as the accrediting body provided such body has the necessary infrastructure.
AD-7.3.3	IAF and ILAC:
AD-7.3.3.1	International Accreditation Forum (IAF) is a membership organization. It is basically a consortium / association, incorporated in the State of Delaware in the USA. The corporate office is located at: 1013 Centre Road, in the City of Wilmington, County of New Castle, 19805. The authority of the IAF is not protected by any particular law or any piece of legislation. From the policy documents of the IAF posted on the IAF website, ACCAB understands that the IAF policies do not permit more than one accreditation body offering the same scope of accreditation from each country/economy.
AD-7.3.3.2	IAF in its communication to ACCAB has categorically mentioned that the IAF MEMBERSHIP IS NOT MANDATORY for any accreditation body and IAF is not aware of any statistical data or survey regarding the credibility of their members as well as non-members.
AD-7.3.3.3	IAF Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) is not protected by any particular law or any piece of legislation and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) of IAF is nothing but IAF members are supposed to recognize each other's work.
AD-7.3.3.4	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) is a membership association and its authority is not protected by any particular piece of legislation. ILAC Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) is not protected by any particular law or any piece of legislation and Mutual Recognition Agreements (MRA) of ILAC are nothing but ILAC

	members are supposed to recognize each other's work. ILAC in its communication to ACCAB has categorically mentioned that the ILAC MEMBERSHIP IS NOT MANDATORY for any accreditation body and ILAC is not aware of any statistical data or survey regarding the credibility of their members as well as non-members.
AD-7.3.3.5	The Government of India, Ministry of Commerce & industry Department of Commerce website provides details on various government to government trade agreements concluded by India. None of them refer International Accreditation Forum or International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Multi Lateral Recognition Agreements (MRA). Hence, it is very clear that Government of India does not recognize International Accreditation Forum (IAF) while signing the trade agreements. For example , a reference can be made to the COMPREHENSIVE ECONOMIC PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE REPUBLIC OF INDIA AND JAPAN posted on the said website of the Ministry of trade and Commerce, Chapter 5: Technical Regulations, Standards and Conformity Assessment Procedures, and Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures, Article 55: Mutual Recognition.
AD-7.3.3.6	ACCAB follows the international accreditation model, which was pioneered by the International Federation of Agriculture Movements (IFOAM) & subsequently followed by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC), Social Accountability International (SAI), International Automotive Task Force (IATF) and others. None of these accreditation bodies are the members of IAF.
AD-7.4	References:
AD-7.4.1	World Trade Organization www.wto.org
AD-7.4.2	International Organization For Standardization (ISO) www.iso.org
AD-7.4.3	International Accreditation Forum (IAF) www.iaf.nu
AD-7.4.4	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) www.ilac.org
AD-7.4.5	Accreditation Commission For Conformity Assessment Bodies (ACCAB) www.accab.org
AD-7.4.6	The Government of India, Ministry of Commerce & industry Department of Commerce website provides details on various government to government trade agreements concluded by India on the below mentioned links: http://commerce.nic.in/trade/international_ta.asp?id=2&trade=i
AD-7.4.7	The Competition Appellate Tribunal, Ministry of Corporate Affairs, Government of India, Appeal No. 03 of 2013/395 order dated 17 th January 2014 http://compat.nic.in/upload/PDFs/janordersApp2014/17_01_14.pdf