

APLAC is an organisation of laboratory accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific area that have expressed a desire to cooperate in fostering the development of competent laboratories in member economies.

Cooperation is to include:

- Exchange of information
- Joint training programs
- Proficiency testing
- Harmonisation of requirements
- Mutual recognition of systems meeting harmonised requirements

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APLAC also maintains an Internet site at:  
[www.aplac.org](http://www.aplac.org)

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## Message from editor



The October issue of APLAC News Notes (Issue No 076) is published by the Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) under the Directorate for Standards and Quality (STAMEQ).

This is an opportunity for BoA to introduce itself to other APLAC members through APLAC News Notes and I am pleased to present the activities of BoA to you.

STAMEQ plays the leading role in coordinating efforts to improve the quality environment in Vietnam. Accreditation is one of the major functions of STAMEQ, the organization that is in charge of activities on standardization, measurement and quality management in Vietnam. BoA aims to integrate its accreditation activities with those of other regional and international accreditation schemes.

With this issue, it is hoped that the publication of APLAC News Notes will help to disseminate information that will lead to increased accreditation cooperation both domestically and internationally.

*Dr Ho Tat Thang,  
Deputy General Director of STAMEQ  
Director of BoA*

## APLAC 2004 Technical Meetings and General Assembly

*Written by Ms Tran Thu Ha, Senior Officer of BoA*

The 10<sup>th</sup> General Assembly of the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) 2004 will be hosted by the Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) under the Directorate for Standards and Quality (STAMEQ) from Monday 5<sup>th</sup> to Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December, 2004 in Hanoi, Vietnam.

This is a great opportunity for exchanging views with colleagues and gaining fresh insights about various aspects of accreditation activity aspects which are of importance to everybody.

Members and interested parties should now have



received an invitation to the APLAC 2004 General Assembly and associated meetings in Hanoi. The information brochure and registration form can be downloaded from the APLAC website.

BoA looks forward to welcoming all of you to Hanoi, Vietnam and sharing with you our hospitality and beautiful city.

## Glance at Hanoi

### Hanoi Flying Dragon

Vietnam implemented its Doi moi (renovation) policy in the late 1980s and the strongly developed market economy is once again altering the face of old Hanoi.

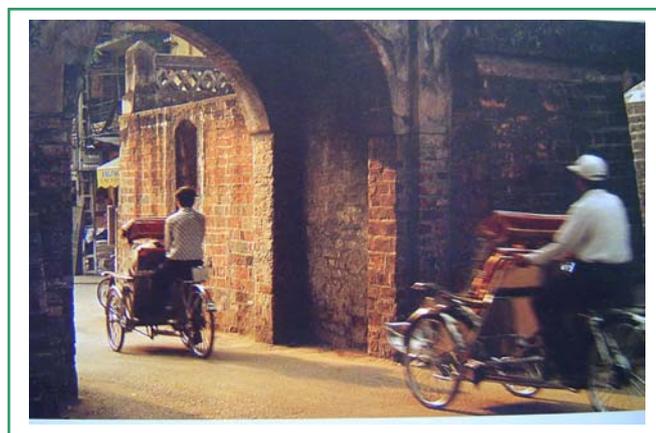
A vision of a golden dragon rising majestically into the heavens was the impetus for the founding of the city that the world knows today as Hanoi. Hanoi was settled hundreds of years ago, when a small fort was built on a commanding site beside the Red River, but it was not until 1010 that King Ly Thai To stepped off a boat there and had his transfiguring vision.

Not surprisingly, the inspired king christened his new capital Thang Long or City of the Rising Dragon. Subsequent dynasties endorsed his choice and the city grew to become the bustling centre of politics, commerce, culture and international business.

As urban incomes rise, Hanoians are investing in restoring and protecting the city's centuries-old streets and the green garden villas established at the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century, or building themselves big new homes in the ever-spreading suburbs.

Hanoi in the 21<sup>st</sup> century is living proof of the Vietnamese people's enduring ability to embrace any amount of outside influence without giving up an iota of their strong cultural identity. Luxury high-rise hotels, splendid buildings, romantic French style villas and ancient pagodas can be seen side by side in this ancient city.

Today, Hanoi is the capital of a rapidly modernizing nation that yet retains its traditional charms.



## Accreditation Activities in Vietnam

*Written by*

*Mr. Vu Xuan Thuy, Deputy Director of BoA*

*& Ms Tran Thu Ha, Senior Officer of BoA*

In recent years, the world economy is experienced sweeping changes through globalization and Vietnam has been very much part of this process. As a developing country, in the dynamic economy with high growth rate, Vietnam is trying best to integrate its' economy with other economies in the region and internationally. Goods made in Vietnam are competitive in the regional and international markets, and Vietnam is eager to minimize and overcome technical barriers to trade. One of the important means to achieving this goal is to promote accreditation activities and to become signatory of regional and international MRAs.

Accreditation activities in Vietnam started in 1990 after the issuance of an Ordinance on Product Quality. From 1990 to 1995, 56 different types of laboratories have been accredited against ISO/IEC Guide 25 by the Directorate for Standards and Quality (STAMEQ). By the end of 1995, and to promote international and regional integration on accreditation, the Ministry of Science Technology and Environment issued Decision No 1479/QD-TDC on the regulations for certification and accreditation activities. Also in 1995, the Ministry of Science Technology and Environment made a decision to establish the Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) under the Directorate for Standards and Quality. The Bureau of Accreditation is responsible for all accreditation activities in Vietnam, including the accreditation of testing and calibration laboratories, certification bodies, inspection bodies and auditor registration.

Vietnam understands the importance of accreditation activities to regional and international recognition, and has been active in involving itself in all the activities of regional and international accreditation organizations.

Vietnam is full member of International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) since 1992, a full member of Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) since 1995 and full member of Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) since 1995.

In August 1998, BoA applied to join the APLAC MRA. After assessment, VILAS was approved to sign the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement in October 2000, and the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement in November 2000 in the fields of testing and calibration. Participation in the APLAC MRA and ILAC MRA demonstrates that the VILAS scheme is internationally recognized, and helps underpin Vietnam's trade with the rest of the world.

To ensure the accreditation scheme operates objectively and with impartiality, while also meeting international best practice, BoA have developed and implemented a quality system conforming to ISO/IEC Guide 58 and Guide 61, set up Accreditation Technical Committees (TCs) and developed an auditor pool with a hundred trained and experienced experts for BoA's different types of accreditation programmes.

The accreditation activities of BoA are identified below:

### **Laboratory Accreditation**

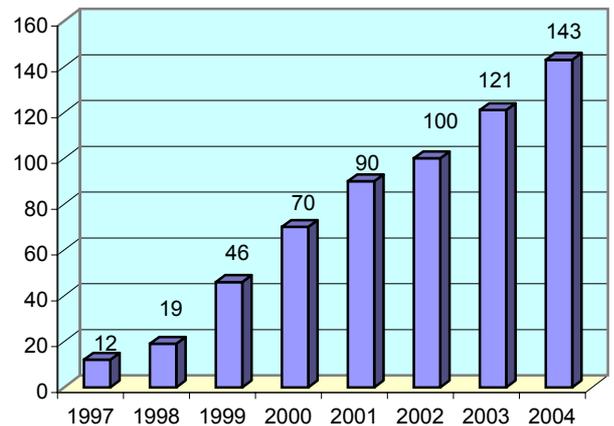
- The Vietnam Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (VILAS) managed by the Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) has been in operation for fourteen years. The aim of VILAS is:
  - ▶ To recognize the competence of laboratories in testing and calibration
  - ▶ To facilitate the recognition of testing/calibration results between laboratories

▶ To integrate the laboratory accreditation activities of Vietnam with those of other countries in the region.

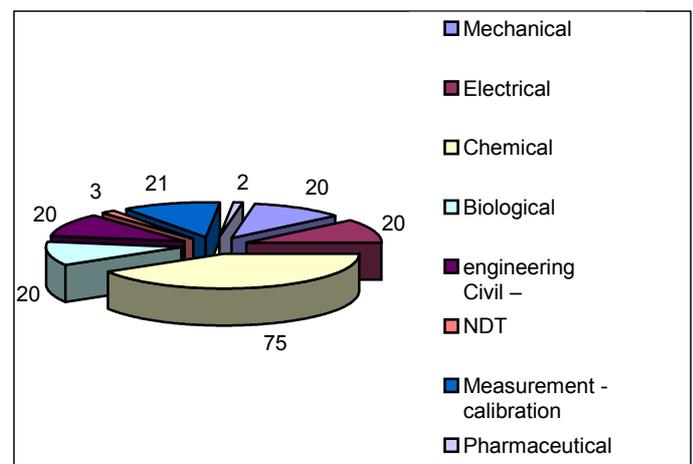
- In the past, the criteria of laboratory accreditation was ISO/IEC Guide 25. Since early 1999, when ISO issued ISO/IEC 17025 to replace ISO/IEC Guide 25, VILAS has accredited laboratories against the new standard ISO/IEC 17025. According to APLAC requirements, all accredited laboratories which complied with ISO/IEC Guide 25 had to make changes in order to comply with ISO/IEC 17025 by the end of 2002.
- In addition to general criteria, VILAS has published supplementary requirements for 8 fields of accreditation: Mechanical, Electrical, Chemical, Biological, Civil Engineering, NDT, Pharmaceutical and Measurement and Calibration. VILAS has granted accreditation to laboratories for the specific test/calibration of products/ materials based on standard test methods or non standard test methods, including in-house test methods. The in-house test methods vary and are in accordance with the individual technical capabilities of the laboratories. Besides TCVN, TCN, ISO, IEC, CAC standards, the laboratories also use test methods from developed economies such as ASTM, BS, JIST, AFNOR, DIN etc to meet the varies and changing requirements of customers.
- Proficiency testing/ inter-laboratory comparisons aims to determine the competence of testing and calibration laboratories; to improve and assure the quality of testing/ calibration performance, and is considered when VILAS assesses the technical competence of laboratories. BoA requires accredited laboratories to participate in APLAC and other local and international accreditation organizations PT programs.
- Now VILAS has accredited 151 testing/calibration laboratories.

*Number of accredited laboratories by year is as follows:*

Year	Lab No	Year	Lab No
1997	12	2001	90
1998	19	2002	100
1999	46	2003	121
2000	70	2004	143



*A break down by scope of accreditation is as follows:*



### **Accreditation for inspection bodies**

- The accreditation of inspection bodies is receiving more attention from international and regional accreditation organizations as well as national accreditation bodies. Many national accreditation bodies in the region are developing and launching accreditation schemes for their inspection bodies. In addition, a MRA for the accreditation of inspection bodies is being discussed and developed within ILAC & APLAC.

- In Vietnam, over the past couple of years, the number of inspection bodies has increased exponentially. Along with governmental agencies carrying out inspection functions for specific industries, there are many other independent private inspection bodies joining the inspection body program. However, fierce competition between inspection activities in the market sometimes affects the quality of inspection services and leads to a lack of confidence in the inspection bodies from regulators and other concerned parties. As a result, there is an urgent need for a mechanism to bring back the confidence in these activities. The establishment of an accreditation scheme for inspection bodies is one step toward this objective.
- The Vietnam Inspection Accreditation (VIAS) was launched in 2002. VIAS adopts the ISO/IEC 17020 “General Criteria for the Operation of Various Types of Bodies Performing Inspection” as its’ accreditation criteria. Currently four inspection bodies have been accredited. Recently, BoA has applied to APLAC for inspection to be included in its’ scope of the APLAC MRA. The VIAS scheme was assessed by an Evaluation Team in Sept 2004 and hopefully, BoA will soon have the inspection body VIAS scheme accepted and included in the APLAC MRA.
- Besides the two above Schemes, BoA also offers two other Schemes namely the Vietnam Accreditation Scheme for Certification Body (VICAS) and Vietnam Auditor Registration Scheme.
- The Vietnam Accreditation Scheme for Certification Bodies (VICAS) is developed with the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 61:1996 General Requirements for Assessment and Accreditation of Certification/Registration Body and other guidance documents of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF). At the moment, applicants for accreditation are limited to bodies

operating in the fields of quality management system certification and product certification. Currently, two certification bodies have been accredited.

- The Bureau of Accreditation (BoA) and Quality Society of Australasia (QSA) established a BoA-QSA Joint Auditor Registration Program in October 2001 to recognize those auditors who are competent in their field. QSA is a signatory to IATCA and has registered large numbers of auditors in Australia as well as worldwide. This is an opportunity for Vietnamese auditors to receive an internationally recognized auditor certificate from QSA. Currently, 17 auditors are registered.

## News from APLAC members

### News from TAF/CNLA, Taiwan

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To facilitate trade between Taiwan and EU, there was an international seminar on Technical Regulations, Standards and Conformity Assessment between Taiwan and EU at the National Taiwan University, Chinese Taipei on 23 – 24 September 2004. The seminar was organized by the Bureau of Standards, Metrology and Inspection (BSMI), Ministry of Economic Affairs (MOEA) and the European Economic and Trade Office, and supported by the MOEA and Directorate General Trade of the EU Commission.



The five sessions' topics during the one and a half day-seminar were "Introduction to Horizontal Legislation", "Market Surveillance Mechanism for Industrial Products", "Certification of Electrical and Electronic Products", "Automotive Certification" and "Accreditation".

There were more than 400 people in the audience including regulators, academic researchers and industry leaders, mainly from the Taiwanese region. Also, many international professionals flew to Taiwan especially for this event. Taiwan Accreditation Foundation/CNLA contributed to this seminar as an accreditation body to provide and exchange information regarding the accreditation system in Taiwan. Mr. Neng-Jong Lin, President of TAF, served as the moderator of "Accreditation" session, and Mr. Nigel Jou, Vice CEO of TAF, gave a speech on Taiwan Accreditation System. Mr Daniel Pierre, Chairman of European Cooperation for Accreditation (EA), also delivered a presentation on European Accreditation Systems. A good number of questions were proposed to speakers, especially Mr. Jou and Mr. Pierre, after their presentations. This shows a strong market need for closer relationships between Taiwan and EU to establish better trading circumstances for both sides.

Mr. Pierre was also invited to visit the TAF Taipei office and exchange opinions regarding how to assist individual accreditation bodies to improve their

relationships with WTO, APEC and EU. After discussions, we came to a conclusion of employing international accreditation recognition to help upgrade regulators' acceptance of individual accreditation bodies, and to promote mutual acceptance of regulators from different countries. TAF and EU intend to look for more cooperative opportunities and possibilities, such as Proficiency Testing and information security, in the future.

## News from IANZ, New Zealand

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### Accreditation may have a role in a Government to Government Agreement between New Zealand and China

In October 2003, the President of China, Hu Jintao led a trade delegation to New Zealand. A MOU was signed relating to cooperation on technical barriers to trade, between Li Changjiang, (Minister of the China Administration for Standardisation Quality Inspection and Quarantine - AQSIQ) and Jim Anderton (New Zealand Minister for Economic Development).

The MOU has provided impetus to discussions between New Zealand and Chinese Government officials with a view to developing systems to avoid the need for re-testing and re-inspection of products. The role that accreditation may play in this process is being considered.

### ILAC-IAF 2005 in Auckland, New Zealand

IANZ would like to remind readers that the "ILAC – IAF 2005" General Assembly will be held in Auckland, New Zealand, in September 2005. Full registration details will be made available on the ILAC and IAF websites later this year.

## News from DSS, Thailand

### Proficiency Testing Programs

In order to enhance the capability and to demonstrate competence of the laboratories in Thailand, the DSS hosted 6 PT programs from January to September 2004 as below:

Program Title	No. of Participating Laboratories
Chemical composition analysis of carbon and low alloy steel	24
Waste water analysis	
- Chemical oxygen demand (COD)	61
- Heavy metal (Cd, Pb)	41
Feeding stuffs	
- Proximate analysis (moisture, fat, protein, crude fiber and ash)	40
Calibration of volumetric flasks	
- 50 ml	22
- 100 ml	22
Calibration of vernier	12
Calibration of electronic balance	14

For the incoming fiscal year 2005 (October 2004 to September 2005) the DSS will be offering 14 PT programs as below:

Program Title	Commencing date
Feeding stuffs	
- Proximate analysis (moisture, fat, protein, crude fiber and ash)	March 2005
Tinplate	
- Tin Coating Weight	January 2005
Coals	
- Gross calorific value, Sulphur	
- Proximate analysis	April 2005
Medical rubber gloves	
- Tensile strength at break	
- Elongation at break	February 2005
Plastics	
- Tensile strength	
- Elongation	
- Modulus of elasticity	February 2005
Paper	
- Ring crush	
- Bursting strength	
- Thickness	
- Grammage	
- Tensile strength	
- Tearing strength	March 2005
Waste water analysis	
- Heavy metal (As, Cd, Hg, Pb, Se)	
- Suspended Solids	
- pH	January 2005
Aerobic plate count (starch)	November 2004
Calibration of volumetric flasks	November 2004
Calibration of Volumetric pipettes	November 2004
Micrometer resolution 1 $\mu$ m	December 2004
Dial gauge resolution 1 $\mu$ m	December 2004

## News from the APLAC Secretariat

*Helen Liddy, Janet Clark, Jane King*

*October 2004*

- A new document, APLAC SEC 051, Overview of APLAC Management System Documentation has been circulated to members for consideration. All members are encouraged to reply with any comments by 1 November 2004.
- APLAC SEC 050, Guidelines for APLAC MRA Signatories When Accrediting Laboratories or Inspection Bodies Within the Economy of another APLAC MRA Signatory was formally issued in August 2004. It can be viewed on the APLAC website, [www.aplac.org](http://www.aplac.org).

### **ILAC Survey on Transition to ISO 17011**

The Secretariat would like to thank all members who provided us with a copy of their response to the ILAC survey on transition to ISO 17011. Responses from APLAC members have been collated and will be tabled at the ILAC APC meeting in Cape Town.

### **Developing Countries Seminar at the ILAC/IAF meetings in Cape Town**

We encourage those attending the ILAC/IAF meetings in Cape Town to attend the Developing Countries Seminar on 14 October 2004, especially the APLAC members from developing economies. Past seminars of this type have been a valuable source of assistance to members and it is anticipated that this year's seminar will be equally valuable.

### **Call for Nominations for APLAC Office Bearers**

The call for nominations for APLAC office bearers has gone out. If you are submitting a nomination, please remember to copy it to the APLAC Secretariat.

### **Forthcoming General Assembly in Hanoi**

All members that have not already registered to attend the General Assembly meetings in Hanoi are encouraged to do so as soon as possible please.

We are looking forward to this meeting and catching up with APLAC colleagues and friends.