APLAC
As a Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

March 2009 APLAC News Notes Issue No. 98

APLAC is an organisation of accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific area that have expressed a desire to cooperate in fostering the development of competent laboratories, inspection bodies and reference material producers 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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The next issue of APLAC NEWS NOTES will be published in June 2009 by the Canadian Association for Laboratory Accreditation (CALA).

ACLASS Offers ENERGY STAR Accreditation

ACLASS (the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board/ACLASS) is now offering accreditation to U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) ENERGY STAR computer specification test methods.

EPA will require that any laboratory that wishes to conduct verification testing of ENERGY STAR qualified computers hold accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 as of July 1, 2009, pending the availability of accredited laboratories.

The purpose of verification testing is to provide regular checks on the ENERGY STAR self-qualification process by requiring impartial testing of ENERGY STAR qualified products in accredited laboratories. EPA will also require that such laboratories list the ENERGY STAR computer specification test methods on their scopes of accreditation.

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In This Issue

IAJapan Signs MOU on Transfer of Accreditation of NIMT with TLAS

On 1 September 2008, International Accreditation Japan (IAJapan) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on transfer of the accreditation of National Institute of Metrology (Thailand) (NIMT) with Thai Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (TLAS).

NIMT has been accredited by IAJapan since 23 June 2004, with financial support from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and technical support from National Metrology Institute of Japan (NMIJ), etc., under the six-year-long JICA-NIMT Project. The IAJapan's accreditation of NIMT has been used as evidence that it has competence to carry out calibration activities in accordance with a quality system that meets the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 when NIMT claims its CMCs (calibration and measurement capability) under the Mutual Recognition Arrangement of International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM-MRA).

Recognizing the existence of an internationally recognized competent accreditation body in Thailand and ILAC Cross Frontier Accreditation Guideline (ILAC G21), IAJapan has decided to transfer the accreditation of NIMT to TLAS.

National Institute of Metrology (Thailand)

This MoU will be expected to serve for smooth transition of the accreditation of NIMT to TLAS.

AIHA Forms Limited Liability Company

The American Industrial Hygiene Association (AIHA) announced February 9 that its legacy laboratory accreditation programs were reorganized into a separate limited liability company called AIHA Laboratory Accreditation Programs, LLC or AIHA-LAP, LLC. The LLC is a separate legal entity that while affiliated with AIHA, has its own governance, committees, policies, budgets, technical volunteers, and strategic advisors.

AIHA-LAP, LLC has assumed the role that AIHA once had for laboratory accreditation with programs that include the Industrial Hygiene Laboratory Accreditation Program, the Environmental Lead Laboratory Accreditation Program, the Environmental Microbiology Laboratory Accreditation Program, and the Food Laboratory Accreditation Program.

These accreditation programs will continue to be managed to conform to the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17011:2004 and testing laboratories seeking accreditation will have to continue to demonstrate conformance to the requirements of the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 in addition to program-specific requirements as detailed in AIHA-LAP, LLC's own policies. AIHA-LAP, LLC will be seeking to be part of both the APLAC and IAAC MRAs this year. A list of accredited laboratories by program can be found on the LLC's new web site at: www.aihaaccreditedlabs.org.

For more information on the AIHA-LAP,LLC, please contact Cheryl O. Morton, Director, AIHA Laboratory Accreditation Programs, LLC at (703) 846-0789.

Dr. Jay-San Chen, President of TAF (fourth from left) and Dr. Jen-Fon Jen, President of TSCST (middle).

MOU Signing Between TAF and TSCST

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed on 15 January 2009 between the Taiwan Accreditation Foundation (TAF) and the Taiwan Society for Chromatography and Separation Technology (TSCST), underscoring their commitment to work together to facilitate the harmonisation of standards and criteria relating to chromatography and separation technologies.

This partnership reflects the closer relationship between the TAF and the TSCST and the collaborative efforts to exchange expertise of relevant technical skills by means of co-sponsoring workshops/trainings, participating in each other's working groups and committees and building communication channels between both parties' manpower.

Both TAF and TSCST will strive for enhancement of accreditation capacity for chemical analysis laboratory and promotion of the quality of chromatography and separation technology related work.

Agreed Minutes Signing Between TAF and DSS

Following a series of successful cooperation experience in establishing PTP accreditation program in Thailand, TAF and DSS have now progressed to the point of forging a new cooperative relationship in a broader scope of accreditation related issues.

In Taipei, on 18th February 2009, Dr. Jay-San Chen, the President of TAF, and Mr. Pathom Yamkate, the Director General of DSS, signed an Agreed Minutes on behalf of both accreditation bodies, witnessed by Mrs. Arbhorn Manasvanich, the Executive Director of the Thailand Trade and Economic Office, and delegates from BSMI, TAF and DSS. The signing of the Agreed Minutes initiated an important step in performing work of mutual benefits, such as joint assessments for common customers, collaborations in technical issues of common interests and mutual promotion of accreditation acceptance by regulators within each other's country. It is hoped that such cooperation, with satisfactory experience, will lead to a degree of confidence sufficient to facilitate the possibility for signing a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) at some point in the future.

(Left to right) Mr. Pathom Yamkate, Director General of DSS, and Dr. Jay-San Chen, President of TAF.

NATA Launches Government Guide

The National Association of Testing Authorities, Australia (NATA) has launched a manual aimed at helping Australian Commonwealth, state, and territory governments understand the role of NATA accreditation in delivering safe and reliable products and services ranging from toasters to road construction to pathology results.

The manual, written by NATA, aims to assist in the development of sound policy, legislation, regulation, and specification in any instance where measurement, testing, and inspection are factors in reaching the government's objectives.

In launching the manual, NATA Chief Executive, Alan Patterson, said he hoped it would assist governments to draft better legislation to ensure safety and quality in the Australian way of life.

"We depend on technical reliability in everything we do," he said. "When we get up of a morning we assume the alarm has the correct time, the milk at breakfast isn't tainted, that the car's brakes work, even that the roads we drive on won't rapidly disintegrate.

"Almost every aspect of modern life depends on a technical test being carried out competently and reliably."

The Guide was launched in Hobart, capital of the state of Tasmania, on 24 February 2009, the same day NATA and the Tasmanian Government re-signed a memorandum of understanding. Tasmanian Premier David Bartlett said his government was proud of its strong relationship with NATA.

"Tasmania was the first state to enter into a formal agreement with NATA in 2003," Mr. Bartlett said. "Other states have since followed Tasmania's lead. The work NATA does with the laboratories and testing facilities under its auspices is vitally important to ensuring Tasmania remains a technologically advanced state."

"This manual does two things," Mr. Patterson added. "Firstly, it provides a detailed but clear background explanation of the importance and process of NATA accreditation, particularly in relation to meeting regulatory and legislative objectives. It explains the standards NATA uses, where the organisation fits within the broader standards and conformance infrastructure, and the benefits of NATA accreditation in terms of cost, productivity, and competitiveness

"We depend on technical reliability in everything we do. When we get up of a morning we assume the alarm has the correct time, the milk at breakfast isn't tainted, that the car's brakes work, even that the roads we drive on won't rapidly disintegrate."

"Secondly, it offers essential guidance for policy writers working within the processes described by the various Commonwealth and state regulatory practice guides. It highlights the importance of appreciating when to make NATA accreditation part of the regulatory framework, considering such factors as impact analyses and the availability of testing infrastructure and relevant standards."

NATA is distributing the manual, A Guide to using NATA Accreditation in Legalisation, Regulation and Specification, to governments throughout Australia.

JAS-ANZ Accredited Inspection Supports New Zealand Exporters

Steve Keeling, JAS-ANZ's Director Technical Services.

For the financial year ending June 2008 New Zealand's exports to ASEAN countries were valued at NZ$4589 million.[1] Of the commodities exported such as dairy products, honey, wood products, and edible fruits, many of those listed in the top 20 would have been inspected by a JAS-ANZ Accredited Inspection Body.

Some of the JAS-ANZ Accredited Inspection Bodies are approved by a number of New Zealand's regulatory authorities, including the New Zealand Food Safety Authority (NZFSA) and Biosecurity New Zealand (BNZ), to carry out a range of inspection activities, from food safety inspections through to phytosanitary export assurances.

"Accredited inspection based on the ISO/IEC 17020 standard is used as the basis for the export approvals of a variety of products. The inspection process helps exporters to ensure that their products meet the requirements of importing countries."

JAS-ANZ's Director Technical Services Steve Keeling (pictured above) commented "New Zealand regulators are strong supporters of accredited conformity assessment."

"Accredited Inspection based on the ISO/ IEC 17020 standard is used as the basis for the export approvals of a variety of other products as well, such as fruit and vegetables, live animals, and cut flowers. The Inspection process helps exporters to ensure that their products meet the requirements of importing countries."

As well as supporting exports, Accredited Inspection offers a number of other benefits. For instance, it means that that regulatory authorities are not required to fund and operate their own inspection teams; and that inspection activities are carried out by a specialist service provider whose competence and independence is regularly assessed by JAS-ANZ, and who operates in a competitive environment.

For more information on JAS-ANZ's inspection schemes visit www.jas-anz.org.

[1] http://www.asean.fta.govt.nz/value-of-nz-exports-to-asean

ACLASS Recognized for Defense Dept. Program

ACLASS (the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board/ACLASS) will be recognized as an Accreditation Body for the U.S. Department of Defense (DOD) Environmental Laboratory Accreditation Program (ELAP). The official announcement was to be made 1 April 2009.

The program was established in December 2008. Recognition is based on ACLASS's status as a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) and review of ACLASS documentation. ACLASS and other participating accreditation bodies are also required to submit an assessor training plan and conduct satisfactory training of your assessors prior to performing ELAP assessments.

ACLASS representatives attended a presentation on program requirements and detailed training at the end of March

Personnel from 12 accreditation bodies took part in a training course for peer evaluators at A2LA headquarters.

Peer Evaluator Training Course at A2LA

Twenty-two enthusiastic personnel from 12 accreditation bodies took part in a training course for peer evaluators on 16-18 March at A2LA headquarters. The course was jointly sponsored by APLAC and IAAC.

Developed and led by Ned Gravel of CALA, the course covered the requirements and processes of peer evaluation primarily for APLAC, but also included IAAC, PAC, ILAC and IAF documents. Randy Dougherty of ANAB, Ramona Saar of NIST, and Roxanne Robinson of A2LA assisted Ned in facilitating the course.

Although A2LA's main meeting room was quite cramped with the large turnout, the participants absorbed the mountain of information quite well. A deeper appreciation of the nuances of ISO/IEC 17011 was gained through various group exercises. The role of a member of a large peer evaluation team and the challenge of managing it successfully was covered. The writing of findings was also emphasized. APLAC and IAAC each have gained at least ten new evaluators. The participants are looking forward to future assignments as team members for peer evaluations in their respective regions. A2LA wishes them well.

ACLASS Grants First Proficiency Testing Provider Accreditation

ACLASS (the ANSI-(the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board/ACLASS) has granted its first certificate and scope of accreditation for a proficiency testing provider. Miller & Weber, Inc., will now provide specialized proficiency testing services for calibration laboratories that routinely certify/ calibrate liquid-in-glass thermometers, electronic thermometers, and hydrometers.

Miller & Weber is an ISO/IEC 17025 accredited calibration laboratory (accredited by ACLASS) with an ISO 9001:2000-certified liquid-in-glass thermometer manufacturing facility. The company will fill a role where there are currently few or no proficiency test artifacts.

Miller & Weber personnel are considered experts in the field of liquid-in-glass thermometry. Miller & Weber president Deanne Miller is currently the chairman of ASTM subcommittee E20.05 on liquid-in-glass thermometers and hydrometers. He is also active on all of the other subcommittees of ASTM E20 on Temperature Measurement.

ACLASS Offers ENERGY STAR Accreditation

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"ACLASS is pleased to work with EPA in providing accreditation for the ENERGY STAR program," Keith Greenaway, ACLASS Vice President, said. "In doing so, we participate in a valuable process that delivers the technical information and tools that organizations and consumers need to choose energy-efficient solutions and best management practices."

"[In working with EPA], we participate in a valuable process that delivers the technical information and tools that organizations and consumers need to choose energy-efficient solutions and best management practices."

A joint program of EPA and the U.S. Department of Energy, ENERGY STAR is a voluntary labeling program designed to identify and promote energy-efficient products to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The ENERGY STAR label can now be found on major appliances, office equipment, lighting, home electronics, and more. EPA has also extended the label to cover new homes and commercial and industrial buildings.

ENERGY STAR is a government-backed symbol providing valuable, unbiased information to businesses and consumers. The label appears on thousands of products for the home and office that deliver the same or better performance as comparable models while using less energy and saving money.

ACLASS Moves to New Office in DC Suburb

ACLASS (the ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board/ACLASS) has moved its headquarters to Alexandria, VA. ACLASS was previously based in Arlington, VA. Both Alexandria and Arlington are suburbs of Washington, DC. The move gives ACLASS more than twice the office space it had at its previous location.

The new ACLASS offices are located in Alexandria, VA.

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