

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

APLAC NEWS NOTES is published six times a year to facilitate the exchange of information among members and interested parties. It is not copyrighted and may be reproduced in full. Excerpts should reference **APLAC News Notes** specifically. Wide copying and distribution are encouraged.

APLAC also maintains an Internet site at: www.aplac.org

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This issue is published by

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The next issue will be published in **March 2007** by **CNAS, China**

News from BLA-DSS

1

Signing ceremony of ILAC MRA



Mrs. Suchin Srikongsri, Deputy Director-General of the Department of Science Service signing the ILAC MRA. On her right is Mr. Daniel Pierre, ILAC Chair

The Bureau of Laboratory Accreditation, Department of Science Service (BLA-DSS), Ministry of Science and Technology, Thailand has been accepted as a signatory to the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) for Testing since 23 August 2006 and signed the ILAC MRA on 12 November 2006 during the Joint General Assembly IAF/ILAC 2006 in Cancun, Mexico.

2

Benefits of laboratory accreditation from BLA-DSS



Dr. Saksit Tridech, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology met the press.

On 14 July 2006, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Dr. Saksit Tridech, was interviewed by the press about the importance of laboratory accreditation and the signing of the APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (APLAC MRA) of the Bureau of Laboratory Accreditation, Department of Science Service (BLA-DSS). Following the signing, test results issued by laboratories accredited by the BLA-DSS are recognized by regulators, buyers and consumers in APLAC member states.

Moreover, in October 2006, the BLA-DSS conducted a customer survey on benefits of laboratory accreditation and the results of the survey showed that test reports issued by most laboratories accredited by BLA-DSS have been accepted within the country. Responding accredited laboratories indicated that domestic and overseas customers have recognized them and their customers have been increased after they have been granted accreditation.

1

BLQS/DMSc To Launch Forensic Laboratory Accreditation in March 2007

The Bureau of Laboratory Quality Standards (BLQS) under the Department of Medical Sciences (DMSc) of Thailand organized a meeting on forensic laboratory accreditation on 16-18 November 2006. The BLQS/DMSc was also honoured to have Professor Dr. Hanjucrgen Bratzke, Director of the Department of Forensic Medicine, Germany, an expert under the technical cooperation program from Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt (PTB) of Germany giving his lecture on How to Assess Forensic Laboratory and Accreditation Procedure at this event. The discussion helped the BLQS/DMSc prepare for launching a new area of accreditation program for forensic laboratory according to ISO/IEC 17025:2005 in March 2007.

2

Regulators Recognize BLQS/DMSc Accreditation

Since laboratory accreditation is voluntary in Thailand, laboratories are not required by laws to be accredited. However, BLQS/DMSc accreditation is successfully recognized by certain regulators as an evidence of competence to carry out testing for mandatory purposes. For example, the Food and Drug Administration under the Ministry of Public Health accepts the BLQS/DMSc's and its MRA signatories' accredited test reports as a means of compliance. In addition, the National Bureau of Agricultural Commodity and Food Standards under the Ministry of Agriculture and Cooperatives uses the BLQS/DMSc accreditation as a means of compliances as well.

2
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Prof. Hanjucrgen Bratzke sharing his experience in assessment of forensic laboratory.



Enthusiastic responses were received from Thai relevant agencies.



THAI INDUSTRIAL STANDARDS INSTITUTE
MINISTRY OF INDUSTRY

News from TLAS/TISI

An Integrated Strategy on the Development of Entrepreneurs and Testing Laboratories

Introduction

The continual enforcement of EU measures and technical regulations on environment has made a considerable impact on the export of the Thai industrial products. The entrepreneurs will have to try to adapt their manufactured products with the EU measures and technical regulations so as to maintain their competitiveness in the EU market.

To maintain their competitiveness in the world market particularly the EU market, the entrepreneurs have to improve their overall procedures from designing process, manufacturing process, testing and product certification by taking into account environmental-friendly concept. In doing so, it is essential to ensure that the necessary infrastructure such as the knowledge on Eco-Design, competent testing laboratories for chemical and other products as well as accreditation schemes is already available.

According to a study, some infrastructure development in terms of prototype laboratory preparation or service providers with limited scopes has already been done by various agencies. However, a considerable effort is still needed to improve further such infrastructure focusing on the transfer of knowledge from prototype laboratories to entrepreneurs and the expansion of service scopes to meet the real needs of industry, rapidly and reliably. Infrastructure development in this area requires financial support as well as good coordination among relevant agencies. Realizing its leading role in this area, the Ministry of Industry has developed an integrated strategy on the development of entrepreneurs and testing laboratories. The three-year strategy (2007-2009) consists of two immediate action plans namely: *Action Plan on Enhancing the Capability of Entrepreneurs* and *Action Plan on Developing Competency in Laboratory Testing based on EU Regulations*.

The key responsible agency is the Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI) in cooperation with relevant organizations including the Department of Science Service, the Electrical and Electronic Institute, the Thailand Textile Institute, the Thailand Automotive Institute, the University of Chiang Mai, the University of Burapa, and the National Metal and Materials Technology Center.

Objectives

1. To upgrade the capability of the Thai entrepreneurs in adapting their production methods to the EU regulations and requirements.
2. To improve the competency of testing laboratories based on the EU accepted requirements.

Planned Programmes

1. Establishment of the knowledge bodies relating to the EU environmental measures such as Eco product, Eco-design, Life Cycle Assessment, Cleaner technology and Eco-labeling. The knowledge will be transferred to specific institutions and entrepreneurs.
2. Increase of the capability and preparedness of the Thai entrepreneurs to comply with some EU regulations such as RoHs, REACH, ELV and CE marking.
3. Development of laboratory competency to test according to the EU regulations. The prototype laboratories will serve two functions including testing as well as technology transferring to commercial laboratories and entrepreneurs. The prototype testing laboratories will be located in major provinces of Thailand to facilitate testing and to lower the costs for the entrepreneurs. In addition, ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and OECD GLP will be used as two basis documents by the prototype laboratories in order to elevate their competency and to be a good basis for future negotiation on mutual recognition agreements between Thailand and the EU.

Conclusion

Realizing the impact of the new EU directives and regulations on the competitiveness of the Thai entrepreneurs in the EU market, the Ministry of Industry has initiated an integrated strategy on the development of entrepreneurs and testing on the development of entrepreneurs and testing laboratories for the years 2007-2009. According to the strategy, the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and of OECD GLP will be implemented by the prototype laboratories to test or certify the product in compliance with the EU measures and technical regulations. It is hopeful that the facilitating mechanism of ILAC and APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) will help to promote mutual confidence between regulatory bodies of the trading partners. laboratories for the years 2007-2009. According to the strategy, the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2005 and of OECD GLP will be implemented by the prototype laboratories to test or certify the product in compliance with the EU measures and technical regulations. It is hopeful that the facilitating mechanism of ILAC and APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) will help to promote mutual confidence between regulatory bodies of the trading partners.

News from SAC

The Singapore Accreditation Council is celebrating its 10th Anniversary and 20 years of national laboratory accreditation in Singapore.

As the national accreditation body in Singapore for conformity assessment services, the Singapore Accreditation Council's (SAC) primary function is to upgrade the competence of conformity assessment bodies and facilitate market access for products made by Singapore-based organisations. Through the years, the SAC has strengthened the conformity assessment infrastructure in Singapore with the introduction of new schemes and extended existing ones to meet the needs of our industries.

The Singapore Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (SINGLAS) was set up in 1986 to build up our expertise in laboratory services and to support the manufacturing and service industries with export potential. Since then, SINGLAS has accredited 223 laboratories.

In 1996, the SAC was set up to champion all accreditation activities in Singapore, including certification and laboratory services. The SAC, hence, took over the administration of SINGLAS as part of the process integrating all the programmes on accreditation of conformity assessment activities under one roof.

Accreditation by the SAC is akin to holding a global passport which can help to access international markets. This is made possible by the strong network the SAC has established with international accreditation bodies. The SAC has since 1997 signed numerous multilateral mutual recognition arrangements and participated actively in the various regional and international fora on conformity assessment activities.

- **19 Nov 97** - Signed the inaugural Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) MRA for laboratory accreditation
- **5 Nov 98** - Signed the MRA with Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) for Quality Management System (QMS) certification
- **29 Sep 99** - Signed the MRA with International Accreditation Forum (IAF) for QMS certification
- **27 Mar 00** - Signed the Bilateral MRA with the European Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation (EA) for laboratory accreditation
- **2 Nov 00** - Signed the inaugural multilateral International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) MRA for laboratory accreditation
- **6 Sep 01** - Elected as a member of the PAC Executive Committee
- **9 Apr 01** - Signed a letter of understanding for technical cooperation with the Ministry of Development, Brunei Darussalam.
- **11 Mar 02** - Signed the MRA with the International Auditor and Training Certification Association (IATCA) for QMS Auditor

- **29 Aug 02** - Signed the agreement with the College of American Pathologists for the joint accreditation of medical testing laboratories
- **1 Jan 03** - Elected as a member of the APLAC Board of Management
- **13 Nov 03** - Signed the inaugural APLAC MRA for inspection body accreditation
- **Jul 04** - Elected as a member of the PAC MRA Management Committee
- **1 Jan 05** - Appointed as the APLAC Treasurer

Over the years, the number and scope of the SAC accreditation programmes have expanded in tandem with the growing needs of the industry. From one single scheme applicable to five industries 20 years ago, today, the SAC has a stable of eight main schemes impacting enterprises in all industries in Singapore that require conformity assessment services to demonstrate compliance of quality and standard to their customers.

Programmes that we offer:

- **Certification Body accreditation schemes:**
 1. Quality System Certification (extended to cover bunker supply)
 2. Environmental Management System Certification
 3. Product Certification
 4. Occupational Safety and Health Management System (OSHMS) Certification
 5. Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP) based Food Management System Certification
 6. ISO 22000 Food Safety Management System Certification
- **Laboratory accreditation schemes:**
 1. Calibration & Measurement
 2. Chemical & Biological Testing
 3. Civil Engineering
 4. Environmental Testing
 5. Electrical Testing
 6. Mechanical Testing
 7. Medical Testing
 8. Non-destructive Testing
- **SAC-CAP Joint accreditation programme for medical testing**
- **Inspection Body accreditation schemes:**
 1. Pressure Vessels & Lifting Equipment Inspection
 2. Motor Vehicle Inspection
 3. Structural Steel Work Inspection

Today, the SAC accreditation is well recognised both in Singapore and internationally. All thanks to our pioneers and group of dedicated volunteers and assessors, who have helped to develop, reshape and grow the accreditation to its present status. The SAC will not rest on its laurels and will continue to strive to meet any new future challenges.



The SAC hosted the APLAC MRA Council Meeting and APLAC Board of Management meeting in May 2006. APLAC members were invited to celebrate the SAC 10th Anniversary on 23 May 2006.



The SAC secretariat at the celebration of Singapore 40th Years of Quality and Standards.

1 News from NATA

60 years of accreditation

Next year NATA marks the sixtieth anniversary of the first NATA Council meeting, and the establishment of what is now the world's longest standing accreditation body.

NATA is also the world's first national laboratory accreditation organisation, and came into being when NATA Council held its first meeting at CSIRO Head Office, East Melbourne, Victoria on 5 to 6 February, 1947. Other countries were unaware of, or did not show an interest in, laboratory accreditation until the mid 1960s. NATA's place in the history and development of laboratory accreditation is therefore an important one.

There are a variety of ways in which NATA will be marking this special year, not least of them through articles in NATA News. Perhaps you are an assessor who has been doing assessments for more years than you care to remember. Perhaps you are a NATA member who was among the first to be accredited in Australia in your field of expertise. Or perhaps you are new to NATA, but have some things to say about where you think the organisation should be in the future. Maybe you are none of the above: but you do have some photos relating to NATA and its activities from the past six decades. In all cases, we'd like to hear from you.

NATA News will be running a series of stories throughout the year featuring NATA's history, the valued contri-

bution to NATA made by volunteer assessors, and the increasingly diverse membership of NATA.

If you have a story to tell, please contact NATA News via corpcom@nata.asn.au.

2

Len's long way 'round - A NATA assessor's cancer pledge

NATA assessor Len Ferrari drove into Martin Place, Sydney, in late September after a gruelling road journey across Australia from Perth.

With a name like his, you'd think Len would be making the journey in something sleek and fast. But however you describe the golf buggy he was driving, sometimes at speeds allegedly approaching 30 kph, sleek and fast are not words that come to mind.

The NSW North Coast grandad started out from Perth on 23 August, and reached Sydney on 25 September for the Channel 7 Sunrise program. He was assisted by a support team comprising wife Carmel, and friends Col and Patty Hassett, along with Alex and Pauline Robinson.

Len, who said he could be distantly related to the great Enzo, says the hardest part of the trip was dodging the semis, the flies, and trying not to be bored while sedately trundling down the Nullabor.

If your head is now buzzing with questions like "Why bother?" Len has a few answers. A grandad with osteo arthritis, Len found the humble golf buggy a useful means of getting around the golf course in his home town of South West Rocks. A new natural medicine regime has all but cured him of his limp, but also got him thinking about how much could a golf buggy do? Combine that with Len and Carmel's parents who had more than their fair share of dealings with cancer, and Len decided to do something worthwhile for the Cancer Council - hence the continental crossing.

Len's buggy is due to be auctioned off shortly (courtesy of Yamaha) to raise much needed funds for the Cancer Council, and he hopes to encourage NATA accredited laboratories donating this worthy cause.

Len has been a NATA assessor for more than 30 years. His company, Team Ferrari, measures air pollution and audits other companies who do the same (they are the independent air quality auditors for the Lane Cove Tunnel project).

Although an electric golf cart is as about as unpolluting as you can get, Len says its not without its problems. To gain that extra mile out of his batteries, he had to try to shed some weight. And the fact

the batteries had to be recharged after every few hours meant long and frequent pit stops.

To further help Len raise the funds he is after, go to www.cancercouncil.com.au/ssl/donation5.cfm and click on the Community Fundraising box and type in FU/06/018 Golf Cart across Australia or EFT through the Team Ferrari Adventures Inc. (No INC9883738) account to the NAB, BSB 082-781, Acc No. 79-208-4619. You can see the event website at www.TeamFerrari.biz then go to Team Ferrari Adventures.

3 On the road again - why NATA staff sometimes drive a long way

Carnarvon, Western Australia, is as far off the beaten track as many might care to venture but was merely the starting point of some recent NATA staff travel for assessments.

Lesley Mair, a scientific officer with NATA's Perth Office, had to conduct a technical assessment 250k east of Carnarvon recently. That's about five-and-a-half-hours by four-wheel-drive.

The job was to conduct a technical assessment of the non destructive testing (NDT) operations on the Alinta owned Dampier to Bunbury Gas Pipeline. The client, Australian NDT Services, is responsible for conducting automated ultrasonic testing on the pipeline to check the integrity of the pipe welds.

Preparation times for such assessments can include a lot of paperwork, but in this instance Lesley found it also included having to complete a one day occupational 4WD course. The course consisted of two classroom sessions and two practical sessions. The classroom sessions were generally a run through of driver safety, covering such things as the effects of alcohol and speed, pre-empting potential hazards, road rage as well as 4WD theory. The practical sessions were conducted on dirt, gravel and totally off-road terrain.

"It really was good fun but was a bit of a shock finding out just how many bad habits I've picked up over the years," Lesley said.

"The only other precaution taken was to hire a satellite phone. Although we didn't have to use it, it was good to know that we could get in touch with someone if need be. We did of course stock up on water and nibbles...just in case."

This was Lesley's first trip out to a pipeline and she says she was lucky she went with an experienced assessor. Bob Kimmins has worked on numerous pipeline projects and was able to keep Lesley on the straight and narrow with regards to pipeline etiquette.

"He was great-professional but good fun as well. I think we share the same sense of humour which is essential when you're on a five-and-a-half hour drive in the middle of nowhere.

Lesley says this type of assessment doesn't come along all that often. NATA staff and assessors however are expected to go wherever they are needed for assessments, so in one way it was all in a day's work for Lesley.

"It was two very long, tiring days but a great experience," she said.

News from The APLAC Secretariat

Incorporation of APLAC

We are delighted to announce that APLAC was incorporated in New Zealand on 18 October 2006. Upon incorporation, the APLAC Constitution came into effect. The Constitution, APLAC SEC 052 - Issue 1 - 10/06, is available on the APLAC website www.aplac.org.

Thank you

Peter Unger's term as Immediate Past Chair of APLAC ends this month.

The Secretariat staff would like to express their personal thanks to Pete for his very generous contributions to APLAC over many years. At different times Pete has held the position of APLAC Chair, MRA Council Chair, and has been a member of the Board of Management and various APLAC Committees. In each of these roles Pete has enthusiastically contributed his

extensive accreditation knowledge to APLAC. He will be greatly missed.

Chang Kwei Fern's term as a member of the APLAC Board of Management and APLAC Treasurer ends this month also. We would like to express our thanks to her for her contributions to the Board over the last 4 years and for her diligent supervision of the APLAC accounts.

Signing of MOUs

The MOU between APLAC and PAC was signed by Tony Russell on behalf of APLAC and Elva Nilsen (Chair of PAC) on behalf of PAC at the recent ILAC/IAF 2006 meeting in Cancun.

The MOU between APLAC and APMP is scheduled to be signed in mid- December 2006 at the APMP annual meeting in Delhi.

Thank you to the members who contributed to the discussions and comments on the texts of these 2

MOUs.

Forthcoming Meetings

The next meetings of the APLAC MRA Council and Board of Management will be held in the week 16-20 April 2007, most probably in Shanghai. The following week a 3 day training course for evaluators who have not yet done a course based on ISO/IEC 17011 will be held from 23-25 April in the same venue.

APLAC 2007 will be held in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia (hosted by DSM) on 2-7 December 2007.

APLAC documents

Please see the APLAC website, www.aplac.org for the current version of APLAC documents, especially the APLAC Constitution.

Another year past

We would like to thank everyone who has contributed to APLAC in 2006. It has been another busy and successful year for us all.

We wish everyone a peaceful festive season and all the very best for 2007.

Helen Liddy, Jane King, Janet Clark
APLAC SECRETARIAT

The survey also took place in 2002 (Berlin) and 2004 (Cape Town). The 2006 (Cancun) survey results reveal improved regulatory acceptance of accreditation and acceptance of the ILAC MRA over the period 2002- 2006. The number of survey respondents in the General Acceptance category (green) increased from 41% in 2002 to 55% in 2006. Conversely, the number of respondents in the Limited Acceptance (orange) category decreased from 34% in 2002 to 32% in 2006, and in the Limited Acceptance (red) category, decreased from 24% in 2002 to 11% in 2006.

The results were pleasing with more accreditation bodies reporting an increase in the interest of regulators to accept accredited test and inspection reports, and also an increased acceptance of test and inspection reports from ILAC MRA signatories' laboratories and inspection bodies.

Regulators need confidence that businesses comply with regulations. A cost effective means of ensuring this confidence is provided through accreditation. In some instances, regulators will accept manufacturer's self declaration. In others, regulators may require accredited test and inspection results. Sometimes the regulators may do their own assessment of laboratory or inspection body compliance. In some instances the regulator may even require product certification (product compliance with a particular standard), or may require evidence of certification to ISO 9001.

Where accurate test and inspection reports are required, the most cost effective, transparent and non-discriminatory assurance of compliance is by accepting test and inspection reports from accredited laboratories and inspection bodies where the accrediting body is a signatory to a Mutual Recognition Arrangement such as the ILAC MRA or the APLAC MRA.

Ian Roy
Manager, International Affairs and Government Liaison
International Accreditation New Zealand

News from ILAC

ILAC survey on regulatory acceptance of accreditation and the ILAC MRA (2006)

An ILAC survey on regulatory acceptance of accreditation was conducted in late 2006 by the ILAC Marketing and Communications Committee (MCC) and the findings displayed at the ILAC General Assembly held in Cancun, Mexico, during November 2006.

Signatories to the ILAC MRA were asked if regulators in their economies required and/or accepted accredited laboratory and/or inspection body reports. ILAC MRA signatories were also asked if regulators in their economies accepted laboratory and/or inspection body reports from MRA partners. The survey results indicate significant growth in the acceptance of accreditation by domestic regulators as well as improved recognition of the ILAC MRA.

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