



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

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National Laboratory Accreditation in Thailand

Throughout the world today, laboratory accreditation has been increasingly recognized as an effective tool to remove technical barriers to trade as well as to better quality of life. In Thailand, the Thai Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (TLAS), the pioneer scheme, was established in 1987 to support the product certification activities of the Thai Industrial Standards Institute (TISI). With the introduction of the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade of the World Trade Organization (WTO), TLAS has extended the scope of its accreditation to cover all testing and calibration laboratories in 1993 to increase the competitiveness of the Thai products in the foreign market. Later on in 1997, the other scheme was set up by the Bureau of Laboratory Quality Standards (BLQS) to accredit specific purpose testing laboratories in the field of medical and health products.

TLAS was established by the resolution of the cabinet in 1987 under the responsibility of TISI, the national standards body of Thailand. TLAS is funded by the government and operates on a non-profit basis. The scheme is voluntary and the scope of the activities covers all fields of testing and calibration laboratories. The Industrial Product Standards Council is responsible for granting, suspending and withdrawal of accreditation certificates by a recommendation of the technical subcommittee. The Council appointed six technical subcommittees to be in charge of different testing areas:

- SC 1 : Construction material, metal product, engine, electrical appliance
- SC 2 : Plastics, rubber, resin, glue, chemical substance, soap, detergent, cement, glassware, petroleum product
- SC 3 : Food, agricultural product, animal product
- SC 4 : Textile, cloth, wood product, paper product, medical instrument and device, sports facilities, office automation
- SC 5 : Environment
- SC 6 : Calibration in all fields

TLAS signed the APLAC MRA on 25 October 2001 during the 19th APLAC General Assembly held in Beijing, China. Then on 3 November 2001, during the ILAC General Assembly held in Kyoto, Japan, TLAS signed the ILAC MRA with the scope covering all fields of testing and calibration.

To comply with the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 58 and to fulfill APLAC MR 001, the first proficiency testing programme (PT programme) of TLAS was launched in 1997 for measurement of DC 10 volts. The following programme on the measurement of platinum resistance thermometer was launched in 1999. The participants of both programmes included the accredited as well as the non-accredited laboratories. Last year, three PT programmes were organized for mass, pressure and dimension. The number of participants were ten each for the first two programmes and twelve for the other.



As of August 2002, sixty-five testing laboratories and twenty-nine calibration laboratories have been accredited by TLAS. The accredited laboratories' names and their scopes of accreditation are published in TISI web-site at www.tisi.go.th and also in the published directory. However, as ISO/IEC Guide 25 will be replaced by ISO/IEC 17025, the accreditation certificates previously issued in accordance with ISO/IEC Guide 25 will be discontinued by 31 December 2002 which is the transition period.

Apart from TLAS, the other scheme was set up by the Bureau of Laboratory Quality Standards (BLQS), an organization established by the Royal Decree in July 1997 under the Department of Medical Sciences, Ministry of Public Health to act as the national accreditation body for testing laboratories in the area of medical and health products. The scope of the accreditation scheme includes physical, chemical, biological and clinical testing for food, beverages and water, pharmaceutical products, cosmetics, medical devices, toxic household products and clinical specimens.

The requirements and conditions for accreditation are documented in the "Policy, Requirements and Conditions for the Accreditation of Health Laboratories". The Laboratory Accreditation Committee appointed by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health comprises all necessary stakeholders. The Committee is responsible for granting, suspending and withdrawal of accreditation certificates as recommended by its technical subcommittees.

Since 1998, BLQS has granted accreditation certificates to seventeen health product testing laboratories and four medical testing laboratories. The names and the scopes of accreditation of the accredited laboratories can be found in the Department of Medical Sciences web-site at www.dmsh.moph.go.th and in the published directory.

BLQS operates in accordance with the requirements of ISO/IEC Guide 58 and APLAC MR 001 and is being evaluated to become APLAC MRA signatory. It has conducted proficiency testing programmes in all disciplines of medical laboratories services. The first PT programme in clinical chemistry area was organized in 1978 (before the establishment of BLQS). At present, a variety of programmes are being conducted in clinical chemistry, immunology, microbiology, hematology, microscopy and blood banking. As all programmes are voluntary and free of charge, they can attract participation from hundreds of laboratories. Among the most successful PT programmes was the Regional External Quality Assessment Scheme in blood group serology and transfusion transmissible infectious agents under WHO SEAR in 2001 which was participated by sixteen laboratories from ten countries. All PT programmes were considered to be a significantly supportive activity to the accreditation activity of BLQS.

Since 1998, BLQS has extended its accreditation scheme to clinical laboratories which provide health certificates to Thai residents going to work overseas. The accreditation criteria is based on some elements of ISO/IEC Guide 25 and some additional technical criteria excluding the requirement for a quality manual. This accreditation programme is established for specific purpose in response to the local need. Although it falls outside the scope of APLAC MRA, the accreditation programme has contributed significantly to the public health in terms of upgrading the clinical laboratories in this area. Ninety laboratories have already been accredited under this programme.

In 1993, the National Accreditation Council (NAC) was established by the resolution of the cabinet to be in charge of the Thai accreditation system which consists of five schemes as follows:

- Accreditation for quality management system certification
- Accreditation for environmental management system certification
- Testing and calibration laboratory accreditation
- Inspection body accreditation
- Accreditation for auditor registration and training course provider

For the third scheme, NAC cooperates and harmonizes the laboratory accreditation activities performed by TLAS and BLQS.

Sharing the same goal of upgrading the technical competency of the local testing and calibration laboratories to the international standards, the national accreditation system which comprises TLAS and BLQS has contributed to the competitiveness of the Thai products in the world market and the better quality of life of the Thai people.



ILAC/IAF General Assemblies and Conference on Accreditation in Global Trade

The second ILAC/IAF General Assemblies and Conference on Accreditation in Global Trade was hosted by DAR in Berlin, Germany during 16-27 September 2002. On this occasion, IPQ from Portugal and BMWA from Austria were accepted as new signatories to the ILAC MRA for testing and calibration. The signing ceremony was arranged on 22 September 2002.

SAC-CAP Joint Accreditation Program

On 29 August 2002, the Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC) and the College of American Pathologists (CAP) signed an Agreement to jointly operate the SAC-CAP Laboratory Accreditation Programme for medical laboratories in Singapore. The signing was held in conjunction with the SAC Annual Award Presentation 2002 held at Mandarin Singapore. The guest-of-honour, Mr. Cedric Foo, Minister of State for Defence and Deputy Chairman of SPRING Singapore officiated the ceremony.



Mr. Lew Syn Pau, Chairman of SAC and Dr. Ronald Lepoff, Chairman, Commission of Laboratory

Accreditation represented SAC and CAP respectively in the signing. This joint programme is opened to all medical testing laboratories in Singapore that meet the criteria of accreditation. The objectives of the Joint Accreditation are :

- To give recognition to medical laboratories with demonstrated capability and competence
- To improve and maintain the standard of medical testing and related activities in Singapore
- To facilitate the recognition of test results in overseas including United States

As the Agreement is the first that CAP has signed outside the United States, this partnership will enhance the credibility of the SAC's Laboratory Accreditation Scheme in the field of medical testing. CAP and SAC are committed to meet the needs of the laboratory community and bring value to those who are in the Joint Programme. Some of the benefits that laboratories can enjoy are:

- Enhanced credibility
- Evidence that the laboratory has been assessed by an independent panel of specialists and deemed competent in specific fields of testing
- Increased confidence amongst the users of the test data provided
- Continuous improvements in technical expertise through interaction and exchange of knowledge with other specialists

The criteria used for accreditation will be the Standards for Laboratory Accreditation of the College of American Pathologists, ISO/IEC 17025 (or the ISO 15189 when published), SAC-SINGLAS Medical Technical Notes 001 and 002. A customised checklist will be used for the joint accreditation programme. Interested applicants may contact the Programme Secretariat, Singapore Accreditation Council at Tel : (65) 62791858 or Fax : (65) 6272 1937

APLAC General Assembly 2002

Members and interested parties should by now have received an invitation to the APLAC General Assembly 2002 and associated meetings, to be held in Vancouver, Canada in the week 10-15 November 2002. The information brochure and registration form can be downloaded from the APLAC website.



APLAC PUBLICATIONS LIST

Most of the following APLAC documents are available from the APLAC web site. They can also be emailed out by the APLAC Secretariat as PDF files.

Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Secretariat, 71 – 73 Flemington Road, North Melbourne, VIC 3051, Australia. Tel: +61 3 9329 1633; fax: +61 3 9326 5148; email: aplac@nata.asn.au

APLAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement Council

APLAC MR001	Procedures for Establishing and Maintaining Mutual Recognition Agreements Between Laboratory Accreditation Bodies
APLAC MR002	Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement
APLAC MR003	Application for Signatory Status in the APLAC Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangement (APLAC MRA)
APLAC MR004	APLAC MRA Council Working Group on Evaluation Performance – Policy and Procedures

APLAC Nominations Committee

APLAC NC001	APLAC Nominations Committee and the APLAC Nomination Process
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APLAC Proficiency Testing Committee

APLAC PT001	APLAC Calibration Interlaboratory Comparisons
APLAC PT002	APLAC Testing Interlaboratory Comparisons
APLAC PT003	APLAC Proficiency Testing Directory

APLAC Public Information Committee

APLAC PR001	APLAC Publications Numbering Policy
APLAC PR003	Procedure for Adoption of APLAC Documents
APLAC PR007	APLAC – Its Role and Structure – PowerPoint Presentation
APLAC PR008	International Recognition of Accredited Test and Inspection Reports
APLAC PR009	APLAC Procedures for Editors of <i>APLAC News Notes</i>

APLAC Secretariat

APLAC SEC001	APLAC Memorandum of Understanding
APLAC SEC004	APLAC Rules of Procedure
APLAC SEC009	APLAC Publications List
APLAC SEC014	APLAC: Background and Recent Developments ¹
APLAC SEC017	APLAC Application for Membership
APLAC SEC020	APLAC General Assembly Delegates List
APLAC SEC021	APLAC Board of Management Membership List
APLAC SEC022	APLAC Committee Chairs and Secretaries List
APLAC SEC023	APLAC MRA Council Membership List
APLAC SEC026	APLAC Nominations Committee Membership List
APLAC SEC027	APLAC Public Information Committee Membership List
APLAC SEC028	APLAC Proficiency Testing Committee Membership List
APLAC SEC029	APLAC Technical Committee Membership List
APLAC SEC030	APLAC Training Committee Membership List
APLAC SEC035	APLAC MRA Signatories List
APLAC SEC036	APLAC Complaints Handling Procedures
APLAC SEC037	APLAC Document Control and Document Format
APLAC SEC038	APLAC Membership Summary List
APLAC SEC039	APLAC MRA Signatories Summary List
APLAC SEC040	APLAC Procedure for Issuing Invoices for Annual Fees
APLAC SEC041	APLAC Guidelines for Hosts of the APLAC General Assembly and Associated Meetings (only available from the Secretariat)

APLAC Technical Committee

APLAC TC001	APLAC-EA Policy on Traceability of Measurements (withdrawn, 1 September 2002; replaced by ILAC P10)
APLAC TC002	APLAC Internal Audits for Laboratories
APLAC TC003	APLAC Management Review for Laboratories
APLAC TC004	APLAC Method of Stating Test Results and Compliance with Specification

APLAC Training Committee

APLAC TR001	APLAC Guidelines on Training Course for Assessors
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¹ This document is updated on a constant basis and is available from the APLAC Secretariat upon request.