

Joint Statement from ILAC and IAF Chairs

Joint Statement by Randy Dougherty, Chair IAF, and Pete Unger, Chair ILAC

Accreditation: Delivering Confidence in the provision of energy



World Accreditation Day will be commemorated on June 9th, 2014. This year will focus on the role that accreditation plays in providing confidence in the provision of energy. Energy provision encompasses attempts to meet the needs of the world's current population without negatively impacting future generations. It involves the extraction, transmission, generation, distribution and storage.

First, it is imperative to reflect on the importance of energy provision. Energy is an oft-overlooked necessity for daily tasks and activities. Society has grown heavily dependent on the convenience and luxury that is obtained through the harnessing of energy. Additionally, the number of households and businesses using energy will continue to increase as the world becomes more industrialized.

As the demand for energy grows, methods for harnessing, storing and sharing energy need to be enhanced. There is immense pressure put upon all responsible parties to implement these methods instantaneously. However, it is in the best interest of the majority to verify that these methodologies are safe. Regulators are tasked with the efficient provision of energy as well as ensuring the safety of their end users. This is accomplished in part by requiring accreditation of laboratories, inspection bodies and certification bodies.

Specifically, laboratories are used to identify performance of devices used in the harnessing and periodically in the dispersal and monitoring of both traditional and renewable energies. Laboratory testing is used to check the purity and quality of fuels. It is also fundamental to the proving of new technologies such as tidal and wind (or solar) energy. Safety inspections are carried out on a range of energy-related installations, from coal-fired power stations to nuclear installations to wind farms. Energy suppliers are certified to demonstrate that their processes and procedures are appropriate, and to declare their environmental credentials. In turn, certification to ISO 50001 can help businesses improve energy-related performance and identify energy reduction opportunities.

Accreditation of laboratories, inspection bodies and certification bodies ultimately provides assurance to consumers, business, government and regulators. Through the standardization and regulatory process, coupled with accreditation, consumers and businesses are assured that they are purchasing a quality product that is safe, can be utilized for its intended purpose, and meets energy efficiency goals.

How do we do this effectively? How do we know what is right and what is wrong? Testing, inspection and certification are ways to ensure that a clear line is drawn between the methodologies and activities that are right and wrong with respect to energy provision. Accreditation of the organizations that are performing these tasks ensures a consistent and reliable approach, which will in turn result in an industry that is conducive to the needs of the consumer and the environment.

Laboratories, inspection bodies and certifiers who maintain accreditation from ILAC and/or IAF Arrangement Signatories benefit from thoroughly vetted accreditation processes. As signatories to these arrangements, the accreditation bodies deem each other equivalent. Trade barriers are reduced through the efforts and activities of these arrangements because there is confidence created in the end product. The results of testing, inspections and certifications, produce both consumer and regulatory confidence in products moving between markets. Because of the stated and verified equivalency, it allows manufacturers to test a product once, rather than multiple times, in the process of seeking regulatory approvals and moving it across borders.

Major events, press campaigns, workshops and seminars will take place in conjunction with the celebration of World Accreditation Day in over 90 countries to raise awareness of the value that accreditation plays in providing confidence in the provision of energy. For further details, contact your local accreditation body.

A promotional brochure to celebrate the day is available for download from the ILAC and IAF websites, and a short promotional film is also available for download on the IAF and ILAC Youtube channel <http://www.youtube.com/user/IAFandILAC>.