

ISO signs updated MoU with IAF and ILAC to strengthen cooperation

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ISO has signed an updated Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) strengthening their cooperation on accreditation.

The MoU, signed on 27 October 2008, updates an MoU reached in 2004. The new agreement provides the three organizations with a mechanism to collaborate with each other at the strategic and planning levels, in addition to the work already being carried out at the technical level.



ISO Secretary-General, Alan Bryden (centre); ILAC Chairman, Daniel Pierre (left), and IAF Chairman, Thomas Facklam, express their resolve for the three organizations to work hand-in-hand.

Accreditation is the formal recognition by a specialized body – an accreditation body – that a certification body, an inspection body or a testing laboratory is competent to perform its activities. It is an important and recognized option for generating confidence in international trade. It involves the evaluation and recognition of operators involved in testing, calibration and inspection, as well as in assessing the conformity of products, services, management systems and personal competence, based on International Standards and Guides developed by ISO and its partner, the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). Today, there are approximately 40 000 laboratories accredited to ISO/IEC 17025.



IAF and ILAC are international groupings of national accreditation bodies and both cooperate with ISO/IEC in developing conformity assessments documents within the ISO Committee on conformity assessment, ISO/CASCO. The MoU confirms ISO/CASCO as the primary body within ISO for the interface with the international accreditation community.

In addition, the MoU will continue to consolidate practices that are largely already implemented by ISO, IAF and ILAC and enable ISO to better manage and monitor the relationships of its various components with the international accreditation community.

It provides an ongoing mechanism for technical cooperation between ISO and international accreditors in order to contribute to the development and subsequent implementation of ISO/IEC Standards and Guides.

The MoU's main implementation methods include involvement in each other's technical work, the continuation of the Joint Working Group that considers policy and operational issues within accreditation as they arise, and the confirmation of complaint exchange procedures to ensure action is undertaken by one or more of the relevant organizations. The Joint Working Group includes representation by the IEC Conformity Assessment Board and ISO technical committee ISO/TC 176, which is responsible for the widely implemented ISO 9000 family of standards for quality management. Approximately one million accredited certificates of conformity to the ISO 9001 standard have been issued to organizations in 175 countries.

Extracted from: <http://www.iso.org/iso/pressrelease.htm?refid=Ref1187>.