



Joint IAF-ILAC-ISO Communiqué

Accreditation bodies worldwide to conform to new International Standard

ISO/IEC 17011:2004, *Conformity assessment -- General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies* was published on 1 September 2004. It replaces:

- ISO/IEC Guide 58:1993, *Calibration and testing laboratory accreditation systems -- General requirements for operation and recognition*;
- ISO/IEC Guide 61:1996, *General requirements for assessment and accreditation of certification/registration bodies*; and
- ISO/IEC TR 17010:1998, *General requirements for bodies providing accreditation of inspection bodies*.

Accreditation body members of the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) have agreed that their members shall meet the requirements of the new standard before **1 January 2006**. This decision was taken at the recent IAF and ILAC annual meetings in Cape Town, South Africa, with the collaboration of ISO.

In establishing this date IAF and ILAC undertook a comprehensive survey of their membership and stakeholders. This survey found that:

- existing signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) or the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) will be in a position to meet all the requirements of the new standard by the end of December 2005;
- that a short transition period was suitable as many members have been aware of, and have had input into, the standard's development;
- accreditation bodies believe the most significant impact on their current operations will be from adjustments that are necessary to conform to the strengthened requirements on impartiality;
- that the ILAC membership had resolved and communicated as early as 2000 that ILAC MRA signatories shall meet the impartiality requirements in the new standard by the end of 2005 at the latest; and
- a majority of members and stakeholders have supported 1 January 2006 as the date for the expiry of the transition period.

Fulfilment of the requirements in ISO/IEC 17011 by this date will be a prerequisite for accreditation bodies to be signatories to the IAF Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) or the ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA). These arrangements allow for the mutual recognition of conformity assessment results from accredited management and product certification bodies, and accredited testing and calibration laboratories. This international mutual recognition contributes to world trade through reducing the cost and time in undertaking import and export activities, and is included in the World Trade Organization Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade.

A more general press release on ISO/IEC 17011 is available on ISO Online <insert link>.



ISO/IEC 17011:2004, *Conformity assessment – General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*, costs 97 Swiss francs and is available from ISO national member institutes (see the complete [list](#) with contact details) and from ISO Central Secretariat ([Web store](#) and sales@iso.org). The new standard was developed by CASCO's working group WG 18, *Accreditation*, in partnership with the IEC (International Electrotechnical Commission).