

Accreditation of Testing Laboratories

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Overview

- ◆ Why laboratories get accredited
- ◆ The laboratory accreditation marketplace in the United States
- ◆ The role of NVLAP in the US accreditation system

Why Do Labs Get Accredited?

- ◆ Improve quality of operations
- ◆ Regulatory and industry requirements
- ◆ Reduce 2nd party audits
- ◆ Acceptance of data
- ◆ Third party endorsement of competence
 - Distinction in marketplace
 - Listing in directory

Lab Accreditation Situation in US

- ◆ 150+ Accreditation Bodies
- ◆ Run by all levels of government and private sector (for-profit and not-for-profit)
- ◆ Varied scopes (Range from narrow, sector specific to multi-discipline)
- ◆ NIST has responsibility for coordination

NACLA - National Cooperation for Laboratory Accreditation

- ◆ Structure and process based on regional MRA organizations
- ◆ Stronger role of specifiers (government and industry) and stakeholders
- ◆ 6 signatories to MRA, several more in various stages of recognition process
- ◆ Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with NIST

Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs)

◆ What they do

- ◆ Provide means for recognizing competent ABs
- ◆ Provide basis for mutual recognition of accreditations and results among ABs and economies
- ◆ Support some trade agreements and facilitate trade by reducing the need for retesting in importing economy

◆ What they don't do

- ◆ Guarantee validity of individual test or calibration reports
- ◆ Supercede any government or industry requirements

Role of NVLAP in US Accreditation System

- ◆ Established in 1976
- ◆ Provides option of a government administered program
- ◆ Programs developed in response to:
 - Legislative or administrative action
 - Requests from private sector entities and government agencies
- ◆ For requested programs, availability of relevant private sector programs considered

Conclusions...

- ◆ Laboratory accreditation is a valuable tool for:
 - Providing confidence in the quality of data used to support decisions in public and private sectors
 - Facilitating trade
- ◆ The laboratory accreditation infrastructure in the US is complex, with both private and public sector activity

Contact Information

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