

ACCREDITATION – A Tool to Support Public Policy

The Irish National Accreditation Board, INAB, supports government across a wide range of policy areas, we believe that an even greater use of accreditation could be made in the future to benefit government, business and consumers.

INAB accreditation can be applied to any policy area in which there is a requirement for compliance to be assessed. INAB is prepared to work with any department or agency to consider if accreditation can support in the delivery of a specific policy.

WHO IS INAB?

The Irish National Accreditation Board is the sole national body with responsibility for accreditation of laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies in Ireland.

It provides accreditation in accordance with the relevant International Organisation for Standardisation ISO 17000 series of standards and guides. It was established in 1985 and is part of the Health and Safety Authority.

WHY INAB ACCREDITATION?

INAB accreditation determines the technical competence and integrity of organisations offering conformity assessment services such as testing, certification, inspection and calibration based on international standards.

Accreditation can thus be used to verify compliance with a standard. Accreditation is an impartial and objective process carried-out by third-parties, i.e. INAB. Further information on INAB and its range of activities can be found on www.inab.ie

HOW CAN ACCREDITATION SUPPORT GOVERNMENT?

Accreditation can be used to support government policy in different ways.

Government can:

- encourage the use of standards to deliver policy,
- sponsor the creation of a standard for a particular purpose,
- work with an industry to develop a standard or code of practice, or a means of determining compliance that involves other parties in setting standards and authorising the activity.

Accredited conformity assessment provides this assurance of compliance with such standards. Further information on accreditation supporting public policy may be found at <http://www.publicsectorassurance.org/>



WORKING WITH GOVERNMENT *Case Studies*

The value of accreditation has been recognised and used to support government in the following areas.

INAB ACCREDITATION SUPPORTS... *Road Safety*



In specifying conditions for the provision of the national car testing service (NCT), the Road Safety Authority required that the preferred provider would have accreditation as an inspection body. In 2012, Applus Car Testing Services Ltd was awarded accreditation by INAB to the international standard ISO 17020 for a range of car inspection procedures.

Road safety for all users is enhanced by successful prosecution of drivers under the influence of alcohol and/or drugs.

These prosecutions are underpinned by a testing laboratory accredited to ISO 17025.

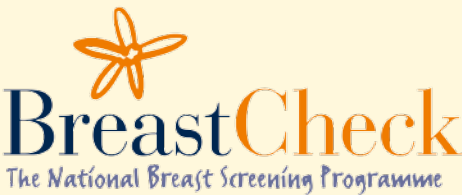
Results issued from an accredited laboratory are considered reliable.

INAB ACCREDITATION SUPPORTS... *Environmental Quality*



Accreditation has long been used as a means to demonstrate environmental performance, both nationally and at a European level. Data collected and monitored by agencies such as the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is produced by accredited testing laboratories (water and air quality, radioactivity in food and vegetation), inspection bodies (asbestos, ionising radiation facilities), certification bodies (end of waste), verification bodies (greenhouse gas emissions) and calibration bodies (instrument calibration for monitoring air quality, radiological survey and contamination equipment). The reliance of accredited services by government provides assurance to the public.

INAB ACCREDITATION SUPPORTS... *Healthcare*



In recent times, accreditation has become recognised as a valuable tool supporting the healthcare sector in Ireland. The medical laboratory testing standard, ISO 15189 provides assurance and confidence in laboratory test results used in patient diagnosis.

The Health Protection Regulatory Authority (HPRA), in implementing European legislation on blood transfusion service, introduced a requirement in 2008 that all medical testing laboratories operate to ISO 15189.

Since then, INAB has accredited over 60 laboratories to this standard for a range of pathology testing. Accredited medical testing also supports national cancer screening programmes, including BreastCheck and CervicalCheck.

INAB ACCREDITATION SUPPORTS... *Business*



Accreditation is evident in a wide breadth of business sectors in Ireland. Private enterprise implements public policy in assuring the quality of Irish goods and services which can be traded internationally, facilitated through the recognition and acceptance of accreditation. Examples are many:

- Company management systems (ISO 9001, ISO 14001, ISO 27001) certified by an accredited certification body.
- Energy consumption managed through a certified management system (ISO 15001).
- Product safety verified by accredited inspection and certification bodies.
- Food quality confirmed by accredited certification bodies, inspection and test laboratories.

CAN WE HELP YOU?

With the growing use of INAB accreditation by government, we recognise there are still many areas in which greater use could be made. INAB accreditation can be applied to any policy area in which there is a requirement for compliance to be assessed.

If you think INAB accreditation could help in the delivery of policy in your department, please contact us.

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