



Laboratory Accreditation 101

ASTA Workshop Panel
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Topics

- Laboratory accreditation concepts
- What does an accreditation body do
- Benefits of accreditation



What is Laboratory Accreditation?

Accreditation is the formal recognition by a third-party body that a laboratory is competent to perform specific tests (which are detailed in a scope of accreditation) in a reliable, credible and accurate manner.



Key Words

- Third party
- Formal recognition
- Competence to perform
- Specified tests



Concepts

- Confusion between accreditation and certification
- Accreditation addresses competence of organizations
- Certification deals with compliance of systems, products, or people to specified requirements



Concepts

- With accreditation:
 - Actual performance matters
 - Personnel change matters
 - Impartiality matters



Accreditation Assessment Tools

- Document reviews
- Periodic on-site assessments
- Ongoing proficiency testing
- Feedback from laboratory customers



Accreditation Requirements

- Accreditation must be objective and impartial.
- Accreditation Bodies (ABs) must use highly professional, skilled assessors and technical experts in the relevant fields of testing.
- All AB employees must be reliable, ethical and competent in following accreditation processes.
- National standard to accredit labs: ISO/IEC 17025
- National standard for ABs: ISO/IEC 17011
- ASTA export/import contracts require ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation



Who benefits from Accreditation?

- Regulators
- Trade facilitators
- General public
- Industry
- Accredited laboratories



Regulatory Benefits

- Leverages limited resources
- As a means of market regulation
- Provides confidence in the results
- Avoids the need to set up equivalent oversight infrastructure



Trade Facilitator Benefits

- One means for overcoming technical barriers to trade
- Provides a technical foundation for government-to-government trade arrangements
- Assists in conformity assessment infrastructure building in developing economies



General Public Benefits

- Provides confidence in the quality of results
- Addresses regulators' interests in health and safety, environment, security and other societal protection and performance requirements
- Uses accreditation bodies as a professional, independent and objective referral organization in cases of complaints and disputes.



Industry Benefits

- Ensures valid results during development, manufacturing, delivery and distribution of products
- Underpins domestic/international trade
- Overcomes technical barriers to trade
- Reduces risks and liability exposure



Accredited Lab Benefits

- Saves the need for duplicate assessments by their customers
- Improves processes
- Reduces risks and liability exposure
- Increases credibility (marketing tool).



Results of Accreditation

- Enhances confidence in test certificates and conformity statements
- Enhances quality of results by ensuring:
 - Traceability to international measurement standards
 - Comparability of results across borders
 - Validity and fitness for purpose





Thank you for your attention

Questions????

