



Participation in MRAs/MLAs

The global marketplace and the international standards supporting it are the key to Canada's future prosperity and well-being. Standards, such as the ISO 9000 quality management (QMS) and ISO 14000 environmental management systems (EMS) series, provide common ground that makes international trade possible. To prosper, Canada must be a leader in both the development and application of international standards.

SCC is a key player in voluntary standards activities, as well as related conformity assessment and management systems registration work, around the globe. We participate in organizations such as the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), one of the foremost standardization bodies in the world. As the Canadian member body of ISO, our volunteers participate on more than 300 ISO committees and subcommittees in various technical sectors.

We hold the international secretariats for both ISO Technical Committee (TC) 176, which developed the ISO 9000 series of standards, and TC 207, which developed the ISO 14000 series of standards. Countless organizations rely on registration—the formal assessment of their QMS or EMS by an independent third party—to do business at home and around the world.

Conformity assessment

We also contribute to the international scene as Canada's national accreditation body, which involves verifying the capabilities of organizations that provide conformity assessment services, such as ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 registration. We participate in international and regional cooperation arrangements for conformity assessment for which the ultimate goal is to enable exporters to use a single test, certification or registration to gain market acceptance anywhere in the world.

Representing Quality Management Systems Accreditation Program (QMSAP) interests to groups such as ISO's Committee on Conformity Assessment (ISO/CASCO) is another important activity. ISO/CASCO develops guides that support consistent evaluation of ISO 9001 and ISO 14001 around the world. Outlining criteria and requirements for the operation of registration bodies, these guides cover topics such as administrative base, human resources and document control.

SCC uses ISO/CASCO guides to assess registration bodies through its national accreditation programs in much the same way that companies are assessed against QMS and EMS standards for registration. SCC uses:

- CAN-P-10B, the Canadian adoption of *ISO/IEC Guide 62, General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of quality systems*; and
- CAN-P-14B, the Canadian adoption of *ISO/IEC Guide 66, General requirements for bodies operating assessment and certification/registration of environmental management systems*.

(as amended from time to time).

These are applied with companion documents CAN-P-1517 and CAN-P-1518, as well as International Accreditation Forum (IAF) guidance documents on the application of ISO/IEC Guides 62 and 66 and relevant provisions of *ISO/IEC Guide 61: General requirements for assessment and accreditation of certification/registration bodies*.

MRAs/MLAs

Our participation in mutual recognition (MRAs) and multilateral arrangements (MLAs) benefits both SCC-accredited registration bodies and their clients. These arrangements are designed to boost confidence and credibility in registration through worldwide recognition.

While not yet fully implemented, it is anticipated that under these arrangements, participating accreditation bodies will agree to accept each other's accreditations as being equivalent to their own after an evaluation of each other's procedures. So, if the country that a registered company wants to export to is a member of these arrangements, clients and regulators there should accept the registration just as they would accept one issued by a locally accredited registration body. These arrangements seek to reduce the need for duplicative registrations and assessments and thereby reduce technical barriers to trade.

SCC participates in various international, regional and bilateral agreements. So far, we participate in:

- an MRA with the American National Standards Institute and the Registrar Accreditation Board (ANSI-RAB) in the U.S.;
- an MLA developed by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), (a full listing of signatories to the IAF MLA can be found on the IAF web-site at www.iaf.nu).
- an MLA developed by the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC), (a full listing of signatories to the PAC MLA can be found on the PAC web-site at www.apec-pac.org).

Impact on registration bodies

These arrangements can also save registration bodies time and money. Through our MRA with ANSI-RAB, for example, SCC and RAB share results from registration body assessments. This means registration bodies accredited by both bodies may be subject to fewer audits to maintain their accreditation.

For applicant registration bodies applying for SCC accreditation under an MRA or MLA, we take the results of other accreditation bodies into consideration during preparation of the audit plan for accreditation. For example, audit results from other accreditation bodies can be used to help us identify any areas that require less investigation on site. Also, once one required witness audit is complete, we see if we have enough information to determine if the applicant meets SCC program requirements.

It should be noted that registration bodies must always demonstrate conformance to program requirements to achieve or maintain accreditation and that we consider required audit activities on a case by case basis when an agreement is involved.

Implementation of the IAF and PAC arrangements is in progress and confidence building among different national approaches continues. SCC also contributes to these organizations through our working groups and standards development activities.

For more information about these and other international activities, visit our web site at www.scc.ca.

Who are we?

As the national member body to the International Organization for Standardization (ISO), the Standards Council of Canada (SCC) oversees Canada's National Standards System (NSS). With close to 400 partner and client organizations, and 15,000 volunteer participants, our NSS is a model for the world.