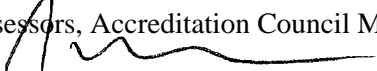




AMENDED: May 5, 2011

TRANSITION MEMORANDUM

To: A2LA Accredited and Enrolled Organizations, Assessors, Accreditation Council Members and Staff
From: Trace McInturff, A2LA Operations Manager 

Re: Transition on requiring the use of Accredited Reference Materials

The issue of traceability of Reference Materials has been present in the world of accreditation for many years and has always been a challenge. ISO/IEC 17025:2005 requires that Reference Materials “shall, where possible, be traceable to SI units of measurement, or to certified reference materials”. The A2LA [P102 – A2LA Policy on Measurement Traceability](#) has made mention of the need for acceptable traceability of Reference Materials for a number of years now but for the most part has not been held to task. A2LA P102, (T1) states:

A2LA requires that:

(b) When possible, all reference materials shall be obtained from:

- *A reference material producer accredited to ISO Guide 34 in combination with ISO/IEC 17025 by a recognized Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) signatory recognized for accrediting reference material producers; or*
- *A recognized National Metrology Institute (NMI).*

Additionally, A2LA [P101 – Reference to A2LA Accredited Status – A2LA Advertising Policy](#) document has recently been updated to include the following verbiage on reference materials:

Reference Material Producer Labels and Certificates (ISO Guide 34 only)

8.4 Only those reference material certificates bearing the “A2LA Accredited” symbol (or that otherwise make reference to accredited status by a specific, recognized accreditation body) can be confirmed to meet the A2LA Traceability Policy. (See P102 – A2LA Policy on Measurement Traceability for additional clarification and requirements that must be met.)

The Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) extended the scope of their Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) to include the accreditation of Reference Material Producers (RMP) during a signing ceremony during the 2007 APLAC General Assembly and Technical Meetings in December 2007 in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia. A2LA, NATA (Australia), CNAS (Peoples Republic of China) and IAJapan (Japan) were the inaugural signatories to the RMP MRA.

Currently A2LA has accredited Reference Material Producers covering a wide variety of biological, metals and powdered metals, pharmaceuticals, and environmental reference materials. For more information on A2LA

Accredited Organizations, please visit the A2LA website at www.A2LA.org and click on the “*Search for A2LA Accredited Organizations*” button. For a search for the A2LA Accredited Reference Material Producers simply select ‘*Reference Material Producers*’ in the ‘*Field of Testing*’ drop down.

The transition plan for requiring the use of accredited Reference Materials will begin with all assessments after July 1, 2009. At that point A2LA assessors will be instructed to identify any non-accredited reference materials that are in use during on-site assessments and note them only as an ‘Observation’; ***no corrective action by the laboratory will be required***. Then beginning January 1, 2012, assessors will commence citing deficiencies for the use of non-accredited reference materials ***only in those instances when accredited reference materials are available and non-accredited reference materials were purchased and used after this date***. To adequately close out the deficiency, laboratories will be required to identify the A2LA or APLAC MRA partner accredited Reference Material Producer they will purchase *their next reference materials from* or submit an A2LA *F106 – Request For Exception To The Policy On Measurement Traceability*. If there are no accredited reference materials available, the assessors will continue noting the use of non-accredited reference materials as an ‘Observation’.

Please note for Life Science laboratories, please be sure to review A2LA [*P102a - Policy on Reference Material Traceability for Life Sciences Testing Laboratories*](#).

To make this transition more seamless, the A2LA Reference Material Producer Advisory Committee (RMPAC) has been tasked with creating a policy on Selection and Use of Reference Materials. Additionally, RMPAC is also tasked with keeping an up-to-date listing of available ‘types’ of accredited reference materials that are available from A2LA or from one of our APLAC MRA partners’ accredited RMPs. These documents will be available from A2LA in the near future.

For more information on Reference Material Producers and traceability achieved through the use of accredited reference materials, please contact Mr. Randy Querry, A2LA Accreditation Manager (rquery@A2LA.org; 301 644 3221) or contact your A2LA Accreditation Officer.