

PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

A2LA Adds Inspection Body Accreditation to its APLAC Scope of Recognition

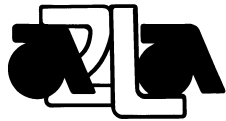
Frederick, Maryland, September 13, 2006 - A2LA has successfully completed the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) peer re-evaluation process and added inspection body accreditation to their scope of recognition.

“A2LA’s addition of inspection body accreditation to our MRA Signatory status gives the program credibility and instant worldwide recognition,” said Peter Unger, President of A2LA.

“A2LA accredited inspection bodies can now benefit from the same international recognition and credibility that our testing and calibration laboratories have enjoyed for years.”

In March 2006 APLAC evaluated A2LA for continued recognition as a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) Signatory by verifying A2LA’s compliance with *ISO/IEC 17011 – Conformity Assessment: General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies*. At the APLAC MRA Council meeting in Taipei, TAIWAN in September, the Council agreed to continue A2LA’s signatory status within the APLAC MRA for testing and calibration laboratory accreditation and to add recognition for inspection body accreditation.

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American Association for Laboratory Accreditation

Free markets and open trade depend upon inspection bodies to ensure that products and services perform as needed, explained Unger. “In a highly complex and technical world, we take for granted that our food is safe to eat, that the products we buy meet safety requirements, that our cars and computers and cell phones will work,” he said. “It has only been over the last 100 years or so that equipment, products and services are consistent, whether you’re in Boston or Beijing Rouge. Inspection services are a vital component of commerce between businesses and with individuals, and A2LA’s Inspection Body Accreditation Program offers additional assurance and confidence to rely on the accredited services.” said Unger.

The requirements for an inspection body assessment are stated in *ISO/IEC 17020:1998 General criteria for the operation of various types of bodies performing inspections* as well as the *IAF/ILAC-A4:2004 Guidance on the Application of ISO/IEC 17020*. These accreditations demonstrate technical competence for a defined scope and operation of a quality management system. A2LA welcomes applications for the accreditation of all types of inspection work. Accreditation may be sought for virtually any type of product or service; some examples include agricultural products, port security (cargo inspections), foods, mechanical equipment, textiles, structures/construction (concrete, steel, timber) and pipelines to name just a few. All requests for information on the Inspection Body Accreditation Program should be directed to the contact listed above.

About A2LA: A2LA is a nonprofit, non-governmental, public service, membership society. Its mission is to provide comprehensive accreditation services for laboratories, inspection bodies, proficiency testing providers, and reference material producers. Services are available to any type of laboratory or inspection body, product certification body, reference material provider and proficiency testing provider whether private or government. A2LA is the largest multi-discipline accreditation body in the United States, and the second largest in the world.

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