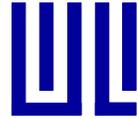


BULLETIN



UNION INTERNATIONALE DES LABORATOIRES INDÉPENDANTS

President: Ronald L. Harris (United States)

December 2002

ISO/CASCO Technical Work of Interest

Because of UILI's Liaison A status, we are able to monitor many activities of ISO/CASCO. David Stanger, our primary representative, has submitted a status report of the ISO policy committee on conformity assessment. It covers selected activities of CASCO that may be of interest to UILI members. Such areas as CASCO Working Group 18 (Standards on Accreditation), Peer Assessment (CASCO WG 19), Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA's) (CASCO WG 11), Marks of Conformity (CASCO WG 12), and Management Systems Certification (CASCO WG 21) are covered. Of special interest to UILI members is a progress report on the work of CASCO Working Group 25 focused on the alignment of ISO/IEC 17025 with ISO 9001:2001.

Copies of the complete report can be obtained by contacting the UILI office whose address is listed on this "Bulletin." Ask for the report titled "Report From ISO/CASCO – Technical Work of Interest."

Bioterrorism and Laboratories

Recent events have shown that extremists are willing and capable of attacks in almost any part of the world. So far, few have involved bioterrorism. However, governments around the globe are considering their country's preparedness for such an event and almost all realize they are not fully prepared. Basic services and industries such as water supplies and food production will require much closer surveillance. The close proximity of needed testing services will likely become one of the important issues. This will relate to emergency situations, but will probably also result in long term needs for standardization of methods and ongoing testing for new and changing agents.

Independent laboratories can play an important role in this urgent effort to develop the capabilities to detect and prevent bioterrorist efforts and to also provide a readiness to react in the aftermath of such an attack. Such efforts

by UILI members can not only serve a patriotic and humanitarian purpose, but can lead to long term business growth. The ACIL Microbiology and Analytical Chemistry Section hosted a session on the Bioterrorism Act enacted by the US government at its recent annual meeting in Chicago. Details from that session are included in an article that appeared in the November ACIL newsletter, available online at www.acil.org/news. Although it relates to a specific piece of US legislation, the article contains much useful information for laboratories in other countries.

The Importance of Each Sample

Many UILI member laboratories conduct relatively routine analyses on a large number of similar samples on a daily basis. Over time, laboratory personnel can naturally become a little complacent due to the repetitiveness of these tests and cease to appreciate the importance each of these samples has to the individual client. Over time, the work becomes mechanical and the technician or scientist forgets its relevance.

Therefore, from time to time, it's a good idea to reinforce the importance of each sample to its owner. One laboratory we heard of recently tests soil samples for nutrient levels for the purpose is applying proper levels of fertilizer. They may receive up to 3,000 samples in a single day for tests that cost about US \$15. In order to remind laboratory personnel why each of these 3,000 samples deserves their close attention, training sessions are conducted periodically. In these sessions, the soil sample is followed from its collection, shipment, testing, and reporting phase, leading ultimately to the point at which fertilizer application decisions are made that could require up to a US \$15,000 or more investment by the client. The reminder that their work on a \$15 sample (one of 3,000 that day) has a major impact on the annual profitability of each individual client reinforces the pride they take in their work and the need for care and accuracy because of its ultimate importance.



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There are many ways a laboratory can maintain the enthusiasm and engagement of its staff. Use whatever approaches seem best in your environment, but don't overlook their importance – you might, but your client won't.

Global News Briefs of Possible Interest to Laboratories

War in Iraq still a good possibility. What will be the immediate impact on your laboratory? And, what will be the long-term affect on the world economy? Worth considering in your long-range plans.

In order to join the EU, The Czech Republic, Slovakia, Poland and Hungary will discontinue enterprise zones, where foreign firms locate and get tax breaks. Could result in changes for some laboratory clients.

Putin's efforts to make Russia economically more viable are continuing, resulting in a country that will likely create more business opportunities in the future. Worth watching as a new market for testing services.

The NAFTA free-trade agreement is having a major impact on trade between Canada, Mexico, and the US. Trade between US and Mexico nearly triple since 1993 pact. Could have an impact on North American laboratories as clients shift activities to other locations.

Nature travel is a rapidly expanding industry, causing host countries and the travel companies to work together to minimize tourism's impact. To make sure tour groups really are sensitive to environmental issues, some governments are beginning to develop accreditation standards. If you operate in such countries, possible opportunity for testing or monitoring services.

India is slowing down its privatization and liberalization of key markets. Will slow the recent rapid growth in India GDP. Worth noting if you operate there.

Turkey's economy also worth watching. War in Iraq could have short-term negative impact.

China's entry into the World Trade Organization is opening a large market for food, autos, technology, telecom. In 25 years, China will almost certainly be the world's second-largest economy – now the sixth. GDP likely to grow at

6-7% annually. Laboratories with global growth strategies need to keep up. Many of our clients will open large operations in China needing laboratory services. At present, there is no independent laboratory industry in China, so opportunity is great. China is certain to gradually develop its own laboratory services industry so those who enter early can gain and maintain market. Some UILI members are already operating in China and could be a resource to others considering such a move. We'd be happy to include such interest in future UILI publications to help in efforts to share information.

CASCO – Image – Ethics – Complaints!

UILI's rapporteur to CASCO David Stanger delivered UILI's report adopted by UILI's Governing Board at their latest meeting held in Barcelona, Spain, to the 18th Annual Meeting of CASCO held in Geneva on the 7th/8th November, 2002. The report highlighted UILI's current concerns on the proposal for the sharing of information on complaints to be established between ISO and ILAC; appreciation for the invitation to attend CASCO Chairman's Advisory Group (CAG) and UILI will continue to give high priority to CASCO work programme in order that conformity assessment standards unify not fragment, are cost effective, discourage multi-assessment and are demanding yet reasonable.

The key issue reported to the plenary meeting was UILI's advocacy, through CASCO WG 25, for laboratory accreditation to remain in accordance with the criteria published in ISO/IEC 17025:1999 as opposed to a proposition that such criteria becomes a sub set of ISO 9001:2000. CASCO WG 25's third meeting is set for December 12th, 2002 in Geneva. All National Member Associations have been distributed with a draft ISO 17025 which highlights the changes proposed by the WG 25 small Task Group. The Group have confined their amendments to Chapter 1- Introduction and Chapter 4 - Quality Management System only. The Task Group's mandate was to propose minimum changes to align ISO/IEC 17025: 1999 with ISO 9001:2000. More UILI members are encouraged to send their comments direct to David Stanger dhs@dhs.be no later than the 10th December.

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An important and informative Communiqué has been issued by CASCO policy committee on the image and integrity of conformity assessment which Members can read on ISO website www.iso.org. UILI urged CASCO to use the existing complaints handling procedures prescribed in ISO international standards for conformity assessment, accreditation bodies and also ISO Central Secretariat, the later being holders of ISO 9001:2000 registration. The differences between accreditation and certification were described in a further CASCO publication adopted by the CASCO Annual meeting which is also available on the ISO website.

We have a full agenda for 2003, which now includes a response to a report that Mr David Lazenby of BSI presented to the ISO General Assembly on "Ethical practice of conformity assessment" within which he has included a number of provocative questions and upon the call from ISO's Deputy Secretary General on complaints procedures.

Transatlantic Business Dialogue (TABD)

The 8th Annual meeting took place on 7-8 November in Chicago, USA attended by over 300 business and government officials participated and numerous small and medium sized companies. Of the eight key messages adopted industry one urged governments to reaffirm their commitment to transatlantic harmonization and therefore greater regulatory efficiency by reducing duplicative testing and divergent standard requirements.

ISO Secretary General

The first Chairman of the ILAC Laboratory Committee, Mr. Alan Bryden (1996-1998) is currently the Director General of the French National Standardisation Institute (AFNOR). The ISO Council decision was unanimously adopted at their meeting held in Geneva on 14-15 November to appoint Alan Bryden as Secretary General of ISO. Alan will take up this appointment on the 1st March, 2003.

For almost 20 years Alan was Director General of the French national testing laboratory Laboratoire National d'Essais - LNE and

over the same period worked with members of UILI in the founding of EUROLAB and the development of ILAC from a conference to a cooperation in 1996 when the ILAC Laboratory Committee was established.

UILI's Liaison 'A' status in CASCO will provide yet another opportunity in 2003 and beyond to work with Alan within the world's largest developer of voluntary technical standards.

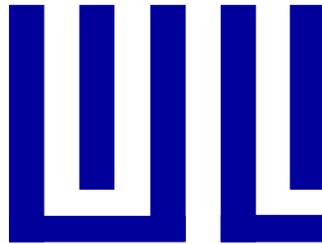
ILAC Laboratory Committee

David Stanger concluded his fourth and final LC Chairman's Annual Report to ILAC 2002 in Berlin last September by saying " I place on record my thanks for the hospitality that the ILAC family has extended to me since my first attendance at ILAC 1979 in Sydney, Australia; the much needed support, good humour and encouragement I have received from new and long serving members of the ILAC over the past 4 years (including Ken Albutt); the positive and constructive working relationship established with members of the ILAC Executive Committee and other Committees and Working Groups; the opportunity to contribute to the mission of the JCCC and the patience and distance computer training from the ILAC Secretariat. Finally I wish my successor (Tony Anderson) and all Stakeholder Members, including UILI, every success in the future and congratulate ILAC on its 25th Anniversary."





UNION INTERNATIONALE DES LABORATOIRES INDÉPENDANTS



OBJECTIVES

To represent the professional and commercial interests of private sector laboratories and scientific consultants on an international basis.

To provide a forum for the international exchange of views on matters of common interest including, for example, laboratory quality assurance, laboratory accreditation, product certification, national and international standards, and international barriers to trade.

To promote the international status of laboratories and scientific consultants and emphasize their important role in international trade.

To establish an international network of scientific contacts to act in the professional and commercial interests of its members.

To strengthen the bond of friendship between members.

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