



ACCREDITATION A TOOL TO SUPPORT REGULATORS





ACCREDITATION	5
CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT	9
ASSURANCE OF COMPETENCE	13
EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION FOR ACCREDITATION	17
INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS	19
PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BENEFITS	21
EFFECTIVENESS IN THE MARKET	24
THE ADDED VALUE OF ACCREDITATION	25
RELIABLE PARTNERS	31

A high-angle, wide shot of a busy city street. The street is paved with cobblestones and is filled with a diverse crowd of people walking in various directions. Some are carrying bags, some are talking on mobile phones, and some are pushing strollers. In the background, several cars are visible, including a white sedan and a purple car. A person is riding a bicycle on the right side of the frame. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day, with shadows cast across the pavement. A large, solid yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the left side of the image, containing the text "What is accreditation?".

**What is
accreditation?**

ACCREDITATION

A service for the Community

Accreditation provides the attestation that accredited bodies offering testing, examination, calibration, certification, inspection and verification services have the technical competence and impartiality to check the conformity of products and services with the relevant national and international standards.

In the European Union, accreditation is performed by National Accreditation Bodies (NABs) appointed by governments as required by Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 on accreditation.

- ❖ In the regulated area, the law requires accreditation for those bodies that qualify certain categories of products and services (e.g. products with the CE marking such as toys, lifts, food products with protected or guaranteed origin, etc.) which can be put onto the market only after undergoing conformity assessment against the applicable standards.
This is notification.
- ❖ In the voluntary area, where there is no specific legislation, companies seek accreditation to provide the market with an impartial attestation of their competence in guaranteeing products' and services' quality, safety, security, etc.



IN EUROPE, ACCREDITATION IS GOVERNED
BY REGULATION (EC) No 765/2008

IN ALL EU MEMBER STATES, GOVERNMENTS
ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ACCREDITATION

ACCREDITATION SUPPORTS BOTH REGULATED
AND VOLUNTARY AREAS

ACCREDITATION FACILITATES TRADE AND BENEFITS
THE MARKET AND SOCIETY

The European system of accreditation

Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 establishes the legal framework for accreditation in Europe, setting out requirements for accreditation relating to the marketing of products.

It gives a harmonized, rigorous approach to accreditation across EU Member States – so that ultimately one accreditation certificate or report will be enough to demonstrate the technical capacity of an accredited body.

The main principles of accreditation in the Regulation – which complements ISO/IEC 17011 and the other international standards for conformity assessment bodies – are:

- ❖ one accreditation body per Member State;
- ❖ accreditation is operated as a public authority activity;
- ❖ no competition between National Accreditation Bodies, and between them and conformity assessment bodies;
- ❖ not-for-profit activity;
- ❖ stakeholder representation.

In accordance with article 11 of the Regulation, accreditation provides a presumption of conformity: accredited certificates and reports can be recognised in all EU Member States.

A male scientist with dark hair, wearing a white lab coat, safety glasses, and white gloves, is focused on his work in a laboratory. He is using a blue pipette to transfer liquid into a small vial. In the foreground, there is a rack of test tubes with blue caps, a red rack with several vials, and a glass flask on a cork stand. The background shows a blurred laboratory setting with blue walls and equipment.

**What is
conformity
assessment?**

CONFORMITY ASSESSMENT

Enhancing confidence in the market

Testing, calibration, examination, inspection, certification, validation and verification, reference material production and proficiency testing, delivered by accredited bodies (CABs), are collectively known as conformity assessment activities.

Acting as authoritative and impartial entities, National Accreditation Bodies (NABs) evaluate competence of laboratories, inspection and certification bodies.

NABs guarantee credibility of conformity assessment and reliability of certificates and reports.

Conformity assessment services delivered under accreditation confirm that products and services comply with established requirements – standards and other relevant specifications.

The conformity assessment system is structured in order to give assurance to the public and boost business competitiveness.

In Europe, the conformity assessment system has been improved by the European Commission so as to increase confidence of regulators, businesses and consumers, and to guarantee free movement within the market of goods and services, offering a high level of health protection and safety for consumers and the environment.

All groups of society are involved in ensuring confidence in the products and services put on the market: governments, businesses, clients and end-users.

Better regulation is based on a competent, impartial and effective system where governments, businesses and consumers have a role in maintaining confidence.

REGULATORS

rely on

NATIONAL ACCREDITATION BODIES

which verify the competence of



which offer conformity assessment services to standards/regulatory requirements/scheme criteria



for the benefit of



on the market of



Accreditation is an ongoing process that guarantees the competence of accredited bodies performing conformity assessment services such as:

**CERTIFICATION OF PRODUCTS,
PROCESSES AND SERVICES**

toys, lifts, electrical devices,
personal protection equipment, building
products, biofuels, organic food and quality
marks, recycled products, e-signature

**CERTIFICATION
OF MANAGEMENT SYSTEMS**

for quality, environment,
occupational health and safety, energy,
food, information security, information
technology, sustainable development

LABORATORY TESTS

chemical, biological, physical, fire,
mechanical, water, air, food, electrical and
electronic, software, DNA, fingerprints,
anti-doping, animal health

MEDICAL EXAMINATIONS

microbiology, histology, oncology,
haematology, genetics, immunobiology,
bacteriology, virology, endocrinology,
reproductive biology

CERTIFICATION OF PERSONS

auditors, welders, verifiers, inspectors,
experts, consultants, professionals in IT,
healthcare, training and education

CALIBRATIONS

speed control meters, weighing machines,
spectrometers, chronometers, radiation
monitor devices, gas flow meters,
electric counters

INSPECTIONS

products, services, processes, designs,
installations, buildings, roads,
railways, trucks and cars

VALIDATIONS AND VERIFICATIONS

of greenhouse gas emissions, such as water
vapour, carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous
oxide, ozone, chlorofluorocarbons

PROFICIENCY TESTING PROVIDERS

Environment, health, food, forensic, sam-
pling, energy, safety

REFERENCE MATERIAL PRODUCERS

Environment, food, oil, water

**How is
competence
assured?**



ASSURANCE OF COMPETENCE

Providing confidence in reports and certificates results

Accreditation is based on demonstrating compliance with specified requirements for competence, independence and impartiality.

COMPETENCE

The experience and technical skills of the staff in the accredited or applicant body are verified by qualified assessors with relevant expertise and specialised knowledge.

INDEPENDENCE

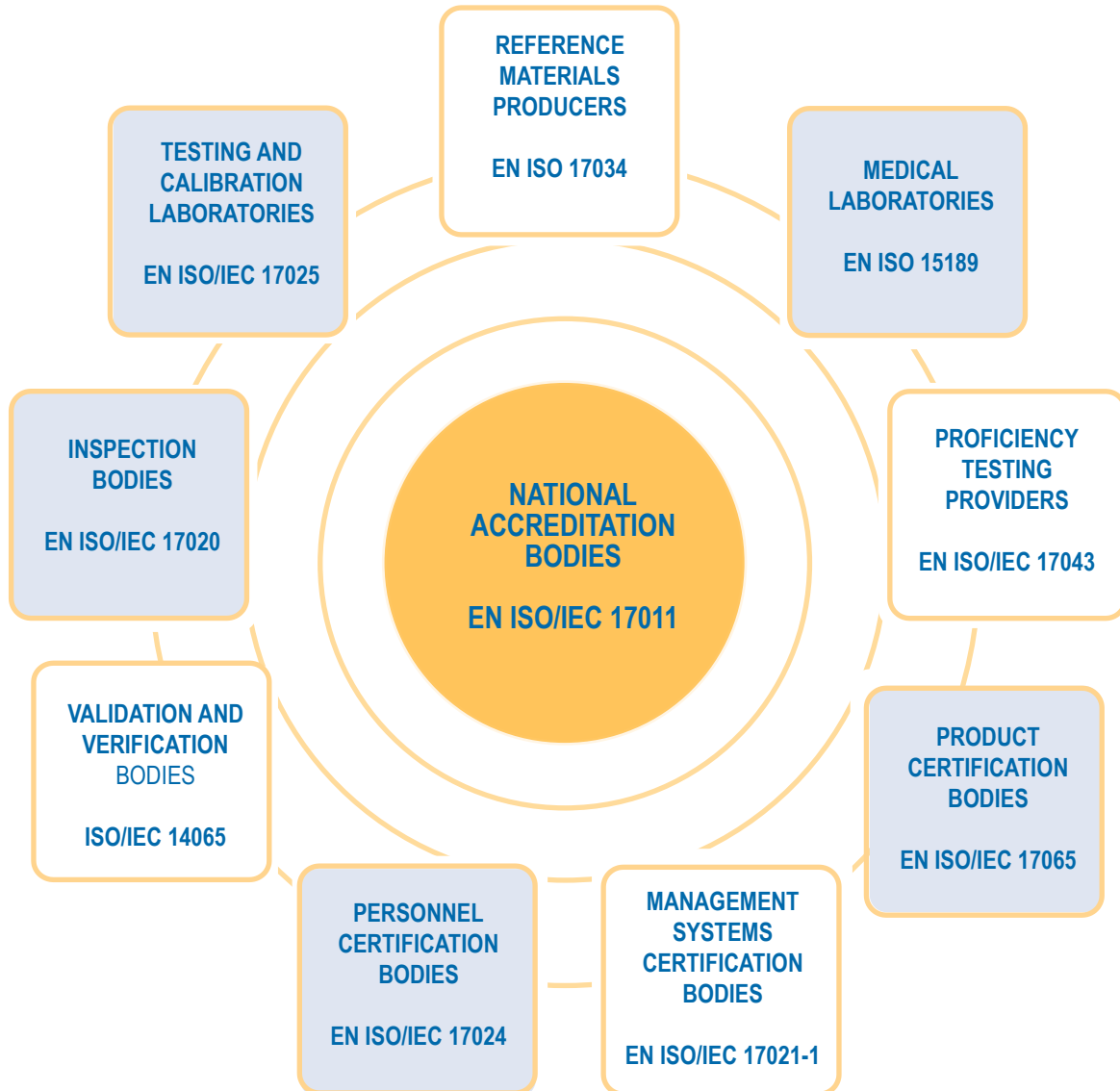
Accredited bodies that grant certification shall demonstrate independence from the organisation to which their services are provided.

IMPARTIALITY

Accredited bodies shall show absence or proper management of conflicts of interest with the client to whom they provide services.

Accreditation

Accreditation means an attestation by a national accreditation body that a conformity assessment body meets the requirements set by harmonised standards and, where applicable, any additional requirements including those set out in relevant sectoral schemes, to carry out a specific conformity assessment activity;



The reliability of reports and certificates is the result of a rigorous and effective process of evaluation of competencies according to national, European and/or international requirements.

Government representatives are welcomed to observe evaluations. The objective is to maintain their confidence in the accreditation system.

INITIAL ASSESSMENT

National Accreditation Bodies' assessors conduct a thorough evaluation of the applicant's practices, staff and management system, thus verifying compliance with standards. Applicant bodies having successfully passed assessment are accredited. They can use the accreditation mark for the accepted scopes.

ACCREDITATION CYCLE COVERS 2 TO 5 YEARS

National Accreditation Bodies carry out regular surveillance assessments to ensure that accredited bodies maintain high standards of technical expertise. They can impose sanctions when accredited bodies are not fulfilling all obligations and requirements, and then accreditation scopes can be reduced, suspended or even withdrawn.

EXTENSION OF SCOPES

During the cycle or at renewal, accreditation scopes can be extended to other services, in response to new needs of accredited bodies' customers. Specific assessments are carried out, for instance to be able to perform tests according to a new legislation.

RENEWAL OF ACCREDITATION

At the end of the cycle, accreditation can be renewed after a complete assessment for a new cycle.

EA:
what for?



ere tuleni
uroopa

liament

Parlament na hEorpa

Ļelpli lūdzam
Eiropas Parleme

Bienvenue au
Parlement européen

benvenuti al
Parlamento europeo

Sveiki atvykę į
Europos Parla

EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION FOR ACCREDITATION

Supporting the Community and national regulators

National Accreditation Bodies in EU and EFTA countries are members of EA, the European umbrella of national accreditation bodies which ensures the acceptance of accredited certificates and reports on the European and global markets.

EA has been recognised by the European Commission as the “European accreditation infrastructure” to manage accreditation within the EU, EFTA and candidate countries, according to article 14 in Regulation (EC) No 765/2008. EA has close relations with the various directorates in the Commission, which it supports in developing regulations. EA is a non-profit association of nationally recognised accreditation bodies, whose main objectives are to:

- ❖ ensure that National Accreditation Bodies operate in accordance with the requirements set out in Regulation (EC) No 765/2008;
- ❖ harmonise and make accreditation consistent as a public authority activity to support European trade and industry according to its needs and to the requirements laid down in the applicable European legislation;
- ❖ serve as a cooperative network of its members to further a coherent European accreditation system that operates in general European interests;
- ❖ peer evaluate the compliance of National Accreditation Bodies with the requirements of applicable harmonised standards, European legislation, and other criteria as applicable and agreed by EA;
- ❖ monitor and achieve continuous improvement of its services in all areas of its activities through an effective procedure for the investigation and resolution of complaints and appeals lodged against National Accreditation Bodies.

What are the international agreements?



INTERNATIONAL AGREEMENTS

The EU and global recognition of reports and certificates

The activities performed by European accreditation bodies are recognised both within the EU and worldwide through their signatory status to the EA Multilateral Agreement (EA MLA).

The EA MLA covers testing and medical examinations, calibration, certification of management systems, certification products, processes and services, certification of persons, inspection, validation and verification, reference material production and proficiency testing.

The EA MLA is an agreement signed between EA-member accreditation bodies to recognise and accept the equivalence of their accreditation systems. Thus it provides equal reliability of the certificates and reports issued by the organisations which EA National Accreditation Bodies accredit.

This eliminates the need for suppliers of products or services to look for accredited certification / inspection / testing providers in each European country where they sell their products or services.

National Accreditation Bodies are granted the MLA signatory status only after a stringent **peer evaluation**, of their operations to check their compliance with the internationally agreed standard for accreditation bodies, ISO/IEC 17011, and the specific requirements of Regulation (EC) No 765/2008. Peer evaluations are carried out on a regular basis by experienced staff from other National Accreditation Bodies. The process is observed by representatives from the European Commission, national authorities and other stakeholders.

The EA MLA is recognised at the international level by the International Accreditation Forum (IAF) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC). It means that EA MLA signatories can use the IAF MLA and ILAC MRA marks and benefit from global recognition through the IAF and ILAC mutual agreements.

A young man with short brown hair and a light beard is smiling warmly at the camera. He is wearing a blue and white vertically striped button-down shirt over a grey t-shirt, and a tan canvas apron. He is holding a bunch of fresh green leafy vegetables in front of him. The background shows a grocery store aisle with various produce on shelves, including yellow squash, onions, and other vegetables. The lighting is bright and even.

**What benefits
for the public
and private
sectors?**

PUBLIC AND PRIVATE BENEFITS

Advantages for regulators and governments become benefits for consumers and businesses

Developed on the market to facilitate the movement of goods and services where demand for quality safety and environmental sustainability is growing, accreditation offers a harmonised, transparent and repeatable approach which:

- ❖ enables innovation
- ❖ reduces the need for governments to employ their own resources
- ❖ builds consumers' and businesses' confidence
- ❖ helps fulfil legal requirements at reasonable costs

For regulators and governments

Conformity assessment can be used for better control and regulation.

The services provided by accredited bodies, either used directly by regulators and governments or as a tool reference in rules and regulations, demonstrate effectiveness in:

- ❖ supporting implementation of the European or national legislation, providing a “stamp of approval” to confirm compliance with standards and widely accepted requirements;
- ❖ qualifying suppliers of goods and services, especially on the procurement market;
- ❖ enhancing trade and economic growth, providing governments with reliable data;
- ❖ reducing bureaucracy by eliminating a number of administrative obligations;
- ❖ limiting costs and resources, by reducing the need for regulators to employ their specialized assessment personnel and by avoiding duplication of audits;
- ❖ simplifying the procurement process by ensuring confidence as a decision-making tool.

For consumers

Creating trust

Increasingly consumers rely on independent evidence, rather than simply believing in suppliers' advertisements. Consumers' confidence on the market is enhanced when they know that the products and services they choose are regularly evaluated and checked by an independent and competent third party. Choosing a product based on its certification mark, consumers have or can have a clear indication of the quality of what they are buying.

Protecting, in the public interest

At the other end of the supply chain, consumers' interest is protected by National Accreditation Bodies acting as "checkers of checkers".

For businesses

Boosting efficiency

Accurate calibration, measurement and testing, performed in accordance with best practice, help limit errors and product failure, improve control of production costs and contribute to an innovative environment. When they obtain certification of their management system, products or services by an accredited body, companies enhance their performance by using a recognised tool for decision-making, risk management and supplier selection. Thus, they enjoy a competitive advantage in terms of reputation and credibility, both on the B2B and consumer markets.

Reducing controls

Accredited certification conveys presumption of conformity with official standards and regulations. This means that businesses do not need to provide additional evidence, and their activities are simplified subsequent to reduction or elimination of controls.

Supporting export

The international recognition of conformity assessment reports covered by accreditation boosts business expansion on foreign markets without the need to carry out additional verifications.

EFFECTIVENESS IN THE MARKET

Supporting regulators and governments across all sectors

Conformity assessment services spread across a large range of goods and services, which regulators and governments have to maintain public confidence in.

FOOD QUALITY AND SAFETY

Control of organic products and quality marks (protected designation origin (PDO), protected geographical indication (PGI) or traditional specialty guaranteed (TSG), Denomination of Controlled Origin (DOC), Denomination of Controlled and Guaranteed Origin (DOCG) and laboratory tests of food. including tastings of olive oil and wine

ENERGY SAVING AND ENVIRONMENT PROTECTION

Analysis and containment of environmental risks, verification of CO₂ emissions, certification of sustainability, use of biofuels and recycled materials and waste reduction, legionella testing

CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Safety inspection and verification, especially of products bearing the CE mark, such as those for children and other potentially dangerous ones (e.g. electrical and electronic equipment, machines, lifts, etc.)

CONSTRUCTION

Evaluation of projects and execution of building works, calibration in sound resistance and acoustics, over the functioning of measurement instruments such as electricity and gas meters

HEALTH PROTECTION

Medical examinations and certification of medical devices

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

Forensic analysis, fingerprint examination, DNA database protection, security systems in conformity with sectoral requirements

SAFETY IN THE WORKPLACE

Management of procedures aimed at health protection and risk reduction, fire detection and alarm systems

TRANSPORTATION AND INFRASTRUCTURES

Control of materials used for highways certification of competence of personnel controlling vehicles and the railway infrastructure, as well as the conformity of payment instruments and highway pay tolls

Visit <http://www.publicsectorassurance.org> to access case studies and independent research that demonstrate to illustrate how accredited conformity assessment is used around the world by central government, local government and regulators to deliver positive benefit.

THE ADDED VALUE OF ACCREDITATION

Accredited conformity assessment activities

By relying on accredited tests, examinations, verifications, inspections, calibrations and certifications, regulators and governments obtain a third party, independent and competent evaluation, providing objective results to support sound decisions in regulation, public procurement or delivery of products and services onto the market.

Accredited bodies performing such services assure that they meet all required standards, as well as regulatory requirements and sector criteria, in terms of:

- ❖ technical competence, professionalism and integrity;
- ❖ risk management;
- ❖ adequate human and equipment resources;
- ❖ mechanism for measuring improvement of product and service quality;
- ❖ complaint and appeal system;
- ❖ capacity to compete on an international scale under the EA MLA.

When referring to accreditation, it is important to recognise or specify the appropriate requirements for the services or bodies providing them, according to the type of guarantees required.

When selecting an accredited body, it is essential to identify the scope of activities for which the accredited body is granted accreditation; this is detailed on the accreditation certificate.

TEST AND CALIBRATION

Accredited tests and calibrations guarantee accurate and reliable results for a defined set of tests, and ensure that calibrations are carried out in a reliable, competent, consistent and impartial manner and to the correct degree of accuracy.

Accreditation of a testing laboratory means:

- ❖ validity and appropriateness of test methods;
- ❖ suitability and maintenance of test equipment;
- ❖ proper sampling, handling and transportation of test items;
- ❖ quality control and assurance of test data.

Accreditation of a calibration laboratory means:

- ❖ metrological traceability of calibration results;
- ❖ traceability of operations and recordings;
- ❖ measurements are performed according to validated procedures;
- ❖ reliability of standards and measurement instruments.

Accreditation to ISO/IEC 17025 also means that the laboratory meets the management system principles of ISO 9001.

MEDICAL EXAMINATION

Accredited medical examinations assure that clinical laboratories focus on maintaining patients' healthcare, directly connected with improved patient safety, risk mitigation and operational efficiency.

Accreditation to ISO 15189 also means that the laboratory meets the management system principles of ISO 9001.

PROFICIENCY TESTING PROVIDERS (PTP)

Accredited proficiency testing (PT) provides reliable opportunity to undertake comparisons of laboratories' competence and to have an independent appraisal of laboratories' data compared to reference values (or other performance criteria) or to the performance of similar laboratories.

INSPECTION

Accreditation provides assurance of competence of inspectors, relevance of methods for conducting inspections and impartiality of results.

Inspection can be used, in the voluntary and regulated areas, for the assessment of the conformity of a product, project, service, process or installation with relevant requirements based on professional judgement.

REFERENCE MATERIAL PRODUCERS

Accreditation of Reference Material Producers ensures to users that reference materials (RMs) and certified reference materials (CRMs) are produced by competent organizations. When metrological traceability is well characterized in a CRM, users can compare results with prescribed values or with results obtained by other laboratories.

Therefore, CRMs can be used as the most effective means to perform method validation by assessment of trueness, and precision in a measurement process. RMs and CRMs are also suitable to be used in quality control in sectors such as environmental, food and oil. Finally, RMs and CRMs are the best tool for assigning values to materials, to perform calibration and to establish conventional scales.

MANAGEMENT SYSTEM CERTIFICATION

A management system is a set of processes that an organisation uses to control a specific aspect of its activities, e.g. the quality of its products, the environmental impact of its processing activities, sustainable management of its assets, the occupational health and safety of its employees, food safety, etc. A certified management system means that the organisation has demonstrated that this set of processes has been effectively implemented and is under control.

Accredited MS certifications ensure impartiality in the assessment; auditors are competent with respect to the specific aspect as well as the organisation's activities to be certified.

An organisation is certified only in conformity with the management system standard mentioned on the certificate covering the specified scope, which consists of the certification application field and the detailed processes verified and certified by the competent body. Organisation sites covered by certification are also listed on the management system certificate.

CERTIFICATION OF PRODUCTS, PROCESSES OR SERVICES

A product (e.g. a low energy bulb), a service (e.g. passenger transport) or a process (i.e. organic farming, traceability of timber origins) can be subject to certification.

Product certification aims to the statement by the producer that the product (or process or service) conforms to the relevant requirements. It is not the task of the certification body to declare the conformity of the product, but to attest the trueness of the conformity to the applicable requirements claimed by the producer.

Accredited product certification gives evidence of the independence between the certification body and the manufacturer, and provides presumption of conformity with the applicable legal requirements.

The accredited certificate for the product shall bear the detailed reference to the technical standard or technical specifications which the product is certified in conformity with.

CERTIFICATION OF PERSONS

The accreditation of the bodies certifying persons is either voluntary or compulsory; it may be a statutory requirement for certain professional categories (e.g. non-destructive testing, welding, property, diagnostic surveys, etc.).

The accredited certificate for persons refers to the qualification of the person that the body has evaluated as competent to certify, with the correct reference to the normative document which the person conforms to.

VALIDATION AND VERIFICATION

According to Regulation (EU) 2018/2067, greenhouse gas emissions shall be verified by accredited verifiers, which can operate in more than one EU Member State.

Accredited verification reports can be accepted through all Europe.

According to Regulation (EU) 2015/757, assessment of monitoring plans and verification of emissions reports concerning CO₂ emissions from maritime transport, shall be done by accredited verifiers from EU Member States.

This developing area is expected to be expanded to other environmental area such as water footprint, or quantities of generated waste, and subsequently also to fields outside the environmental area.



RELIABLE PARTNERS

Accreditation Bodies' Network

Finding out the competent supplier for conformity assessment activities

EA, IAF and ILAC publish the list of accreditation bodies signatories of the EA and IAF MLA (Multilateral Agreements) or ILAC MRA (Mutual Recognition Arrangement), to identify the competent Accreditation Bodies worldwide recognised.



www.european-accreditation.org



www.iaf.nu



www.ilac.org

Moreover, accreditation bodies in most countries publish lists or directories of the bodies and laboratories they have accredited, together with contact details and scopes of accreditation.



EA Secretariat

75 avenue Parmentier
F-75544 PARIS Cedex 11
FRANCE

Email: secretariat@european-accreditation.org

Phone: +33 (0)1 40 21 24 62

www.european-accreditation.org



With support from
the European Union



With support from
the EFTA