



Bord Náisiúnta na hÉireann um Chreidiúnú
Irish National Accreditation Board

HSA

An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta
Health and Safety Authority

A Strategy for Accreditation

Accreditation is recognised as central in providing trust and confidence in Irish enterprises, trade and public services.

2022-2026



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Foreword



Damien English TD,
Minister of State for Business,
Employment and Retail

The development of the first ever Strategy for Accreditation by the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB), part of the Health and Safety Authority, is an important and welcome milestone. I am grateful for the commitment and work by all involved in the development of this valuable 5-year plan.

This new forward-focused strategy sets out how Ireland will fully realise the benefits of accreditation and will have a positive impact across the Irish economy and society.

The key benefits of accreditation are felt by the government, the consumer, and industry. It assists the government in seeking competent and professional bodies to pursue our policy and regulatory goals. It gives the consumer confidence in the quality of the products and services they purchase. It increases efficiency, innovation, and safety within industry. Accreditation also plays an essential role in augmenting access to European and international markets, offering a competitive advantage for Irish products and services.

The Strategy for Accreditation will be delivered through specific and detailed actions aimed at highlighting the wide-ranging benefits of accreditation through its key priorities of:

- informing national policy-makers across government to leverage the competitiveness, trade, safety, and confidence-building benefits to make targeted improvements to the economy,
- communicating the role and importance of accreditation to stakeholders and the public to build awareness and engagement,
- promoting the active voluntary uptake of accreditation by enterprise of all sizes, and
- increasing the availability and innovativeness of accreditation, with the aim of improving the quality of Irish products and services.

In an increasingly competitive and globalised economy, particularly as we gradually and carefully emerge from a global health pandemic, it is vitally important for Ireland's long-term success that the products and services we produce demonstrably meet or exceed international standards in the most efficient, productive and safe way, and accreditation is a key tool in achieving this aim.

Damien English TD,
Minister of State for Business,
Employment and Retail



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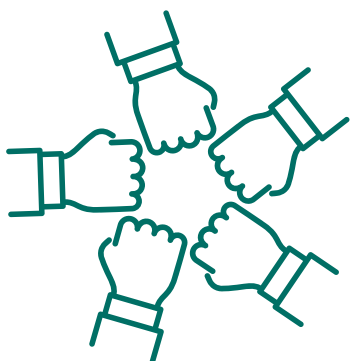
Introduction

We are pleased to present Ireland's first Strategy for Accreditation. This Strategy was developed by the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB), a part of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) and sets out a vision and an ambitious roadmap for accreditation from 2022 to 2026.

The Strategy has been developed against the backdrop of uncertainty created by the global pandemic, economic and societal challenges from climate disruption, and changes to trading partnerships and cybersecurity threats. Nationally and internationally, policy-makers, enterprises and society face challenges from these uncertainties; this Strategy recognises that accredited goods and services will support the government, regulators, enterprise, and society to meet these challenges.

The Irish economy has faced significant disruption arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and the ongoing consequences of the United Kingdom's (UK's) exit from the European Union (EU). The Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) estimated that if the pandemic had not occurred, the Irish economy would have experienced €24 billion more in output during 2020 and 2021 alone.^[3] Despite a signed trade agreement between the EU and the UK, the potential for a divergence in regulations and standards may create impediments to trade, which did not previously exist.

Accreditation is an essential enabler for trade, demonstrating its distinct importance to the economy. Underpinned by international agreements, accreditation, as provided by INAB, removes barriers to international trade for Irish businesses. Facilitating market access for Ireland's products and services will play an important role in supporting Ireland's future economic growth.



Building relationships, forming strategic alliances and collaborating at all levels will be fundamental to delivering the ambitious plans set out for the next five years.

The stark reality of the immediate and future impacts of climate change mean that policy-makers and society must implement clear action plans in order to provide for a sustainable future. Accreditation already plays a pivotal role in assuring the competence of emissions verifiers, enterprises implementing an accredited energy and environmental management system realise real sustainable and economic benefits. The potential for the application of accreditation to support sustainable development and positively contribute to climate action is evident.

It is important that society can expect and trust high-quality public health and safety services. Accreditation is the process used to demonstrate the competence of testing, inspection, and certification services across a broad range of activities in healthcare, food and water quality, product safety and information security management.

Building relationships, forming strategic alliances, and collaborating at all levels will be fundamental to delivering the ambitious plans set out in this Strategy for the next five years. These partnerships will help to gain support and recognition for accreditation. In order to grow uptake of accreditation, existing schemes will be enhanced and further innovation and a more comprehensive accreditation offering will be developed. The benefits that accreditation can bring to Ireland's economy and society will be promoted in order to increase awareness and grow uptake. Communicating the benefits and role of accreditation across a strong network will enhance buy-in and understanding, and will grow confidence. INAB, through effective partnerships, will seek opportunities for accreditation through alignment with other government strategies and priorities.

To deliver this Strategy successfully and take advantage of opportunities, INAB will continue to have a strategic focus and a proactive outlook, in order to ensure preparedness for further economic and social change.

It will put in place a robust structure, seek the necessary resources to ensure that it meets its mandate, and strengthen relationships at a European and international level, bringing awareness to Ireland's accreditation needs.

The implementation of the Strategy for Accreditation sets out a clear path for how Ireland can avail of the many benefits of accreditation. We look forward to working alongside our clients, partners and stakeholders to realise its vision.

Dr Adrienne Duff,
Programme Manager,
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Dr Sharon McGuinness,
Chief Executive Officer,
Health and Safety Authority

Ms. Ita Kinahan,
Chairperson,
Accreditation Board

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The context for accreditation

What is accreditation

Products, services and systems are examined to ensure that they, initially and continually, meet specified requirements set out in legislation or standards. These examinations, known as **conformity assessment**, are tests, inspections, calibrations, verifications, and certifications. The organisations that perform conformity assessment are known as **conformity assessment bodies (CABs)** and are an important component of a national infrastructure underpinning trade, quality and high standards.

Accreditation is the independent assessment of CABs to ensure their independence, impartiality and competence to carry out conformity assessment tasks. Accreditation is awarded to recognised standards by a national accreditation body. In Ireland, this is the function of INAB.

Accreditation covers all market sectors and its independent nature builds trust and confidence in the quality and integrity of products and services. Receiving accreditation enables the acceptance of products and services globally, as they are “*tested or certified once, accepted everywhere*”. The ability to move products and services into different markets without secondary testing or verification contributes to the efficiency of international trading for customers and suppliers.

INAB and accreditation in Ireland

INAB is part of the HSA and is established under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 ^[1]. It is the sole national accreditation body for Ireland appointed by the government, and it is recognised by the European Commission in accordance with Regulation (EC) No 765/2008 ^[2].

INAB provides accreditation of CABs to international standards through a series of peer assessments, confirming their competence, integrity and independence to perform testing, inspection, certification, verification, and calibration services.

INAB is Ireland's representative in European and international fora on accreditation, actively contributing to policy and bringing forward Ireland's interests. International recognition of accreditation is maintained through a suite of multilateral agreements.

INAB provides accreditation in Ireland across a wide economic, regulatory and public policy landscape.

In the regulated area, accreditation is mandated where products (e.g. machinery) must meet specific requirements in order to be placed on the market. National policy-makers have selected accreditation as the preferred mechanism to demonstrate competence in award criteria for national contracts (e.g. car testing, medical diagnostic screening).

Organisations that voluntarily choose to become accredited do so in order to distinguish their business in the marketplace and obtain independent confirmation of their competence to provide their services.

Organisations that are accredited in Ireland include small indigenous enterprises employing fewer than five persons; large public sector organisations supporting State administration; and large enterprises that are key to Ireland’s foreign direct investment policies.

Accreditation is administered through a comprehensive on-site annual assessment programme with highly specialised assessors.

The application of accreditation as provided by INAB has rapidly adapted and evolved in recent years to address ongoing economic and public policy changes such as the UK’s exit from the EU and the COVID-19 pandemic. Accredited conformity assessment is providing consumer trust and confidence in certifying product safety and healthcare testing.

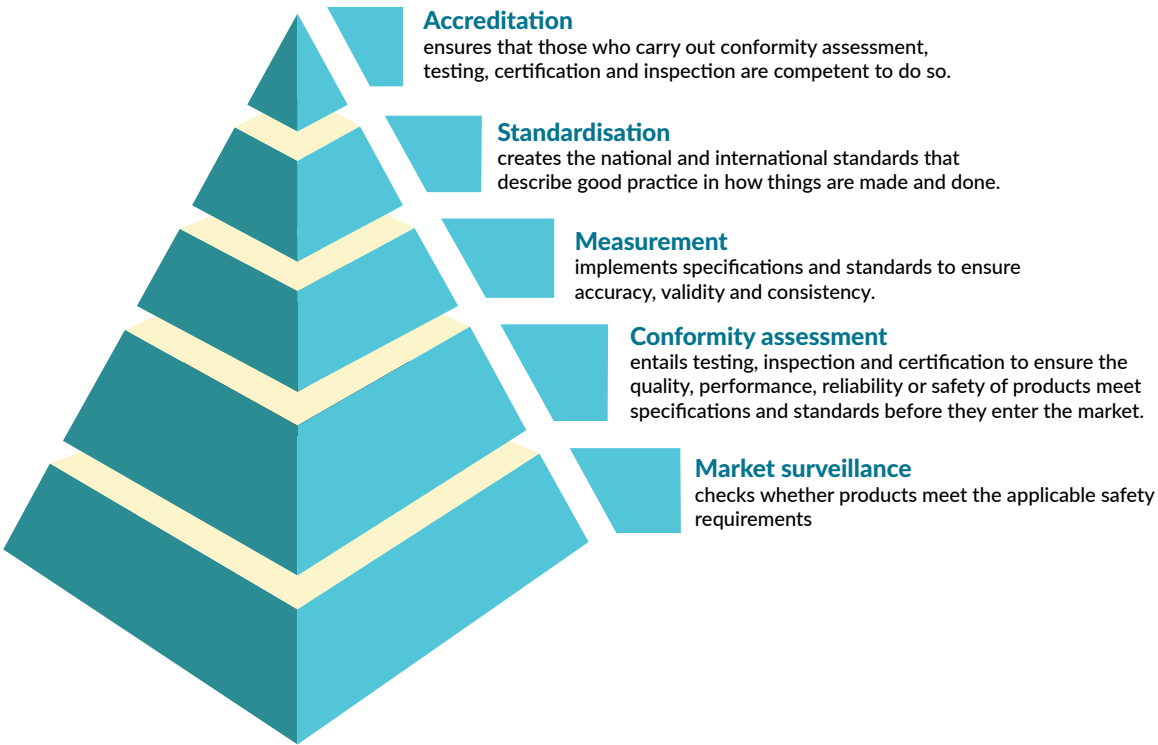
In recognition of new challenges and expectations to have high standards, INAB is continually adapting and expanding to bring diverse new activity to the market, for example, in the areas of data protection, biobanking and autopsy services.

Through the realisation of the Strategy, accreditation will be embedded into public policy, recognised as providing real competitive value, and accepted as the basis for consumer confidence in goods and services.

The importance of a national quality infrastructure

When enterprises, public authorities and consumers purchase goods and services, there is an expectation that they meet applicable specifications and standards. To provide this confidence and deliver on expectations, there exists a national system of standards, agreements, codes and regulations that are rigorously devised and implemented.

This national system is known as the National Quality Infrastructure (NQI).^[4]



There are a number of key pillars in an NQI, often presented as in Figure 1

A recognised NQI supports and facilitates international trade, underpinning World Trade Organization (WTO) rules on eliminating technical barriers to trade (TBTs). This is achieved through the mutual acceptance of international standards and the mutual recognition of conformity assessment and accreditation, realising the free trade goal of “*tested or certified once, accepted everywhere*”.

While the five pillars are important elements in the NQI, **accreditation** is recognised as the highest level of control in the conformity system. Accredited bodies have the technical capacity and competence to perform their duties with integrity and impartiality. Used in regulated sectors and voluntary areas, accreditation increases trust in conformity assessment.



INAB provides accreditation in Ireland across a wide economic, regulatory and public policy landscape.

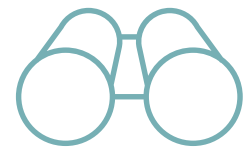


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Strategic vision and principles

Strategic vision

Accreditation is recognised as central in providing trust and confidence in Irish enterprises, trade and public services.



Accreditation will be positioned as a positive influence in policy decision-making and will strongly support Ireland's interests at an EU and international level. The vital role that accreditation has in unlocking European and international trade will play an important role in Ireland's sustained economic recovery and long-term prosperity.

Through the delivery of this Strategy, widespread public recognition and awareness of the role and the benefits accreditation brings to Irish society will be created. It will be recognised as providing trust and confidence in Irish products and services across government, industry and consumers.

Through greater participation in accreditation, enterprises will improve their competitiveness and regulators can rely on accreditation for robust legislative compliance.



Positive influence in policy decision making



Strongly represent Ireland's interests at an EU and international level



Unlocking European and international trade



Public recognition and awareness



Improve competitiveness



Robust legislative compliance

Principles to deliver the strategic vision

Five key principles guide the successful delivery of the Strategy for Accreditation.



These key principles are:

1. Independence

Exercise good judgement and impartiality to eliminate bias and conflict of interest when engaging with government, enterprises and the public.

2. Collaboration

Be open, approachable and work together with accreditation stakeholders to deliver the collective strategic vision.

3. Governance

Exercise the highest standards of governance in the delivery of the Strategy for Accreditation, demonstrating openness, transparency, consistency, fairness and integrity.

4. Excellence

Proactively maintain the highest possible standards of accreditation expertise, in order to ensure the effective delivery of the Strategy.

5. Innovation

Facilitate and encourage a culture of innovation to seek out new operational and strategic accreditation opportunities, embrace change, and provide timely and effective services to accreditation stakeholders.

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Strategic priorities, goals and objectives



Four strategic priorities will direct the Strategy for Accreditation over the 5-year period.

PRIORITY 1

Inform and influence national policy

PRIORITY 2

Promote awareness and engagement

PRIORITY 3

Grow uptake and application of accreditation

PRIORITY 4

Provide capacity and infrastructure

Priority 1:

Inform and influence national policy

Expected Outcome: Accreditation's central role is better understood and valued by key stakeholders and considered for inclusion when introducing new policies and regulations in relevant areas. Ireland's interests are strongly represented at an EU and international level.

Goal 1:

Quantify, verify and articulate the benefits of accreditation

Objective 1	Commission research to analyse, quantify and verify the benefits of accreditation
Objective 2	Develop and publish material to advocate for accreditation nationally across government, industry and society

Goal 2:

Seek to influence national policy-makers and regulators to incorporate accreditation in policy decision-making

Objective 3	Take a lead role in communicating and translating direction set out at EU level to policy-makers on the application of accreditation in Ireland
Objective 4	Develop positive engagement with government and industry representative bodies to increase the use of accredited services across the public and private sectors
Objective 5	Influence the development of relevant national and organisational strategies to align with the Strategy for Accreditation

Goal 3:

Identify and target strategic sectoral areas where the benefits of accreditation can be realised

Objective 6	Enable a proactive response to political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal change through horizon scanning
Objective 7	Identify specific target sectors and services where the application of accreditation creates the greatest value
Objective 8	Develop strong networks to influence policy and reflect Ireland's interests at EU level and support Ireland's position at international fora through existing European Accreditation (EA) membership

Priority 2:

Promote awareness and engagement

Expected Outcome: Greater recognition of accreditation as essential for providing trust and confidence in Irish products and services, as an indicator of high-quality standards and a means to achieve regulatory compliance. Strong partnerships, and engagement with strategic stakeholders are built to enhance recognition and understanding of accreditation across sectors.

Goal 4:

Build support and commitment for accreditation through strategic partnerships and collaboration

Objective 9	Develop and implement a communications and engagement strategy to increase understanding and awareness of accreditation
Objective 10	Partner with organisations to promote the benefits of accreditation, improve knowledge sharing and exchange information
Objective 11	Establish a 'voice of the client' forum to enable feedback and to promote their accredited services
Objective 12	Engage with sectoral groups to share learnings and knowledge, and to grow networks

Goal 5:

Communicate the benefits and role of accreditation

Objective 13	Promote accreditation and build the INAB brand
Objective 14	Convey the importance of accreditation as a facilitator of international trade and an enabler to market access for Irish enterprises
Objective 15	Communicate the value and benefits of accreditation through public forums, in accessible and relatable language

Priority 3:

Grow uptake and application of accreditation

Expected Outcome: An increase in the application of accreditation, adding real value and improved access for clients. Availability of ancillary services that broaden the accreditation experience and further support users of accreditation.

Goal 6:

Realise opportunities to increase the application of accreditation within new and existing sectors

Objective 16	Increase the scope of accreditation activity available in line with Irish market demand and international developments to broaden the accreditation offering and client base
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Objective 17	Develop and implement the roadmap for entry and growth in targeted sectors
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Goal 7:

Build an innovative and comprehensive accreditation offering through broadening the scope of value-added services

Objective 18	Support government departments to attract foreign investment into Ireland as part of Global Ireland
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Objective 19	Explore models for provision of training services
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Objective 20	Provide business development capability in the National Accreditation Body to bring new activity to market
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Goal 8:

Improve accessibility to accreditation

Objective 21	Commission a fee structure assessment to review the cost model for accreditation services
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Objective 22	Explore mechanisms to incentivise uptake
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Objective 23	Improve efficiency within the accreditation process to improve user experience and provide effective accreditation solutions
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Priority 4:

Provide capacity and infrastructure

Expected Outcome: A National Accreditation Body with a robust structure and the necessary resources to underpin and effectively deliver the Strategy for Accreditation and associated services.

Goal 9:

Develop the governance, organisational design and structure of the National Accreditation Body to ensure that it can meet its mandate and deliver the Strategy for Accreditation

Objective 24	Review and progress the implementation of the recommendations from the Irish National Accreditation Board Review of Structure and Positioning 2020 to enable the National Accreditation Body deliver its future mandate
Objective 25	Develop robust and transparent governance for the delivery of the Strategy for Accreditation

Goal 10:

Align the delivery of the Strategy for Accreditation to the Strategy of the Health and Safety Authority (HSA) to provide the necessary staff, financial resources and support required

Objective 26	Engage with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) to secure public sector funding to meet current and future accreditation resource requirements
Objective 27	Prepare a strategic workforce plan to address the resource requirements to deliver the Strategy for Accreditation
Objective 28	Increase operational capacity and capability through continuous improvement and innovation initiatives, and enhanced training programmes

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The benefits of accreditation

Accreditation plays an important role in benefitting the economy, regulatory compliance and society.



enabling trade



boosting productivity



protecting the public



enhancing policy and regulation

The most notable economic benefits are evident in the vital role that accreditation plays in enabling trade and boosting productivity, both of which are of particular importance for the competitiveness of enterprise in Ireland, improved living standards and quality of life.^[5]

The increasing application of accreditation in European and national legislation recognises the benefits of accredited conformity assessment in providing assurance for regulatory monitoring and compliance. Ireland's accreditation system is ideally placed to provide valuable support to indigenous enterprise seeking to meet EU regulatory frameworks and benefit from EU trade deals.

Societal confidence in the quality of goods and services that impact on public health and safety is reinforced and strengthened when based on a robust system of assessment and assurance, provided by accreditation.

The Strategy for Accreditation sets out a roadmap for how the benefits of accreditation will be further realised by the Irish economy and society over the next 5 years.

Enabling trade



As a small open economy, Ireland is heavily reliant on its export market. According to figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO), total Irish exports were valued at €160 billion in 2020,^[6] with approximately 40% of Ireland's exports going to the European single market. For the single European market to function effectively, each country must eliminate barriers to trade and have confidence in the quality of goods and services produced in other Member States. With the EU being the biggest export market for 80 countries^[7], accreditation plays a vital role in supporting the integration of the single market and facilitating seamless trade between Ireland and the rest of the EU. Indeed, the European Commission has stated that accreditation is "essential for the correct operation of a transparent and quality-oriented market".^[8]

Accreditation removes technical barriers to trade by verifying competence to harmonised standards in areas of conformity assessment, the results of which allow Irish products and services to cross borders without the need to retest or recertify. It gives Irish exporters access to global markets. In the words of an accredited organisation, "it enables both national and international sales of our products, gives customers confidence in our results and helps maintain our formal quality system".

Ireland's ability to trade freely in products and services within European and international markets is enabled through INAB's role as Ireland's signatory to European and international accreditation agreements with the European co-operation for Accreditation (EA), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), and the International Accreditation Forum (IAF).

The international recognition of Ireland's accreditation system in addition to the European Union's trading power provides Irish enterprise with access to a large international trading platform.

Accreditation and the mutual recognition of accredited conformity assessment is frequently an important element in international trade deals (e.g. the EU-Canada Free Trade Agreement (CETA)), demonstrating the growing importance of accreditation in facilitating trade. As Britain continues to be a key trading partner for Ireland, accounting for approximately 8% of the total goods exported in 2020, accreditation and standards will be central to the new trading arrangements with our closest neighbour.

The report on **Working to Progress Ireland's Trade and Investment Objectives** ^[9] states Ireland's ambition to "enhance our ability to sell goods and services into international markets"

The Brexit Readiness Action Plan ^[10] describes how standards and accreditation will become a more significant element in the Ireland-UK trade context.

Boosting productivity and performance



Accreditation is proven as a consistent and reliable system to manage risk, and to inform decision-making and improve supplier management. Underpinned by a competence assessment, accredited organisations enjoy a return on investment in accreditation, with enhanced reputation and credibility and increased productivity all contributing to providing competitive advantage.

Accreditation can benefit all enterprises, irrespective of their size or business sector. A focus of this Strategy is to grow the uptake of direct accreditation in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), influence policy to ensure that accredited services are mandated in public procurement, and ensure that where SMEs choose to be certified, it is by an accredited certification body.

A study by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2019 outlined a significant gap between the productivity of SMEs and large firms in Ireland. Irish SMEs lag significantly behind the EU average for the value added to the economy compared to large enterprises.^[12] Recent research in Italy^[13] has shown a direct link between enterprises that hold an accredited certification, and increased employee productivity and performance. This research analysed the economic performance of certified and non-certified enterprises.

Certified enterprises with over 250 staff were 1.4% more productive than non-certified enterprises. For smaller businesses, certified enterprises were 18.8% more productive than non-certified enterprises.

The Irish government has highlighted the importance of increasing productivity with the report from the SME taskforce^[14] encouraging the use of standards and quality systems as a means of increasing quality management and innovation practices. During the development of this Strategy, feedback from stakeholders emphasised the importance of accreditation as a catalyst for ensuring consistent and efficient performance of internal processes.

Through implementation of this Strategy, accreditation provided by INAB offers Irish enterprises a competitive advantage as the quality and efficiency of Irish products or services produced is improved across sectors within the economy.

The Future Jobs Ireland 2019 strategy^[11] sets a key strategic goal to “*improve SME productivity*”.

Protecting the public



Accreditation is a tested and trusted mechanism in building public confidence in the reliability of products and services that have a direct or indirect impact on people's health, safety, welfare, security and the environment.

Consumers can save time, reduce costs and lower their risk exposure when choosing an accredited, and therefore competent, supplier.

Accreditation objectively protects the public interest in providing the assurance that suppliers of goods and services are competent, thus building confidence and trust.

This Strategy will encourage national policy-makers to adopt the use of accreditation in the delivery of objectives that directly impact on the quality of life in Irish society. Accredited organisations are already active in climate policy, food quality and sustainable production, healthcare standards and energy efficiency. The potential to further expand the application for accreditation in these policy areas, in addition to identifying new activity to benefit Irish society, is a key objective of this Strategy.

Enhancing policy and regulation



Accredited conformity assessment supports a wide range of public policy and legislation, which national authorities implement in order to provide confidence in the quality of services delivered.

This Strategy aims to support better regulation in recognising the benefits accreditation brings by:

- avoiding duplication of public resources,
- basing compliance on competence assessments,
- minimising administrative and compliance burdens to enterprise, and
- informing decision-making.

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Strategic outcomes

The Strategy for Accreditation sets out a clear set of priorities, goals and objectives that, when delivered, will result in positive outcomes and real change for accreditation in Ireland.



Each priority sets out the expected outcomes to realise the strategic vision, recognising accreditation as central in providing trust and confidence in Irish enterprises, trade, and public services. The application and awareness of accreditation will grow, and a body that is competent, resourced and agile will deliver national accreditation.

Successful implementation of the Strategy for Accreditation will deliver outcomes based on:

- ✓ **Trust**
- ✓ **Confidence**
- ✓ **Competence**

Policy-makers, regulators, enterprise and end users can **trust** that organisations providing accredited goods and services conform to international standards.

Government, enterprise and society can have **confidence** that results provided by accredited organisations are credible and reliable.

Organisations that obtain and maintain accreditation are considered to have the necessary **competence** to perform their accredited activities.

8



Delivering the strategy and measuring performance

Programmes of work

INAB, the HSA and DETE will have leading roles in the successful delivery of the Strategy for Accreditation. Delivery of this Strategy is a key objective in the HSA's Statement of Strategy 2022 – 2024 and, as such, INAB, as part of the HSA will oversee the development and implementation of annual programmes of work through which this strategy is delivered. HSA/INAB will submit the programmes of work to the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment for review and approval.

The programmes of work will contain actions and key performance indicators for the year ahead. This will ensure that INAB, the HSA, and DETE have transparent deliverables and can effectively refocus their resources as required to deliver the Strategy for Accreditation.

Performance measurement

Performance measurement will be a vital tool to judge the success of the Strategy for Accreditation. The annual programmes of work for the HSA/INAB will include key activities and indicators to measure progress and outcomes against the specified goals of this strategy. An annual report will be developed and published, documenting the progress of the Strategy for Accreditation.



The annual programmes of work for the HSA/INAB will include key activities and indicators to measure progress and outcomes against the specified goals.



Annex I: Development of the strategy

Governance

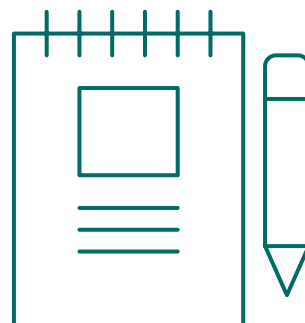
The development of the Strategy for Accreditation commenced in November 2020 and was governed by a steering committee, with representatives from the INAB Board and staff, the HSA and DETE.

Stakeholder engagement phase

During the strategic review stage, extensive stakeholder engagement was conducted through various formats such as workshops, interviews and surveys. Feedback was gained through interactions with over 200 stakeholders across multiple groups. This included current and previous INAB clients, government departments and agencies, international accreditation bodies, INAB staff, HSA employees, and representatives from the board of INAB and the board of the HSA.

INAB also conducted a public consultation process during the strategic review stage, gaining input from the public. The information collated from stakeholder engagements and the public consultation played an important role in the direction of this Strategy. Stakeholders recognised the confidence instilled from having their services accredited, and they acknowledged the professionalism and competency of INAB employees.

The information collated from stakeholder engagements and the public consultation played an important role in the direction of this Strategy.



Analytical phase

The information and data collected were subjected to a thorough SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis, as well as a PESTLE (political, economic, social, technological, legal, environmental) analysis. The outputs from this analytical phase informed the key themes for the review phase and determination of the priorities and objectives.

Strategic review phase

The information collected through the public consultation and stakeholder engagement process informed the development of key elements of the Strategy for Accreditation.

INAB would like to thank all who participated in the stakeholder engagement process and public consultation for their valuable contribution to Ireland's first Strategy for Accreditation. The strategic outcomes reflect the stakeholder consultations, with further operational objectives incorporated into INAB's detailed implementation plan.

Through the consultation process, the greatest opportunities identified for accreditation over the next five years are to:

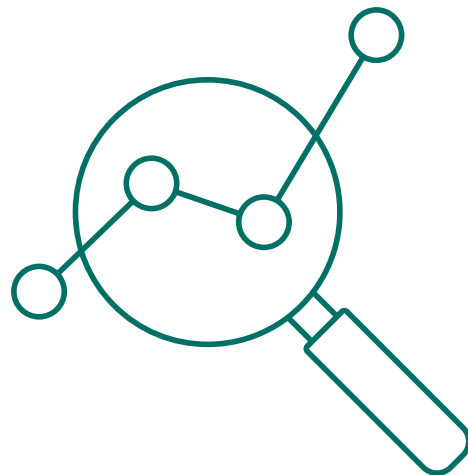
- create greater brand visibility and better promote the benefits of accreditation,
- increase public awareness of how accreditation improves the quality and safety of products and services,
- enhance the reputation and awareness of accreditation through increased representation at EU and national levels,
- improve accessibility to accreditation,
- leverage opportunities available as a result of the UK's exit from the European Union,
- promote public understanding and awareness of quality assurance in Ireland's healthcare system, and
- advocate for accredited suppliers in publicly funded contracts.

Further insights from our clients included:

- review capacity to scale up INAB,
- increase the volume and broaden the range of services available,
- enhance INAB's use of technology solutions,
- increase client engagement outside of the technical accreditation process,
- grow INAB's in-house sector knowledge in order to avoid being overreliant on external resources, and
- ensure balanced strategic and operational focus within INAB.

Preliminary research

During the strategic review stage of the development, preliminary research was undertaken on the potential economic and societal benefits of accreditation. While this research provided support to the Strategy for Accreditation, it also demonstrated a need to invest in research and analysis over the next 5 years and this has been identified as a key goal and objective to be delivered.





Annex II:

Reference material

Organisations referenced

Acronym	Organisation and contact
INAB	Irish National Accreditation Board (www.inab.ie)
HSA	Health & Safety Authority (www.hsa.ie)
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment (www.enterprise.gov.ie)
EA	European co-operation for Accreditation (www.european-accreditation.org)
CSO	Central Statistics Office (www.cso.ie)
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (www.ilac.org)
IAF	International Accreditation Forum (www.iaf.nu)
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (www.oecd.org)

Definitions

Glossary term	Meaning
Accreditation	Independent evaluation of conformity assessment bodies (CABs) against recognised standards to ensure their impartiality and competence to carry out specific activities, such as tests, calibrations, inspections and certifications
Conformity assessment	Processes that are used to demonstrate that a product, service or management system, or body meets specified requirements set out in standards or legislation
Conformity Assessment Body (CAB)	Entities that perform testing, calibration, verification, certification or inspection services
National Quality Infrastructure (NQI)	A network of public and private organisations, together with the policies, relevant legal and regulatory framework, and practices needed to support and enhance the quality, safety, and environmental soundness of goods, services, and processes
Multilateral Agreement (MLA)	A signed agreement between the EA Members whereby the signatories recognise and accept the equivalence of the accreditation systems operated by the signing members, and also the reliability of the conformity assessment results provided by CABs accredited by the signing members.

Legislation

Reference No.	Title
1	Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 as amended by the Industrial Development (Dissolution of Forfás) Act 2014 (www.irishstatutebook.ie)
2	Regulation (EC) NO 765/2008 setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance. Available at: https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=celex%3A32008R0765

Reference reports and articles

3	<i>Quarterly Economic Commentary, Summer 2021</i> , ESRI. Available at: https://www.esri.ie/publications/quarterly-economic-commentary-summer-2021
4	<i>Ensuring Quality to Gain Access to Global Markets: A Reform Toolkit</i> , World Bank Group. Available at: https://thedocs.worldbank.org/en/doc/249621553265195570-0090022019/original/FullQIToolkitReport.pdf
5	<i>The link between productivity growth and living standards</i> . Economic Policy Institute, 2000. Available at: https://www.epi.org/publication/webfeatures_snapshots_archive_03222000/
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