

Accreditation for Certification of Products

IS-5

INAB offers Certification Bodies accreditation to the international standard ISO Guide 65:1996 "General requirements for bodies operating product certification systems", also known as EN 45011.

In the area of Product Certification, INAB accredits certification bodies who certify the quality of a product. The word "product" is used in its widest sense, and includes processes and services. The certification of such a product is a means of providing assurance that the product in question conforms to standards and/or other normative documents.

Certification bodies providing product certification issue product certificates or licenses to organisations which entitles them to display a mark of conformity on their product or to issue a certificate indicating the product's conformity with specified requirements. In this way the consumer is assured that the product they are purchasing has reached a set standard. One of the big growth areas for product certification has been in the food area. Food quality assurance schemes such as those owned by Bord Bia and Bord Iascaigh Mhara are now implemented by accredited certification bodies.

Product certification can offer the customer formal documentation that the product they have purchased has been tested by qualified personnel to the applicable codes and/or standards. Those seeking certification for their products must demonstrate that they have adequate quality control systems in place to maintain conformity of their products with the standards.

ISO Guide 65 has a number of requirements for organisational structure, quality management system elements, competence of personnel, confidentiality, etc. The certification body must also describe the certification requirements, how the product evaluation is performed and define periods of recertification and surveillance. In addition, the product certification body must be able to demonstrate how conflict of interest is managed and provide rules and monitoring of the certification mark.

Once the product certification body has all of the organisational and technical measures in place, and has been operating a certification service for a period of time sufficient to have historical records built up, and to be able to demonstrate that the operation is stable (typically three months minimum), it can apply to INAB for accreditation.

INAB applicant and accredited product certification bodies are required to implement in full the requirements of ISO Guide 65 and associated EA, IAF¹ and INAB mandatory documents, which may be accessed from the INAB website at www.inab.ie

Certification bodies are accredited in compliance with ISO Guide 65 for a defined range of activities and these are detailed in a scope of accreditation which is annexed to the organisation's accreditation

¹ EA is the European Co-operation for Accreditation
IAF is the International Accreditation Forum

certificate. A directory of these scopes of accreditation is maintained by INAB and is available from the INAB website.

The process for the accreditation of certification bodies is fully described in INAB Publication P7, also available from the INAB website.

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