

Accreditation for Certification of Products

IS-5

INAB offers certification bodies accreditation to the international standard **ISO 17065:2012**, “*Conformity assessment - Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services*”.

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 as the title of the standard suggests, it 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 licences 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 consumers are 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 customers formal documentation that the product they have purchased has been tested by qualified personnel to 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 17065 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 must define periods of recertification and surveillance. In addition, the product certification body must have a mechanism for safeguarding impartiality and must provide rules for, and monitoring of, its 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 is 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 17065 and associated EA, IAF¹ and INAB mandatory documents, which may be accessed from the INAB website at www.inab.ie

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

Certification bodies are accredited in accordance with requirements of ISO 17065 for a defined range of activities and these are detailed in a scope of accreditation which is annexed to the organisation's accreditation 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.

For further information please contact INAB at:

Email: inab@inab.ie