

Guide: ASCB Affiliations

Summary:

ASCB is not currently a member/signatory of IAF, ILAC or IPC. There is no technical requirement for membership of these trade associations that are typically non-profit distributing commercial organisations.

In consequence of public awareness of this subject, ASCB is publishing this guidance.

Our position remains under constant review.

Detail:

ASCB operates in over 70 countries and across a broad range of accreditation types. Within each accreditation type, industry sector, country and region, there are many hundreds of available affiliations, associations and private accreditation schemes. We are often asked "Is ASCB a member of X professional body?". We must be selective, otherwise the administrative function and membership costs to maintain these affiliations would detract from our primary purposes of quality assurance.

Many international organisations, such as IAF & ILAC are private corporations that are established with no other remit or authority than to operate as non-profit distributing commercial organisations. They have no legally assigned status (such as that which is assigned to United Nations Organisations or the International Monetary Fund) nor is there any legal requirement for their members to be members.

Nonetheless, ASCB recognise that membership does have benefits in particular the credibility and prestige that such organisations may have built up in the marketplace, even though these benefits may be subjective and are commercially driven factors.

At time of publication, IAF multilateral recognition arrangements were in place with only 46% of countries in the world and ILAC MRAs in place with 45% of countries in the world. ASCB feel that to exclude the majority of the world's accreditation bodies from quality assurance and procurement schemes does not reflect the purpose of international standards such as ISO.

ASCB pride ourselves on being technically outstanding without being overly bureaucratic. We offer accreditation to ISO standards and other non-proprietary schemes. We assess conformity assessment bodies (CABs) to the required standard and only the standard, rather than additional mandatory documents that private membership bodies impose on CABs. These additional requirements serve little purpose to improve quality assurance.

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