

Guidance: ASCB Affiliations

Summary

This guidance explains ASCB's approach to external affiliations and cooperation arrangements. It is intended primarily for use by conformity assessment bodies (CABs) accredited by ASCB, to support consistent and accurate communication.

ASCB is not currently a member of, or signatory to, the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), or Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated. There is no technical or normative requirement within ISO/IEC accreditation standards for accreditation bodies to hold membership of these or similar trade or cooperation organizations, which typically operate as non-profit-distributing private entities.

Given the ongoing interest in this subject from clients and other stakeholders, a short client-facing FAQ is included at the end of this document to assist CABs in responding to related questions.

ASCB's approach to external affiliations is kept under regular review as part of its long-term governance and strategic planning.

Detail

ASCB has operated continuously for more than 30 years, supporting accreditation activities internationally across more than 70 countries and a wide range of accreditation types. Within each accreditation type, industry sector, country and region, there are numerous professional associations, cooperation bodies, and private accreditation or recognition schemes.

As a result, ASCB is frequently asked whether it is a member of particular professional or international organizations. While such affiliations can provide visibility or recognition in certain markets, ASCB must be selective. Maintaining a broad portfolio of memberships would require significant administrative effort and cost, which would detract from ASCB's primary purpose: delivering effective, impartial and technically robust accreditation based on international standards.

Many international organizations, including IAF and ILAC, are privately constituted bodies operating as non-profit-distributing commercial organizations. They do not hold legally assigned authority comparable to intergovernmental organizations such as the World Trade Organization, or other United Nations specialized agencies operating under international law, nor is there any legal requirement for accreditation bodies or certification bodies to be members of them.

ASCB recognizes that membership of such organizations may carry perceived benefits in certain markets, including visibility or recognition. These benefits are commercially and market-driven rather than technical or normative requirements of ISO/IEC accreditation standards.

At the time of publication, multilateral recognition arrangements associated with IAF and ILAC cover less than 50% of the countries worldwide. ASCB considers that restricting quality assurance or



procurement acceptance solely to bodies operating within such frameworks risks excluding a significant proportion of global conformity assessment activity. This does not align with the international and inclusive intent of ISO standards, which are designed to support global trade and confidence across diverse markets.

ASCB's accreditation model is founded on technical competence, impartiality and conformance with published ISO/IEC standards. ASCB assesses conformity assessment bodies against the applicable standard requirements and does not impose additional proprietary, membership-driven or non-standard criteria. This approach has supported sustained market acceptance of ASCB accreditation over more than three decades of continuous operation.

Conclusion

For over 30 years, ASCB has provided independent, internationally focused accreditation grounded in ISO/IEC standards. Decisions regarding external affiliations and memberships are made in support of this objective and are reviewed periodically in light of market needs, technical developments and stakeholder feedback.

Certified client FAQ

The FAQ below is provided to support certification bodies accredited by ASCB in responding to questions from clients and other interested parties about ASCB's approach to accreditation and external affiliations.

What is ASCB?

ASCB is an independent, non-governmental accreditation body founded in 1995. For more than 30 years, ASCB has supported accreditation activities internationally using recognized ISO/IEC standards.

What does ASCB do?

ASCB accredits certification bodies and other conformity assessment bodies. Accreditation confirms that these organizations operate competently, impartially and in accordance with the applicable international standards.

What standards does ASCB use?

ASCB accredits against internationally recognized ISO/IEC standards, including those used for management system certification, personnel certification, product certification, and testing and calibration activities.



Is ASCB part of IAF, ILAC, or similar organizations?

No. ASCB is not currently a member of, or signatory to, organizations such as the International Accreditation Forum (IAF), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC), or Global Accreditation Cooperation Incorporated.

Is membership of those organizations required?

No. ISO/IEC accreditation standards do not require accreditation bodies to be members of IAF, ILAC, or similar cooperation or trade organizations. Accreditation is based on meeting the technical and impartiality requirements of the applicable ISO/IEC standards.

Do organizations such as IAF or ILAC have legal authority?

No. Organizations such as IAF and ILAC are privately constituted bodies. They do not have legally assigned authority comparable to intergovernmental organizations such as the World Trade Organization or other United Nations specialized agencies.

Does ASCB's approach affect the validity or use of certification?

No. Certification issued by an ASCB-accredited certification body is based on compliance with the relevant ISO standards. ASCB's role is to ensure that certification bodies operate competently, impartially and in accordance with those standards. Acceptance of certification for specific purposes, such as procurement or regulation, depends on the requirements set by the organization, scheme or contracting authority involved.

Why does ASCB take a selective approach to affiliations?

ASCB operates across many countries, sectors and accreditation types. There are numerous professional associations and cooperation bodies worldwide. ASCB takes a selective approach to affiliations to ensure that resources remain focused on delivering effective, impartial and technically robust accreditation based on international standards.

How is ASCB's credibility established?

ASCB's credibility is established through more than 30 years of continuous operation, adherence to international standards, independent governance, transparent processes and sustained acceptance of ASCB accreditation across multiple markets.

Is there a legal requirement to use a specific accreditation body?

There is no general legal requirement to select a certification body accredited by a particular accreditation organization. Organizations should ensure that their certification and accreditation arrangements meet their regulatory, contractual and commercial requirements.

Where can I find more information?

Further information about ASCB, its accreditation scope and standards is available from ASCB or via its website.