ITU-T SG11 Guideline

Testing Laboratories recognition procedure[1]

Summary:

ITU-T SG11 Guideline "Testing Laboratories recognition procedure" describes the procedure for recognition of Testing Laboratories, which have competence for testing against ITU-T Recommendations. This guideline also describes the ITU-T Conformity Assessment Steering Committee (CASC) which will manage the recognition procedure under ITU-T SG11.

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[1] *NOTE: During the approval of this document by SG11 (29/04/2015), the USA and UK registered reservations regarding the Testing Laboratories (TL) recognition procedure. They have concerns that no budgetary proposals have been developed and that the financial burden and scope of managing these TLs will have an impact on the ITU budget. They stated that it is not clear whether the ITU has an operational role in the conformity and interoperability assessment and in managing the activities of the TLs. They also stated that uncertain are the rules and procedures that would need to be developed for the operation and management of the Conformity Assessment Steering Committee (CASC).*

USA also stated that a number of standards development organizations (SDOs) in the United States that represent a significant number of Sector Members have expressed their concerns regarding the ITU's conformity and interoperability (C&I) program. The USA also stated that:

- *The C&I databases may deform and negatively impact the ICT market by raising equipment costs, increasing time-to-market, and frustrating trade;*
- *The ITU databases pose significant enforcement challenges.*
- *The interoperability between different equipment is often handled by the private sector, including network operators and equipment vendors, in addition to any needed conformity testing, and hence poses significant testing costs and burdens for network operators and equipment vendors.*

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Scope

The implementation of the ITU-T testing laboratory recognition procedure will take place through the following approach:

- to join the existing conformity assessment programs, by providing ITU-T's technical experts to perform relevant TL's assessment against ITU-T Recommendations ;
- based on experience gained from collaboration with existing schemes, ITU may, in future, consider the possibility of establishing an ITU-T TL self-recognition procedure, providing the assessment of ITU-T technical experts and assessment of the TL.

This Guideline describes the criteria and the description of the appointment of ITU-T technical experts and the procedure for registration of testing laboratories that are eligible to test ICT equipment against the ITU-T Recommendations in the ITU list of recognized TLs. This Guideline also describes the ITU-T CASC and its terms of reference for managing such procedures.

1.   References

None

2.   Definitions

Testing laboratory (TL) is a laboratory that performs tests.

Recognized TL is a testing laboratory which has successfully passed the recognition procedures.

Candidate TL is a testing laboratory which has applied for recognition.

ITU-T CASC is the ITU-T Conformity Assessment Steering Committee managing the recognition procedures of TLs.

3.   Abbreviations

AB	Accreditation Body
CASC	Conformity Assessment Steering Committee
C&I	Conformance and Interoperability
CV	Curriculum vitae
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
IEC	International Electrotechnical Commission
IECEE	IEC System of Conformity Assessment Schemes for Electrotechnical Equipment and Components
ILAC	International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation
ISO	International Organization for Standardization
ITU	International Telecommunication Union
MLA	Multilateral recognition Agreement
MRA	Mutual Recognition Agreement
SG	Study Group
TL	Testing Laboratory

ToR	Terms of Reference
TSB	Telecommunication Standardization Bureau

4.   Conventions

None

5.   Terms of Reference of the ITU-T CASC

The main objectives of the initial approach of the implementation of the ITU-T CASC are:

−   to provide the ITU-T view and position to the management organs of the established Conformity Assessment Systems and Schemes of the IEC and ILAC;

−   to set up criteria, rules and procedures for the appointment of ITU-T technical experts by working with established Conformity Assessment Systems and Schemes of IEC, in collaboration with ILAC aiming for a common testing and conformity assessment;

−   to process applications from candidate experts from ITU-T membership;

−   to appoint the ITU-T technical expert(s);

−   to recognize TL with a scope of ITU-T Recommendation(s) which is assessed by IEC or by ILAC accreditation bodies and register it in the ITU recognized TL list;

The ITU-T CASC is working under the auspices of ITU-T SG11 with the participation of ITU-T experts from all ITU-T SGs.

Any expert from ITU-T membership can be appointed by CASC as an ITU-T technical expert according to the requirements in paragraph 7 below. Initially the editors of ITU-T Recommendations which are specified in the living list of key recommendations suitable for C&I testing as well as focal points of pilot projects in the living list of pilot project for C&I testing against ITU-T Recs could be candidates for appointment by the CASC as technical experts. The list of ITU-T technical experts will be made publicly available.

Bearing in mind that the ITU-T CASC cooperates with international accreditation bodies, the ITU-T technical experts appointed by ITU-T CASC can work directly as part of the accreditation body teams.

The ITU-T Telecommunication Standardization Bureau (TSB) will provide secretariat and facilities as required by ITU-T CASC.

The ITU-T CASC will work mostly using electronic working methods and have face-to-face meetings which will normally occur concurrently with SG11 meetings. Meetings will be held as determined by the Chairman of ITU-T CASC as soon as a pool of applications have been gathered and will be announced to its participants. The ITU-T CASC will follow the working rules and procedures which are applied to a Working Party.

The ITU-T CASC will report its activities to ITU-T SG11.

6.   Periodical review

The ITU-T CASC will review the effectiveness of the programme periodically, at least on an annual basis. This periodical review will also check whether the approach is efficient.

7.   Criteria for ITU-T technical experts

An expert who is willing to be appointed as an ITU technical expert should complete the on-line

form which is available on the ITU-T C&I Portal and send the completed relevant application form to the ITU-T CASC. The ITU-T technical expert should comply with the following requirements:

- working knowledge and experience of the relevant ITU-T Recommendations and relevant test suites;

- witnessing of testing and measuring including previous experience in the relevant field(s) and that the assessed ITU technical expert may have had in previous employment (based on the information on the CV);

- completed relevant training programmes as decided by the CASC;

- proven experience of the competence to review the Test Report.

- shall not have a conflict of interest

8.   Criteria for recognized Testing Laboratories

In order to be recognized by the ITU-T, testing laboratories shall:

1. have ITU-T Recommendations in their scope of testing;

2. be assessed to these ITU-T Recommendations by a program approved by ITU-T CASC, for example be accredited by IEC or an Accreditation Body which signed a mutual recognition arrangement (e.g MRA, MLA) with ILAC to ISO/IEC 17025 with the accredited scope covering the relevant test types and processes.

9.   TL recognition procedure

The TL recognition procedure of ITU is based on the decisions of IEC and ILAC on the assessment of a particular TL. For this purpose, ITU-T CASC should establish the agreement between the relevant committee of IEC and ILAC, specifying the exact procedures of collaboration. The high level workflow of the ITU CASC, which includes recognition procedure, is presented in Annex 1.

In general, all inquiries to recognize a TL should be forwarded to ITU CASC and/or to the relevant committee of IEC and ILAC. In case of ITU CASC, the Candidate TL shall submit to the ITU-T CASC a signed application form (to be developed by CASC), containing all necessary documents. The ITU-T CASC may contact the Candidate TL to request more information. After collecting all information provided by the TL, ITU-T CASC will forward the set of documents to the relevant committee of IEC and ILAC for further action.

Based on the decisions of IEC and ILAC, ITU-T CASC will recognize a TL. Upon recognition, ITU-T CASC will issue a confirmation letter to the candidate TL. The confirmation letter will state the Recommendations for which recognition has been granted. The testing laboratory will be added to the list of recognized testing laboratories.

The status of Recognized TL is valid during a period of time determined by IEC and ILAC respectively.

The CASC needs to determine the procedure concerning the length of time that an application and associated assessment must be successfully completed and provide appropriate feedback to the assessed TL.

The ITU-T CASC will not disclose the status of requests for recognition to any third party until the recognition process is completed. All relevant information submitted to the ITU-T CASC for the purpose of securing TL recognition shall be held as extremely confidential by ITU-T CASC.

The detailed rules and procedures for TL recognition procedure shall be approved by ITU-T CASC.

9.1. Responsibility/Liability

The recognition of a testing laboratory by the ITU-T CASC does not imply or otherwise suggest approval of a product or that the recognized testing laboratory acts as an agent or representative of the ITU.

The ITU-T CASC does not accept any responsibility for the effects or consequences of services provided by the recognized testing laboratory on users of such services.

9.2. Retaining Recognition

Procedures dealing with the ongoing recognition of test laboratories shall be determined by CASC.

9.3. Suspension or Withdrawal of Recognition

Procedures dealing with the withdrawal or suspension recognition of test laboratories shall be determined by CASC.

Annex 1   General workflow diagrams of ITU-T CASC