



CSIRO Verification Services – ActivFire Scheme

1. Regulatory recognition.
2. Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

David J. Whittaker
CSIRO Verification Services
Executive Officer, ActivFire Scheme
12/13-May-2009

CSIRO Verification Services ActivFire® Scheme

Part I

Regulatory recognition

“Products, for which conformance to relevant criteria has been independently verified, are listed in ActivFire® Register of Fire Protection Equipment. The Register, which exists on-line at <http://www.ActivFire.gov.au>, is a nationally recognised source of “Evidence of suitability” for the purposes of the Building Code of Australia (BCA).”

Regulatory recognition

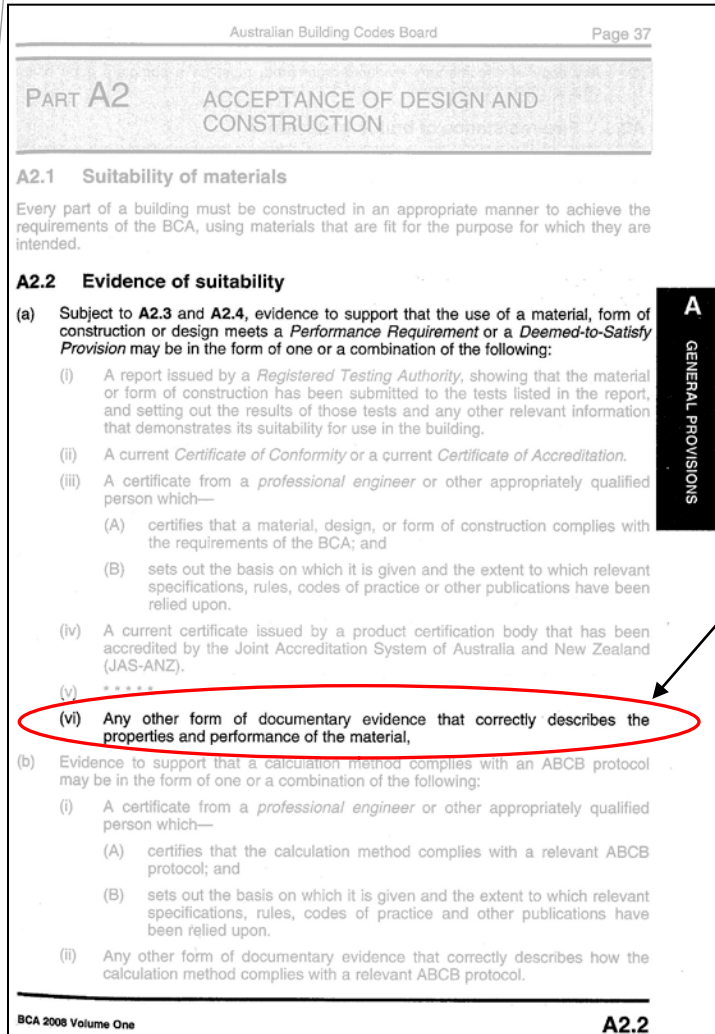
ActivFire® Scheme and CSIRO Verification Services

- In October 2004 the Australian Government transferred Scientific Services Laboratory (“SSL”), together with the administration and services of the ActivFire Scheme®, to the Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation (CSIRO) within the division of Materials Science and Engineering (CSIRO-MSE).
- In 2007, CSIRO Verification Services was created as a management and administrative group providing conformity assessment services in accordance with ISO Guides 28 and 65.
- ActivFire® Scheme, as one of a number of programs operating under CSIRO Verification Services, is a nationally recognised product certification scheme for the registration and listing of active (detection and suppression) fire protection equipment, verified as conforming to specified requirements (standards and specifications).
- Products, for which conformance to relevant criteria has been independently verified, are listed in ActivFire® Register of Fire Protection Equipment. The Register, which exists on-line at <http://www.ActivFire.gov.au>, is a nationally recognised source of “Evidence of suitability” for the purposes of the Building Code of Australia (BCA).

Regulatory recognition

ActivFire® Scheme

BCA: Evidence of suitability



BCA Clause A2.2 (vi)

Since publication of the 2007 edition of the BCA, recognition of CSIRO Verification Services and the ActivFire® Scheme is provided for under the general requirements of clause A2.2 item (vi)

ActivFire® provides documentation produced from relevant and verifiable details in relation to the properties and performance of materials used in construction and is acceptable as Evidence of Suitability meeting the a Performance Requirements or Deemed-to-Satisfy Provisions.

Regulatory recognition

ActivFire® Scheme

CSIRO: The organisation and statutory authority

- (vi) Any other form of documentary evidence that correctly describes the properties and performance of the material,

The scope of resources and authority of documentation contributing to evidence provided through CSIRO Verification Services – ActivFire® Scheme is outlined as follows

- CSIRO is an independent statutory authority constituted and operating under the provisions of the Science and Industry Research Act 1949 and the Commonwealth Authorities and Companies Act 1997.
- Under the act, the “Functions of the Organisation” (Part II, Cl. 9), determine that CSIRO’s research and services are provided for various purposes including;
 - i. assisting Australian industry;
 - ii. furthering the interests of the Australian community;
 - iii. contributing to the achievement of Australian national objectives or the performance of the national and international responsibilities of the Commonwealth;

Regulatory recognition

ActivFire® Scheme

The process and information

- Through defined and transparent processes CSIRO provides resources for evaluating established, as well as new and emerging, fire protection technologies.
- Documentation produced from relevant and verifiable details in relation to the properties and performance of evaluated products and materials includes the following.
 1. Product Listing Data Sheet (the content of which is soon to be migrated to Certificates of Conformity)
 - Product description.
 - Statement(s) of conformance criteria and evaluation.
 - Various elements of the data sheet provide, relevant extracts of technical properties of the product.
 - Limitation/conditions of conformance.
 2. On-line (web site) records of product registration details including;
 - Product standard(s)/specification(s) to which the producer's attestation of conformity has been verified.
 - Details of designated supply and manufacturer business entities associated with the product.

The above information is all available and accessible through the following web address.

<http://www.ActivFire.gov.au>

CSIRO Verification Services ActivFire® Scheme

Part II

Recognition of conformity evaluation agencies

“CSIRO Verification Services has developed a recognition framework and policies to enable our certification processes to appropriately manage and recognise evaluations and reporting from national and foreign agencies”

Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements

1. NATA^a is recognised as Australia's peak authority for accreditation of inspection and proficiency testing.
(ref.: Commonwealth / NATA MOU, Apr 2008)
2. Through various international and regional fora, such as the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRA) of ILAC^b and APLAC^c, NATA ensures that national interest priorities of the Commonwealth, Australian industry and community, in APEC^d, WTO^e and other trade agreements are taken into account.
(ref.: Commonwealth / NATA MOU, Apr 2008)
3. The operation of the MRA Network is detailed in NATA Information Paper 3 – May 2008

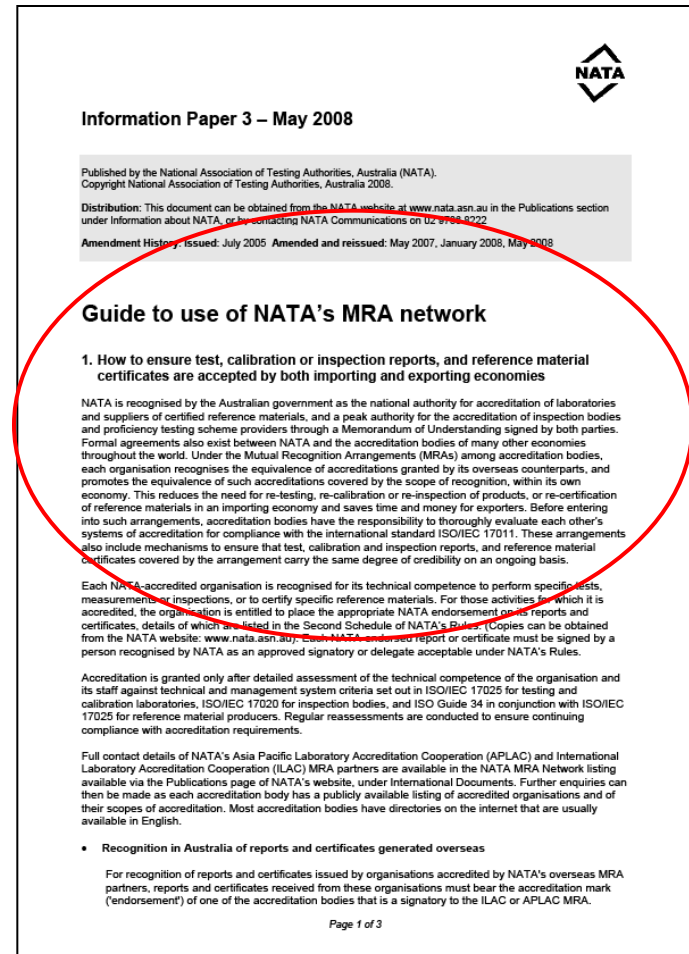
a NATA – National Association of Testing Authorities

b ILAC – International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

c APALAC – Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation

d APEC – Asia Pacific Economic Community

e WTO – World Trade Organisation



Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements

- The ILAC, APLAC and NATA Mutual Recognition Arrangements are agreements between accreditation bodies eg NATA and UKAS^a (UK).

Guide to use of NATA's MRA network

1. How to ensure test, calibration or inspection reports, and reference material certificates are accepted by both importing and exporting economies

NATA is recognised by the Australian government as the national authority for accreditation of laboratories and suppliers of certified reference materials, and a peak authority for the accreditation of inspection bodies and proficiency testing scheme providers through a Memorandum of Understanding signed by both parties.

Formal agreements also exist between NATA and the accreditation bodies of many other economies throughout the world. Under the Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) among accreditation bodies, each organisation recognises the equivalence of accreditations granted by its overseas counterparts, and promotes the equivalence of such accreditations covered by the scope of recognition, within its own economy. This reduces the need for re-testing, re-calibration or re-inspection of products, or re-certification of reference materials in an importing economy and saves time and money for exporters. Before entering into such arrangements, accreditation bodies have the responsibility to thoroughly evaluate each other's systems of accreditation for compliance with the international standard ISO/IEC 17011. These arrangements also include mechanisms to ensure that test, calibration and inspection reports, and reference material certificates covered by the arrangement carry the same degree of credibility on an ongoing basis.

a UKAS – United Kingdom Accreditation Service

Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements

- The ILAC, APLAC and NATA Mutual Recognition Arrangements are not inter-laboratory agreements.

Information Paper 3 – Guide to use of NATA's MRA network

- Recognition of NATA endorsed reports and certificates by overseas clients or regulators

The mutual recognition arrangements also enable reports and certificates issued by NATA accredited organisations to be accepted overseas. The same set of requirements for claiming equivalence apply here. That is, a NATA-endorsed report or certificate issued in accordance with the client or regulator prescribed method can be claimed to be the equivalent of that issued by an organisation accredited by one of NATA's MRA partners.

- Acceptance of reports and certificates under the MRA

The claim of equivalence of reports and certificates is widely accepted by regulators in Australia and overseas, but ultimately it is the regulator or client that decides on acceptance of reports and certificates. NATA and its MRA partners cannot demand acceptance of the reports and certificates but all are willing to support claims of equivalence, where all the conditions for claiming that equivalence have clearly been met, and to further explain the MRA system to facilitate their acceptance.

- Ensuring a thorough understanding of a regulator or client's needs

To meet any Australian or overseas client-driven or regulatory requirements, organisations are urged to pay particular attention to the test, calibration or inspection procedure prescribed by the Australian or overseas regulatory client. Unless these are understood and the organisation is accredited for the specific activity, the full benefits of the MRA cannot be utilised.

- Equivalence of test and measurement procedures

The APLAC and ILAC MRAs relate to the equivalence of endorsed reports and certificates. The MRAs enable the recipient of an endorsed report or certificate to have equal confidence in the competence of the foreign accredited laboratory, inspection body or reference material producer.

The APLAC and ILAC MRAs do not relate to the equivalence of test and measurement procedures. Any decision on the acceptance of equivalence of test and measurement procedures is the responsibility of the client, regulator or other end-user of the reports or certificates. For this reason it is critical that it is clearly established exactly what procedure a client or other end-user requires.

2. The ILAC Laboratory Combined MRA Mark

To demonstrate accreditation by a signatory to the ILAC Arrangement (MRA), NATA members may wish to use the ILAC Laboratory Combined MRA Mark on reports and certificates.

A set of clear rules govern the use of the ILAC Laboratory Combined MRA Mark, for example it is not available for use by all NATA fields of testing, by inspection bodies or reference material producers, as these activities are not yet covered by the ILAC MRA, and it can only be applied to reports and certificates that meet the requirements for NATA endorsed reports and certificates.

If you wish to know the areas of NATA accreditation in which it can be applied, and the other conditions of use, please visit the member's section of NATA's website, www.nata.asn.au, to view the full ILAC Laboratory Combined MRA Mark Sub-License Agreement.

3. APLAC Membership and the APLAC MRA

Full APLAC members are national third party organisations in the Asia Pacific region engaged in the accreditation of testing and calibration laboratories, inspection bodies and reference materials producers, as designated by their governments or otherwise recognised as practitioners by APLAC.

APLAC full membership should not be confused with being a signatory of the APLAC MRA (sometimes incorrectly referred to as 'party to...', 'member of...' the APLAC MRA).

Page 2 of 3

Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Mutual Recognition Arrangements

- **Equivalence of test and measurement procedures**

The APLAC and ILAC MRAs relate to the equivalence of endorsed reports and certificates. The MRAs enable the recipient of an endorsed report or certificate to have equal confidence in the competence of the foreign accredited laboratory, inspection body or reference material producer.

The APLAC and ILAC MRAs do not relate to the equivalence of test and measurement procedures. Any decision on the acceptance of equivalence of test and measurement procedures is the responsibility of the client, regulator or other end-user of the reports or certificates. For this reason it is critical that it is clearly established exactly what procedure a client or other end-user requires.

Recognition of or between laboratories is the “*responsibility of the client (customer), regulator or other end-user*”.

Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Framework for recognition of conformity evaluation agencies

- CSIRO Verification Services has developed a recognition framework and policies to enable our certification processes to appropriately manage and recognise evaluations and reporting from national and foreign agencies.
 - In order to certify a product, CSIRO Verification Services must be provided with clear and traceable evidence as part of the process of verification that a product meets the specified requirements of the reference criteria (standards etc.).
 - It is essential that evaluation for conformity reports (test reports) be provided by agencies that are recognised and established as having the capability to meet this objective

Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Elements of recognition framework

- CSIRO's recognition framework consists of four (4) elements
 1. Accreditation
 - ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation of conformity evaluation agencies by NATA or MRA partner. Precedence (prior performance) criteria will also apply where specific accreditation is unavailable.
 2. Cooperation
 - conformity evaluation agencies must
 - be capable of written and oral communication which is clear, concise, in a mutually understood language of English
 - provide reasonable access to requested information
 - be available to authenticate their accountability for their evaluations for conformity.
 3. Independence
 - conformity evaluation agencies should not be engaged or associated with consultancy services that may conflict with the independence of their evaluation
 4. Reporting
 - Reports in English.
 - Product designation(s) which is/are unique and unambiguous.
 - Clear statements of the specified requirements and the extent to which they have been met.
 - Detail which sufficiently demonstrates that all relevant aspects of the evaluation were executed and completed.

Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Administration of recognised conformity evaluation agencies

- Agencies recognised for conformity evaluation will need to be registered.
- CSIRO Verification Services, initially through the ActivFire® Scheme web site, will publish details of recognised conformity evaluation agencies, together with the scope and classification of their recognition.
- **Classes of registration and classification**
 - Field/s of testing
 - e.g. NATA:CSIRO Measurement Science and Technology Testing
 - e.g. UKAS:BRE Fire Detection & Electronics Testing
 - Types of testing/measurement (products/materials/activity)
 - e.g. NATA:CSIRO Tests on fire detection systems
 - e.g. UKAS:BRE Fire detection and fire alarm systems
 - Products/materials/activity of testing
 - e.g. NATA:CSIRO Control and indicating equipment
 - e.g. UKAS:BRE Control and indicating equipment
 - Methods of test

		<u>CSIRO Recognition class id.</u>
e.g. NATA:CSIRO	i AS 7240.2 Control and indicating equipment	PPA
	ii AS 7240.4 Power supply equipment	PPA
e.g. UKAS:BRE	i BS EN 54-2:1998	CAF
	ii BS EN 54-4:1998	CAF

Recognition of Conformity Evaluation Agencies.

Administration of recognised conformity evaluation agencies

Recognition class ident.	Recognition process	Referenced from	Reference body	Recognition description
PAA	Procedural	Accreditation	Australian accreditation body	Procedural recognition, referenced from Accreditation by an Australian accreditation body.
PAF			Foreign accreditation body	Procedural recognition, referenced from Accreditation by a Foreign accreditation body
PPC		Precedence	CAB	Procedural recognition, referenced from Precedence by a Technical Panel of the CAB.
CAA	Conditional	Accreditation	Australian accreditation body	Conditional recognition, referenced from Accreditation by an Australian accreditation body.
CAF			Foreign accreditation body	Conditional recognition, referenced from Accreditation by a Foreign accreditation body.
CPC		Precedence	CAB	Conditional recognition, referenced from Precedence by a Technical Panel of the CAB.
UC	Unclassified			Unclassified, recognition pending validation.

CSIRO Verification Services

David J. Whittaker
Executive Officer – ActivFire Scheme

Phone: +61 3 9252 6193

Email: david.whittaker @csiro.au

Web: <http://www.csiro.au/cmse>
<http://www.ActivFire.gov.au>

www.csiro.au

Contact Us

Phone: 1300 363 400 or +61 3 9545 2176
Email: enquiries@csiro.au Web: www.csiro.au

