

Anne Hofstra, Senior Operations Manager, 17025 Sector Programmes, provides an update on IANZ's signatory status.

In July 2020 IANZ extended the scope of its signatory status to the ILAC MRA to include RMP. This is a milestone for IANZ, as we are now a 'full scope' signatory to the ILAC MRA joining a minority of ILAC members having such status.

It's also a conversation stopper when you bring this statement out at a BBQ which results in blank stares from many. To fully understand the importance of being an ILAC signatory and what this means to both RMPs and laboratories, please read on.



The International Laboratory Accreditation Body (ILAC) is the international organisation for accreditation bodies such as IANZ, whose primary purpose is to establish an international arrangement between member bodies based on peer review and mutual acceptance, and developing criteria to assist in harmonisation of accreditation which supports the mutual acceptance of laboratory's data by other countries. The ILAC Mutual Recognition Arrangements (MRAs) link the existing MRAs of Recognised Regional Cooperation Bodies, one of which is APAC. In 2020 ILAC extended the MRA arrangements to include RMP and IANZ was one of the first to sign up.

APAC The Asia Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (APAC) is the Regional Cooperation Body to which IANZ is a signatory. APAC's primary role is to manage and expand the MRA among accreditation bodies in the Asia Pacific region. In order to become a signatory for a specified area of accreditation such as Reference Material Producers (RMPs), IANZ had to undergo a peer evaluation by a team of evaluators from other accreditation bodies within the region. This is basically the same process familiar to all of IANZ's clients, an assessment of our procedures and then witnessing our assessment team conducting an assessment of our RMPs. IANZ completed this part of the process in 2015 and became a signatory for RMP to the APAC MRA. At this time there was not yet an ILAC MRA in place – that was still to come. Thanks here to the RMPs who were assessed during our evaluation. As a result of the successful evaluation, IANZ is a signatory for RMP under APAC, and ILAC.

[What does this mean for RMPs and what do they do?](#)

RMPs are assessed against the requirements of ISO 17034:2016 *General requirements for the competence of reference material producers*. The requirements set out in this standard includes such areas as production of the reference material, characterisation (establishing the quality/quantity of its properties), establishing

metrological traceability and measurement uncertainty. RMPs produce both or either of Certified Reference Materials (CRMs) or Reference Materials (RMs). CRMs are metrologically traceable which means traceable to Standards Internationale (SI) and are the higher order of materials. However, both CRMs and RMs are important to testing laboratories in establishing traceability of their test results.

CRMs will come with a certificate which includes information and data on the properties characterised, their values and measurement uncertainty, and the all-important statement of metrological traceability (how the material is traceable to SI such as the kilogram and the metre). RMs will come with paperwork, often called a Product Information Sheet, detailing the properties characterised, and information on the stability and homogeneity of the reference material.

In New Zealand we have three organisations accredited as RMPs; BOC Limited who produce CRM gases, MilkTest NZ who produce RM milk solutions used for the calibration of milk testing instruments, and Global Proficiency who produce both CRM and RMs for a range of materials such as milk powder and cheese, and environmental materials such as soil.



As IANZ is an ILAC signatory, the accredited RMPs are now permitted to use the ILAC mark on their Certificates and Product Information sheets which provides assurances to their clients to know they are using CRMs and RM which come from an accredited RMP, assessed by an Accreditation Body (IANZ) who are a signatory to the ILAC MRA, which is as good as it can get.

Also see the IANZ Technical Policy on the requirements for establishing measurement traceability:

https://assets.website-files.com/5e447d8550a99c8326ee5ae6/5f028a3d190d45280ca136aa_AS%20TP1%20Measurement%20Traceability%20Policy.pdf