



JOINT STATEMENT

Delivering Sustainability Assurance through Effective Standards and Accredited Conformity Assessment

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We, the representatives of [IAF](#), [ISEAL](#), [UNDP](#) and the Conformity Assessment Body Associations ([IIOCO](#), [IQNET](#) and [TIC Council](#)), are pleased to present our joint statement in relation to the role of standards and accredited conformity assessment on sustainability assurance.

We are deeply concerned about the negative impacts of social inequality, environmental degradation and the unsustainable use of natural resources that threaten the future of our planet. The sense of urgency for sustainability is real and growing. Climate change, loss of biodiversity, and the depletion of natural resources are already having devastating impacts on communities, ecosystems and the economy.

Our organizations stand together and at the service of governments, businesses, and society to enable tangible action to address these urgent sustainability challenges through consensus-based standards and accredited conformity assessment¹. Credible standards and conformity assessment are critical to establish trust and deliver impact.

We believe that through collaborative dialogue and our conformity assessment activities we can help society to transition toward a more sustainable future.

Consensus-based standards and accredited conformity assessment play a crucial role in delivering improved sustainability performance by providing a common framework for companies and governments to adopt sustainable practices and independently verify progress towards improved sustainability. The key reasons why standards and accredited conformity assessment are crucial activities in providing trust and delivering impact to sustainability are:

¹ ISO 17000:2020, § 4.5: *a third-party conformity assessment activity is a conformity assessment activity that is performed by a person or organisation that is independent of the provider of the object of conformity assessment (4.2) and has no user interest in the object. ISO 17000:2020, § 7.7 (...) Accreditation demonstrates the competence, impartiality (5.3) and consistent operation in performing specific conformity assessment activities,*

- **Building Trust:** Accredited conformity assessment builds trust by providing independent, third-party verification that organizations are meeting sustainability standards, promoting confidence in sustainable products, practices, organizations and services.
- **Consistency and Transparency:** consistent and transparent approach to improved sustainability practices, allowing organizations to compare their performance and identify areas for improvement
- **Innovation:** drive innovation by setting high-performance consensus-based standards and encouraging organizations to find new and creative ways to meet them
- **Global Interoperability:** embracing sustainability standards that are interoperable promotes international trade and cooperation by allowing sustainability practices to be seamlessly integrated across borders, thus ensuring the equivalence and harmonisation of the evaluation outputs
- **Competence:** safeguarding the proficiency of auditors and training requirements, ensuring consistency and reliability of systems with the capacity to deliver globally
- **Market-ready Solutions:** the accredited conformity assessment sector is recognised for providing flexible and competent answers across all economies for almost 30 years in diverse areas such as greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), ethical claims and responsible supply chains, quality, environmental and management, anti-bribery management, occupational health and safety management and business continuity management, vent sustainability management.
- **Regulatory recognition:** accredited conformity assessment is the bedrock of product safety across the globe
- **Scalability:** The reach of the existing quality infrastructure including standards and assurance mechanisms, is global in reach, fit for organizations from small & medium-size enterprises to large corporations through global, regional and national delivery capacity.

In conclusion, we express the view that consensus-based standards and accredited conformity assessment provide a key foundation for credible and effective sustainability assurance by setting clear and consistent expectations, ensuring impartial and competent assurance of performance, enabling organizations to measure and improve their sustainability performance over time.

We look forward to continued collaboration among the parties under the IAF umbrella, representing complementary parts of the quality infrastructure ecosystem – accreditation and third-party verification - who will work towards the implementation of mutually agreed objectives in a timely, efficient and effective manner.

END