

Testing and Certification

Testing and certification is an industry with good development potentials. Over the years, the industry has established a good foundation, based on a robust accreditation system, high professional standards and an excellent reputation.

Promoting the Testing and Certification Industry: The Government established the Hong Kong Council for Testing and Certification (HKCTC) in September 2009 to advise it on the overall development strategy of the testing and certification industry. HKCTC comprises members from the industry, business sector and professional organisations as well as the relevant public bodies and Government departments. All members are appointed by the Chief Executive. The Innovation and Technology Commission (ITC) of Government provides secretariat and executive support to HKCTC.

HKCTC has been adopting a market-oriented approach to promote the development of the industry. On the general front, continued enhancement has been made to the accreditation service and the factors of production of the industry. On the other hand, HKCTC is also exploring new testing and certification opportunities in different business areas.

From 1 February 2016, owners of industrial premises can apply to Lands Department for a waiver in order to accommodate testing and calibration laboratories inside the premises and successful applicants would be exempted from paying the usual waiver fee chargeable by the Government. Both the Government and HKCTC hope that the implementation of this new measure would facilitate the operation of testing and certification bodies in industrial buildings in Hong Kong.

To reinforce the branding of "Tested in Hong Kong, Certified in Hong Kong", HKCTC promotes Hong Kong's testing and certification services through different channels, including participation in major trade fairs locally and overseas, organising seminars in Hong Kong, and placing interviews and articles in the media.

For details of the work of HKCTC, please refer to HKCTC website (www.hkctc.gov.hk).

Seeking Wider Recognition of Hong Kong's assessment results in the Mainland: Since the implementation of Supplement VII to the Mainland and Hong Kong Closer Economic Partnership Arrangement (CEPA), the Mainland has been gradually opening up its market to Hong Kong's testing and certification industry.

The Agreement on Trade in Services (the Agreement), signed in November 2015, covers and consolidates previous commitments relating to the liberalisation of trade in services in the testing and certification sector. In addition, it introduces a new

liberalisation measure of implementing, on a pilot basis, a mutual recognition arrangement of certification and relevant testing business among Guangdong, Hong Kong and Macao in the China (Guangdong) Pilot Free Trade Zone, with a view to carrying out "certified once, tested once, and results accepted by three places". To provide implementation details on the new measure, an Implementation Guide for the articles relating to testing and certification in this Agreement was promulgated in September 2017. For products requiring China Compulsory Certification (CCC), the Implementation Guide allows testing organisations in Hong Kong to cooperate with designated Mainland certification bodies to undertake testing for all products that are processed or manufactured in the China (Guangdong) Pilot Free Trade Zone (regardless of where they are designed or prototyped). In the area of factory inspection, eligible Hong Kong certification bodies may now cooperate with Mainland CCC product certification bodies for deploying inspectors to carry out initial and follow-up factory inspection on CCC product manufacturers in the China (Guangdong) Pilot Free Trade Zone.

The Agreement on Economic and Technical Cooperation signed in June 2017 introduces two liberalisation measures relating to certification. One of them is to recommend a certification body located in Hong Kong to become a National Certification Body of China under the International Electrotechnical Commission System of Conformity Assessment Schemes for Electrotechnical Equipment and Components (IECEE). The other is to consider applications of eligible certification bodies set up by Hong Kong enterprises in the Mainland to become designated certification bodies under the CCC system.

These measures would enlist wider recognition of Hong Kong's testing and certification results by Mainland authorities and companies, and would assist the local industry in further exploring the Mainland and overseas markets.

Contributions of the Industry: In 2016, there were about 670 private testing laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies in Hong Kong, engaging 13 960 persons. Their direct contribution to Hong Kong's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was about HK\$7.3 billion. In addition to its direct contribution, the industry also supports manufacturing, export and other service industries, and is an integral part of the overall supply chain.

Hong Kong Accreditation Service (HKAS): Having a robust accreditation system is also one of Hong Kong's key advantages in developing the testing and certification industry. HKAS improves the standard of local conformity assessment services (i.e. testing, inspection and certification) and supports the development of the industry by providing a

wide range of accreditation services through three accreditation schemes, namely, the Hong Kong Laboratory Accreditation Scheme (HOKLAS); the Hong Kong Certification Body Accreditation Scheme (HKCAS); and the Hong Kong Inspection Body Accreditation Scheme (HKIAS). Performance of laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies are evaluated through rigorous on-site assessments before they are recognised as competent in performing the conformity assessment activities listed in their respective scopes of accreditation. Users of conformity assessment service may select the services provided by accredited organisations to support their business through the directory of accredited organisations published on the HKAS website (www.hkas.gov.hk).

Through participation in Multilateral Mutual Recognition Arrangements administered by international accreditation cooperation bodies, conformity assessment results issued by HKAS accredited organisations are widely recognised in nearly 100 economies, including all major trading partners of Hong Kong. This greatly facilitates cross-border trade with the related economies.

Product Standards Information Bureau (PSIB): PSIB of the ITC promotes general awareness of the importance and benefits of product standards and facilitates manufacturers and exporters in understanding and complying with the international standards and requirements. In addition to operating a product standards library, PSIB offers sales services for standards and free technical enquiring service. PSIB also encourages interested parties to take part in international standardization activities. For detailed information about PSIB, please visit its website (www.psib.gov.hk).

The Standards and Calibration Laboratory (SCL): The SCL of the ITC is the custodian of Hong Kong's reference standards of physical measurements. The SCL also provides comprehensive calibration services to ensure that measurements made in Hong Kong are traceable to the International System of Units (SI). The SCL is a signatory to the Mutual Recognition Arrangement (MRA) of the International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM). Through that MRA, calibration certificates issued by the SCL are internationally accepted by 102 metrology institutes, encompassing 98 economies and 4 international organisations, and a further 157 designated institutes. For details, please refer to SCL website (www.itc.gov.hk/scl).