

Providing reliability to conformity assessment

## All about TTLABS

The Trinidad and Tobago Laboratory Accreditation Service (TTLABS) was established in 2001 following the revision of the Standards Act in 1997 (Standards Act No. 18 of 1997) which authorized the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards to be the national laboratory accrediting body.

Accreditation can be defined as “the procedure by which an authoritative body gives formal recognition that a body or person is competent to carry out specific tasks” (ISO/IEC Guide 2:2004).

Although not required by law in Trinidad and Tobago, accreditation has been deemed by the World Trade Organization (WTO) as a primary means for

reducing Technical Barriers to Trade and so avoids expensive retesting of exported products. It also confers many benefits to regulators who rely on test reports to make critical decisions.

TTLABS’s scope of accreditation includes testing, calibration and medical laboratories and uses criteria based on two international standards ISO/IEC 17025:2005 “General Requirements for the Competence of Testing and Calibration Laboratories” and ISO 15189 :2007 “Medical Laboratories– Particular Requirements for Quality and Competence”.

TTLABS is at present a small Division within TTBS but nevertheless, carries the important responsibility of

assuring that a level of competence as required by international criteria is demonstrated and maintained among the laboratories it serves. It also conducts training programmes in understanding the standards to which laboratories are accredited.

The staff comprises the Manager, Ms Karlene Lewis, two Standards Officers, Mrs Ellison Floyd-Tobas and Ms Asha Paryag and the Secretary Mrs Keisha Charles-Diamond.



**TTLABS Staff - From left to right- Asha Paryag, Keisha Charles-Diamond, Karlene Lewis and Ellison Floyd-Tobas**

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### Inside this issue:

TTLABS hosts Assessor meeting	2
TCL’s testing laboratory receives accreditation	2
Regional Developments	2
OIML, BIPM, ILAC signs joint declaration	3
TTLABS prepares for major changes	3
2011—The year in review	3
Upcoming events	4

## Message from the Manager

Dear readers,

It is with great pleasure that we introduce to you our first issue of TTLABS e-newsletter 2012. This e-newsletter, which will be posted quarterly, was created with the intent to provide our valued

customers and stakeholders with easy access to developments on topics of interest within the world of accreditation. Inside you will find updates on not only local, but regional and international issues.

We hope that you would find these publications informative and of value to you and we do encourage

you to forward them to your colleagues who may have interest in the information provided.

Thank you for your support and well wishes and we do welcome your comments and inputs for future publications.

Sincerely,  
Karlene Lewis

# TTLABS hosts meeting with Assessors and Technical Experts

TTLABS held its assessor meeting for 2011 on 15th December 2011. A total of seventeen (17) participants attended including current, new and prospective Assessors and Technical Experts.

Assessors were briefed on revisions of assessor documents and expectations during assessment activities. There was also lively discussion on topics such as assessor liability and assessor reporting formats and procedures.

As a gesture of appreciation the assessors were also treated to a sumptuous Christmas Luncheon not

excluding the traditional Christmas drinks of sorrel and ginger beer.

Assessors and technical experts play a vital role in the functioning of any accreditation body. TTLABS therefore has the responsibility of ensuring the continued development and competence of the personnel involved. To this end, future assessor meetings and training programmes have been scheduled for the year 2012 and assessors will be informed in due time.

TTLABS would like to take this

opportunity to thank all the assessors who participated in this activity.



## TCL's Testing Laboratory receives accreditation

Trinidad Cement Limited (TCL) has been granted accreditation in November 2011 to the standard ISO/IEC 17025:2005– “General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories”. This brings the total number of laboratories accredited by TTLABS to five (5). The other laboratories presently accredited by TTLABS are ; Angostura Ltd, Analytical Technologies Ltd, Alpha

Interlab Centre N.V. which is a medical laboratory located in Aruba and most recently Environmental Sciences Ltd (See next issue).

Inset from left to right; Mr Deryck Omar (Executive Director, TTBS), Ms Karlene Lewis (Manager, TTLABS), Mr Wayne Benjamin (Q.M./Chief Chemist, TCL) and Mr Stephen Bachan (Assistant Chemist, TCL)



## Regional Developments in Accreditation

TTLABS have, over the years been an active participant in the regional activities organized by the CARICOM Organization for Regional Standards and Quality (CROSQ).

At present, activities are being focused on the development of a Regional Accreditation Infrastructure referred to as the “Caribbean Cooperation for Accreditation- (CCA)” This vision arose out of the need to have readily available

and affordable and harmonized accreditation services for conformity assessment bodies within the Caribbean Region.

In order to advance this vision, key stakeholders including the accreditation bodies and National Accreditation Focal Points (NAFPs) of the various CARICOM island states met at the CROSQ secretariat in Bridgetown, Barbados in January of

2011 to develop a three year and one year operational plan for the CCA.

TTLABS and the Jamaican National Agency for Accreditation (JANAAC) met in Jamaica in September, 2011 for the purpose of harmonizing their accreditation processes and procedures. The two accreditation bodies have recently signed an agreement of Technical Cooperation at CROSQ’s 10th anniversary celebrations on Friday 27th April, 2012.

## International Developments –BIPM, OIML, ILAC signs Joint Declaration

The International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM), the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML), the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC) and the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) have signed a joint declaration that supports the equivalence and acceptability of measurements globally.

This declaration stemmed from the 22nd General Conference on Weights and Measures at which there was endorsement of a resolution which dealt with mutual recognition of measurement standards, calibrations

and tests.

This specific resolution invited the International Committee for Weights and Measures (CIPM) to draw up a declaration on the importance of its Mutual Recognition Arrangement (CIPM MRA) for trade, commerce and regulatory affairs.

This resolution also encourages the promotion of the CIPM MRA for the acceptance of calibration and measurement certificates from National Metrology Institutes and accredited laboratories which demonstrate traceability of their measurements to SI Units

One benefit of this system is that it will provide users with measurement results, which can be accepted everywhere without the need for further measurements. In so doing, it can be used to reduce the effects of Technical Barriers to Trade.



## TTLABS prepares for major changes

In order to satisfy the requirements of the International Standard for Accreditation Bodies *ISO/IEC 17011*, TTLABS needs to be established as a separate legal entity distinct from the Trinidad and Tobago Bureau of Standards.

TTLABS is therefore in the process of completing its business plan which is to be presented to the TTBS Board of Directors and Ministry of Trade and Industry for approval.

In addition, TTLABS is at present revising and updating its Quality Management System to be in alignment with international criteria for accreditation bodies.

An expansion of its present scope to include accreditation of inspection and certification bodies will be part of the major changes envisioned and will inevitably require an amendment to the Standards Act. In the near future TTLABS will be known by a different name and logo.

TTLABS expects to apply for Peer Evaluation in the Year 2014 which will allow it to become a full member of ILAC.

“In the near future TTLABS will be known by a different name and logo.”

## 2011– The Year in Review



Here's a look at the year 2011 in review:

- Initial Assessment for local Testing Laboratory –June 1-2, 2011
- World Accreditation Day Celebrations– June 9, 2011– “Supporting the work of Regulators”
- Attendance of IAAC Annual General Meeting in Ecuador–Aug 16-26, 2011
- Harmonization meeting with JANAAC–September 2011
- ISO 17025 and Introduction to twenty milestones training course September 20-22, 2011
- Internal Auditing Training for Laboratories–October 24-27, 2011
- Assessor meeting–December 15, 2011
- ILAC Annual General Assembly meeting (online) - December 20, 2011 (local time)

## TTLABS

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NEWSLETTER

### TTLABS Mission Statement

*To continuously provide high quality, accreditation services to laboratories in Trinidad and Tobago and the Caribbean region in accordance with internationally accepted standards and criteria for the operation of an internationally recognized accreditation body, to ensure competence, integrity and confidence in those services and to support the region's mandate for high quality goods and services.*

## Stay tuned for upcoming events !

The following events are scheduled for the year 2012:

- June 9–World Accreditation day to be celebrated on June 12 - Theme:“Accreditation... supporting safe food and clean drinking water”
- DigitalPT (One World Accuracy) programme for medical laboratories- ongoing
- July 9-13–Assessor training and refresher course.
- August 11-17– IAAC Annual General Assembly Meetings -Columbia



- September 21- Assessor meeting
- October 15-24 – ILAC Annual General Assembly Meetings–Brazil
- December 13–Assessor meeting and Christmas luncheon
- Stakeholder engagement meetings–(to be scheduled)