

Testing and Certification

Testing and certification is an industry with good development potentials and a sector where Hong Kong enjoys clear advantages. 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 on the overall strategy to support the development 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.

The vision of HKCTC is to develop Hong Kong into a testing and certification hub in the region by reinforcing the branding of “Tested in Hong Kong, Certified in Hong Kong”. Since 2010, a market-oriented dual approach to spearhead the development of the industry has been adopted. 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 opportunities in specific trades with good potentials in using testing and certification services.

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 there would be no need for successful applicants to pay 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.

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 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. For products requiring certification under the Mainland’s China Compulsory Certification (CCC) System, the Agreement allows testing laboratories in Hong Kong to cooperate with designated Mainland certification bodies to undertake testing of all categories of products processed in Hong Kong, and audio and video products designed and prototyped in Hong Kong, as well as processed or manufactured in the Guangdong Province. In the area of voluntary certification, testing of products manufactured or processed in Hong Kong or Mainland can also be tested in Hong Kong. With respect to the mode of commercial presence, the Agreement in general offers Hong Kong’s testing and certification industry same treatment as the Mainland enterprises in terms of market access requirement.

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 market.

Contributions of the Industry: In 2015, there were about 640 private testing laboratories, certification bodies and inspection bodies in Hong Kong, engaging 13 580 persons. Their direct contribution to Hong Kong’s Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was about HK\$7 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.

Locally, the testing and certification industry plays an important role in the daily life of the community. For example, medical testing laboratories provide essential support to the medical sector in diagnosis of illness. The construction materials laboratories and inspection bodies contribute to ensuring the safety of buildings.

In support of Hong Kong’s external trade, the industry provides high volume of testing and inspection services for consumer products manufactured in Hong Kong and the Pearl River Delta Region of Mainland China, in particular for toys, electrical and electronic goods, textiles, garments and footwear. The industry also provides certification service for the management systems of the relevant factories. Through providing assurance to overseas buyers on the quality and safety of products sourced in the region, the industry underpins Hong Kong’s position as an international trading hub.

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 by over 90 accreditation bodies in other 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.psis.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 156 designated institutes. For details, please refer to SCL website (www.itc.gov.hk/scl).