

INSTITUT FÜR SPORTBODENTECHNIK

IST CONSULTING GmbH



Accredited by
IAAF and DIN CERTCO
ISO/IEC 17025 (STS 411)

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Reference Reliability of Testresults between Laboratories
Accreditation of Labs by FIFA and the ISI) 17025 Concept

Dear Mr. Boyer, dear Mr. Bretscher

Let me come back to the conversation we had at the Zuerich Airport before departure to Berlin on November 1. It was about how to control the accuracy and comparability of test labs when performing tests on synthetic turf.

As I understand the difficulty for organisations such as FIH, IAAF or FIFA to gain control over this question is that it needs the more efforts of the organisations the more labs are involved. Since you feel responsible for this question and to warrant effectiveness of the testing system, you have chosen to restraint the number of test labs involved and accredited by your organisation. A special question is how to manage the control of labs located outside Europe since the procedure that all labs gather for a testing contest at a specific time and location is costly and may probably not be reasonable.

The IST has run through the process of being accredited according to ISO 17025. From this, we have experienced how this system works and how it provides the feasibility of controlling lab work in respect to accuracy of test results. This system accomplishes more than a Sports Association can ever do. And the best of everything: it reduces the responsibility and legal liability of the Association and minimizes its management efforts to keep the system going.

The limitation of the number of labs could also be relaxed enough (being merit based) that the Sports Association is not in conflict with international trade laws which is necessarily the consequence of an arbitrary limitation of labs, as has been found by FIH.

Of course only laboratories with experience in sports surfaces would be considered as being "listed or recognised" by FIFA. And in addition to their ISO 17025 responsibilities these labs would have the responsibility of regular attendance at FIFA technical seminars and of participating in round robin trials of circulated test artefacts.

ISO 17025

This standard is the basis for the accreditation of laboratories. It is an international agreed system to control and monitor their quality management system and the reliability of their testing. ISO Accreditation is a task for national government authorities such as the Federal Authority of Metrology in Switzerland (RvA in Netherlands, COFRAC in France, UKAS in the UK and ENAC in Spain). The system is based on international treaties and existing accreditations must be recognized by all signed countries across borders. So if you send a laboratory team into China, for example, its competence will be recognised there.

Accreditation is provided after thorough inspection of the management system (similar to ISO 9000 procedure) and the lab operation (including control of proper use of laboratory equipment and its accuracy). It is a far-reaching program of obligations for documentation, traceability and transparency of all processes. The inspection is performed at least every two years by two or more experts who themselves have to carry accredited competence for auditing procedures according to ISO rules: experts for management aspects and technical experts in the specific area of testing.





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There is no overall accreditation as with ISO 9000. Accreditation acc. to ISO 17025 is specific. The accreditation of a company is valid only for

- the specific location inspected/audited (if a testing company has several labs each individual lab needs to be covered)
- the personal (from the director to the laboratory staff)
- the specified tests (this means that the specific FIFA tests must be included)

Any change of the management system must be notified to the Accreditation Body.

Now, in which way can the ISO 17025 serve the sports governing bodies? It is easy: all the responsibility for accuracy and comparability of test data is left to the Accreditation Bodies (AB). It is sufficient for FIFA, to request valid ISO certificates of the labs and confirmations of the ABs that the annual obligations are met.

I am in close contact with my colleagues of the ISSS most of them already FIFA accredited. We are going to prepare a document covering the necessary details for securing comparability of test results between ISO accredited labs. This will be adopted as an official ISSS document after the next AGM in May 2005.

Best regards

Hans-Jörg Kolitzus