RULES GOVERNING APAS® RECOGNITION AS A TESTING AUTHORITY

1 SCOPE

a) This document establishes the rules governing how organisations can be considered by the CSIRO Verification Services (CVS) for recognition as a testing authority under the APAS® Certification Scheme.
b) This document is prepared in a manner compliant with the requirements of AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065.
c) There are two types of testing authorities:
   1. Those that are part of the Clients Recognised Manufacturing Unit (RMU) and perform all or the majority of the required tests
   2. Those that are specialist laboratories, contracted either by the APAS Secretariat or by the Client, to carry out specific tests that are beyond the capability of the Client RMU
d) Such organisations / testing authorities shall be referred to as Agency for Conformity Evaluation (ACE).
e) APAS® is a trademark registered with IP Australia, owned by CSIRO, the Scheme Owner, and protected under applicable laws. Use of the trademark or the Certification Scheme is prohibited unless prior approval in writing is obtained from CSIRO via the APAS Secretariat.

2 PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE

a) The purpose of obtaining recognition as a testing authority under APAS is to provide evidence of conformity to APAS requirements.
b) These rules have been developed in order to establish the administration and management principles governing the operation of APAS.
c) The objective of this document is to clearly specify Certification Requirements and Product Requirements in order to ensure consistency of evaluation practices and reporting for the purpose of achieving Certified Product under APAS for paint, surface coating materials and non-paint products.
d) Historically, APAS has accepted that its Clients undertake their own testing for both batch quality control purposes and product certification applications. This process will continue to be extended to both existing and new Client Applicants.
e) Under some circumstances, an Applicant may choose or be required to use the services of an external testing authority. This document defines what constitutes a testing authority that is acceptable to APAS.
f) Recognition as an ACE is based on third party accreditation, cooperation, independence and minimum reporting requirements.
g) An ACE register will be established and maintained by CSIRO Verification Services.

3 DEFINITIONS AND ACRONYMS

3.1 Definitions

The definition of terms used in this document and in the Certification Scheme can be found in APAS document AP-D001. In addition, the following definitions within this document shall apply:

a) **Applicant:** Client RMU and / or specialist laboratory seeking recognition as a testing authority under APAS.
b) **Certified Product:** A product that has been assessed by an APAS Officer and found to comply with the Product and Certification Requirements. Historically referred to as an Approved Product.
c) **Certification Body:** Third-party conformity assessment body operating the certification scheme. APAS is the Certification Body.
d) **Certification Requirement:** The specified requirement(s), including product requirement(s), that is fulfilled by the Client as a condition of establishing or maintaining certification.
e) **Certification Scheme:** The Certification system related to specified products (Paint and Non-Paint Products) to which the same specified requirements, specific rules and procedures apply. APAS is the applicable Certification Scheme.
f) **Client:** The organisation responsible to the Certification Body (APAS) for ensuring that certification requirements, including product requirements, are fulfilled. The Client nominates a person(s) directly responsible (APAS Signatory) within its organisation, and to communicate directly with the Certification Scheme (APAS).
g) **Product Requirement:** The specified requirement(s) that relates directly to a product, specified in standards or in other normative documents (APAS Specifications, National and International Standards) identified by the Certification Scheme (APAS).
h) **Recognised Manufacturing Unit (RMU):** A company voluntarily choosing to participate in the Certification Scheme (APAS) whereby its manufacturing facilities have been assessed in accordance with AP-D177 for supply of products certified to APAS Specifications. The RMU forms part of the Client. Historically referred to as the Supplier.
i) **Scheme Owner:** The organisation responsible for developing and maintaining the certification scheme. CSIRO is the APAS Scheme Owner.
j) **Secretariat:** The organisation that provides administrative support and other resources necessary to keep the Certification Scheme functioning. The Secretariat is vested in CSIRO.

3.2 Acronyms

The following acronyms appear in this document:

ACE Agency for Conformity Evaluation
APAS Australian Paint Approval Scheme
CRCL CSIRO Recognised Competent Laboratory
CSIRO Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation
CVS CSIRO Verification Services
EO Executive Officer, APAS
IANZ International Accreditation New Zealand
ILAC MRA International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation Mutual Recognition Arrangement
NATA National Association of Testing Authorities
QC Quality Control
R&D Research and Development
RMU Recognised Manufacturing Unit

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4 AUTHORITIES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

a) The CVS Manager is accountable for the adherence of CVS to these rules and criteria and their equal application to all applicants.
b) The Executive Officer – APAS (EO) is responsible for the implementation and approval of the process for official recognition.

5 REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

a) The following standards are referenced in this document:
   i. **AS 1580** – Paints and related materials – Methods of test
   ii. **AS/NZS ISO 9001** – Quality management systems - Requirements.
   iii. **AS ISO/IEC 17025** – General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.
   iv. **AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065** – Conformity assessment: Requirements for bodies certifying products, processes and services

These documents may be purchased through the Reference Standards Australia website: https://www.standards.org.au/

b) The following APAS documents are referenced in this document:
   i. AP-D001 Rules Governing How APAS® Operates
   ii. AP-D004 Rules Governing Appeals and Complaint Handling
   iii. AP-D150 Rules Governing How Specifying Organisations become Members of APAS
   iv. AP-D177 Rules Governing How Product Manufacturers Participate in APAS.
   v. AD-D178 Rules Governing Proficiency Testing Program Providers

All APAS documents are available for download from the APAS web site: https://vs.csiro.au/apas/documents/

6 INTRODUCTION

a) For information about the history of APAS, refer the APAS web site: https://vs.csiro.au/apas/history/
b) For information about how product manufacturers may participate in APAS, refer to APAS document AP-D177.
c) For information about how to become a Member of APAS, refer to APAS document AP-D150.

7 GENERAL CRITERIA

a) The ACE applicant shall be a registered business entity such as a Company.
b) Australian applicants shall have a valid ABN or ACN.
c) The Applicant shall hold a current accreditation from a duly authorised accrediting body for AS/NZS ISO 9001 (Quality Management Systems) from an organisation accredited by an International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC, refer to www.ilac.org) Mutual Recognition Arrangement (ILAC MRA) signatory having a Scope of Accreditation covering AS/NZS ISO 9001 requirements.
d) The Applicant's AS/NZS ISO 9001 Scope of Accreditation statement shall specifically include the Technical function.
e) The Applicant shall preferentially have previous experience in the conduct of tests on paint, surface coating materials, non-paint (paint-associated) products and other applied coatings by standard accepted methods. For example, AS/NZS 1580. Refer also Note 1 below for exemptions.
f) The Applicant shall agree to abide by the rules of the Certification Scheme as documented.

8 TECHNICAL CRITERIA

8.1 RMUs

a) APAS requires that Client RMU(s) shall demonstrate their technical competence through one or more of the methods detailed in 8.1 b) below.
b) **Technical competence shall be demonstrated by one or more of the three method OPTIONS below:**
   i. **OPTION 1:** The QC and/or R&D laboratory(s) must be accredited against AS ISO/IEC 17025, by an organisation accredited by an ILAC MRA signatory, and having a Scope of Accreditation covering AS ISO/IEC 17025 requirements. Within Australia, the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) is such an accredited organisation. IANZ Is the equivalent body for New Zealand. The laboratory(s) must have under their Scope of Accreditation **all** tests being conducted that relate to the specific APAS specifications and associated standards. Refer to Note 1 below.
   ii. **OPTION 2:** The QC and/or R&D laboratory(s) must be accredited against AS ISO/IEC 17025 as per clause 8.1 b) i. ***but*** with a Scope of Accreditation that includes similar test(s) to those being conducted that are within the same Field of Application, for example Chemical Testing.
   iii. **OPTION 3:** The QC and/or R&D laboratory(s) shall:
      - Participate in a Proficiency Testing Program at least twice per calendar year, conducted by a recognised service provider – refer to documents AP-D177 clause 9.3 and AP-D178 (refer also Note 2 below for exemptions), **and**
      - Undergo an extended APAS audit covering issues such as:
        - Equipment: registration & maintenance
        - Calibration
        - Traceability
        - Record keeping
        - Training of Testing Staff
        - Format of reports; and
      - Ensure that at least one technical function, for example Quality Control, Product Development, Technical or Technical service etc, is included in the AS/NZS ISO 9001 Scope of Accreditation.

NOTE 1: Laboratory accreditation to AS ISO/IEC 17025 is limited to a specified scope of work, usually referenced by a range of test methods and/or standards. The Scope of Accreditation for each ACE will be reviewed in relation to the reference criteria (APAS specification and

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associated standards) listed in the various verification schedules upon which product certification is based.
It is a requirement of certification that all products under the APAS Specification AP-S0042 shall be tested by a laboratory(s) that is AS ISO/IEC 17025 accredited with <u>all</u> the applicable test methods / standards stated in their Scope of Accreditation.
Should APAS reference criteria call for test methods outside the scope of any identifiable and accredited conformity evaluation agency, competence within relevant fields of testing may determine the basis for recognition, if any.

<u>NOTE 2</u>: Where a QC and/or R&D laboratory cannot physically participate in a Proficiency Testing Program due to their laboratory equipment limitations, a laboratory can document and supply evidence of their internal series of Round Robin testing to demonstrate the proficiency of laboratory testing staff, testing history, developed and applicable test methods and full training history. This arrangement must agree with APAS by prior arrangement and be covered under the standard APAS auditing process for this Client.

8.2 Other Test Authorities: CSIRO Recognised Competent Laboratory (CRCL)

a) The Applicant shall comply with all elements of clause 7 above. Refer also Note 3 below.
b) The ACE shall be able to demonstrate technical competence by one or more of the following four method OPTIONS below:
   i. **<u>OPTION 1</u>: As per clause 8.1 b) i.** above, must be accredited against AS ISO/IEC 17025 ***and*** with a Scope of Accreditation that includes the specific test(s) being conducted that relate to the specific APAS specifications and associated standards, or;
   ii. **<u>OPTION 2</u>: As per clause 8.1 b) ii above,** must be accredited against AS ISO/IEC 17025 ***and*** with a Scope of Accreditation that includes similar test(s) to those being conducted that are within the same Field of Application, for example Chemical Testing or;
   iii. **<u>OPTION 3</u>:** If not accredited to AS ISO/IEC 17025 as per either 8.2 b) i. or ii. above, the Applicant laboratory may undergo a regular series of audits by either APAS officer(s) or agent(s) approved by the EO to establish confidence in their technical competence; or
   iv. **<u>OPTION 4</u>:** Have a long-standing documented relationship with CSIRO in relation to its competency, testing history, proficiency of laboratory testing staff, development of applicable test methods and full staff training history. An example of such a relationship is with the Field Services Group, Photometrics Laboratory (Department of Planning, Transport and Infrastructure) in South Australia.

<u>NOTE 3</u>: Where the ACE Applicant does not hold external AS/NZS ISO 9001 accreditation as per clause 7 c) above, application may be made for a variation. Variation may be granted where an initial audit by APAS demonstrates compliance with an equivalent management system to the requirements of AS/NZS ISO 9001.

9 COOPERATIVE CRITERIA

a) A cooperative relationship between the Applicant and CVS is essential for effective processing of submissions to produce Certified Product(s).
b) The Applicant organisation must be capable of written and oral communication that is clear, concise and in the mutually understood language of English. The testing authority must also provide reasonable access to supplementary information and be available to authenticate submitted documents.
c) The Applicant shall nominate a senior staff member to act as the APAS Contact and Signatory. This person shall be able to communicate with the EO in English on technical matters related to APAS activities. The Signatory does not necessarily need to be a senior technical person with the Applicant's organisation. However, it is expected that the Signatory shall be able to liaise confidently between the technical function and the EO.
d) The likelihood for the development of a cooperative relationship will be assessed through preliminary contacts and discussions during the ACE application stage. Where the EO has doubts about the development, the EO will discuss the concerns with the Applicant who will be given the opportunity to resolve such issues.

10 REPORT CRITERIA

a) Submitted evidence, referred to as conformity evaluation or test reports, must be clear, concise, relevant and unambiguous in relation to identification of the product. They must include the product(s) full name, Client Product identification designation, batch production numbers, and the specified requirements against which it has been evaluated i.e., APAS Specification test methods and/or applicable standards. If the Applicant has AS ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation, many of the specific reporting requirements will be stipulated as part of the accreditation.
b) Recognition by CVS extends these reporting requirements to include the following:
   i. Reports shall be in the English language.
   ii. A clear, unique and unambiguous identification of the product under test i.e., Test Report Number.
   iii. A clear statement, for each testing requirement, as to whether the product has or has not met the specified requirements for which certification is being sought.
   iv. A declaration of any and all conflicts of interest relevant to the product and the product manufacturing organisation.
   v. All results of testing reported in figures wherever possible.
   vi. Detail that sufficiently demonstrates all required aspects of the evaluation were executed and completed.
   vii. Reports shall be signed off by the technical person authorised by the ACE to do so on their behalf (APAS Signatory).

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c) The Applicant must submit, as part of its application, an example of a test report complying with CVS requirements. The report format and content need to be agreed upon between the Applicant and CVS prior to recognition as a testing authority.

11 RETROSPECTIVE RMU RECOGNITION

a) Many paint and surface coating material manufacturers have a long and satisfactory history of cooperation with APAS through the Client RMU process.
b) All existing Clients with RMUs shall automatically be added to the APAS ACE list.
c) All existing Client RMUs shall agree to be bound by the requirements contained in this document.

12 COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

a) APAS recognised Clients (existing ACE) or Applicants (those seeking recognition as an ACE), may lodge a complaint or an appeal against a decision made by the Certification Body, Certification Scheme, Scheme Owner or any of its processes or personnel.
b) Appeals and complaints shall be subject to the process detailed in APAS document AP-D004.

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13 APPENDIX A

Document History

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Document Version No.:	Date Published:	Summary of Changes:
4	11-06-2021	• Updated APAS website details within document • Further defined clause 1 b) Scope • General formatting changes
3	22-10-2020	• Addition of Appendix A Document History and removal of the Editorial Note previously used in document versions • Minor formatting changes
2	16-10-2020	• Name change from *APAS Certification Scheme Criteria for Recognition as a Testing Authority* to *Rules Governing APAS® Recognition as a Testing Authority* • Document brought in line with requirements of AS/NZS ISO/IEC 17065 • Updated document and logo to the current format • Incorporation of definitions and acronyms • Minor editorial changes • Addition of “People + Product = Protection” to Footer
1	08-10-2013	• Reflects the current acronym • Adds new sections 4 & 11 • Clause 7.1 has been reworded to clarify
0	06-01-2009	• Original document version

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