



Quality Infrastructure Council of the Americas

The Quality Infrastructure Council of the Americas (QICA), comprises the three independent regional organizations involved in quality infrastructure in the Americas: the Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT), the Inter-American Metrology System (SIM) and the Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC), each of which has an active and broad participation in the countries of the Americas in their respective areas of expertise.

The Council is the contact point for actions of cooperation which help to strengthen the national quality infrastructure in all countries of the Americas.

In this framework, its basic objective is to promote a shared vision for mutual support in standards development, the development of accreditation and the scientific, industrial and legal metrology.

QICA is a platform for developing joint projects, information sharing, and cross-functional training and development that, by acting collaboratively, exceeds the abilities of any single organization acting alone.

Standardization: consists in developing standards that are documents established by consensus and approved by a recognized body, which provides, for common and repeated use rules, guidelines or characteristics for activities or their results, aimed at achieving the optimal level of order in a given context.

Metrology: is the science of measurement and all its applications; this includes the theoretical and practical part of the measurements. It is a scientific, objective and reliable tool that supports the economic sectors by improving their competitiveness and for regulators to ensure the health, safety, environment and fair-trading.

Accreditation: is the formal recognition of competence and impartiality granted by an independent evaluation of Conformity Assessment Bodies: Laboratories, Certification and Inspection Bodies.

Quality Infrastructure

The Quality Infrastructure (QI) comprises three pillars, standardization, metrology and accreditation.

The quality infrastructure is an excellent tool to demonstrate and generate trust in the quality of products and services, and to contribute to economic and social development and to facilitate trade. It is a system that includes the participation of a variety of stakeholders, including national regulators, production and commercial enterprises, service providers, conformity assessment and consumers bodies.



Agreement signing for the creation of QICA, Guatemala, August 2014. From left to right: Kory Eguino, Executive Secretary of COPANT; Ileana Martinez, IAAC Chair; and José Dajes, President of SIM (Photo: IAAC)

Activities of QICA:

- Co-organizing awareness and capacity building events for stakeholders, including public officials;
- Offering joint seminars and training courses on priority areas;
- Increasing the visibility of each other's services and activities among its respective networks;
- Supporting each other's training activities;
- Developing and implementing joint programs;
- Exchanging documents, specific information and access to databases and general information;
- Exchanging professional personnel to strengthen projects and programs;
- Carrying out joint meetings to address matters of common interest.
- Promoting cooperation and collaboration among each other's members at a national level.



QICA is supported by:



Background:

On August 29, 2014, in Guatemala, QI leaders of the three regional organizations signed a Memorandum of Understanding creating QICA.

The creation of QICA is the result of a joint effort between the three regional organizations of the QI in technical cooperation projects. It takes into account the initiative of Ministers and High Authorities of Science and Technology of the Organization of American States (OAS), for access to quality infrastructure services and has enjoyed strong support since its creation and ongoing development, from PTB, Physikalisch Technische Bundesanstalt, the National Metrology Institute of the Federal Republic of Germany.

The 3 regional bodies of the QI of the Americas, which make up QICA are:

Pan American Standards Commission (COPANT):

Is the reference for technical standardization and conformity assessment for the countries of the Americas for its members and international peers, and promotes the development of its members.



Inter-American Metrology System (SIM):

Is the result of a broad agreement among national metrology institutes in the Americas countries. Its mission is to promote and support in the Americas an infrastructure of integrated measurements, which enable each National Metrology Institute to stimulate innovation, competitiveness, trade, consumer protection and sustainable development through effective participation in the regional metrology community.



Inter-American Accreditation Cooperation (IAAC):

Manages the Multilateral Recognition Arrangements among Accreditation Bodies and supports the qualitative and quantitative growth of the activity of accreditation in the countries focused on the development of structures of conformity assessment, to demonstrate the quality of products, processes and services.

