

Singapore Signs Multi-lateral Pact for Product Certification Companies to save costs on certification

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1. Singapore companies exporting products to the Asia-Pacific region can now save on certification costs. This is thanks to the Pacific Accreditation Cooperation (PAC) Multilateral Recognition Arrangement (MLA) for Product Certification that the Singapore Accreditation Council (SAC) will sign on 12 July 2007. The SAC is an independent body that operates under the purview of SPRING Singapore.
2. With this signing, Singapore becomes one of seven signatories of the PAC MLA for product certification. It is also the first in Asia to do so. The other signatories are Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand, Standards Council of Canada, the Mexican Accreditation Entity, the Taiwan Accreditation Foundation, American National Standards Institute and Korean Accreditation System.
3. With Singapore as a product MLA member, the certification given by SAC-accredited certification bodies will be recognised by other PAC MLA members. This means that the products certified by SAC accredited certification bodies will be recognised overseas and further certification may not be required for these exports to the other PAC MLA member countries. This is provided the certification system and standards for certification are the same. In addition, the PAC MLA members are also qualified as International Accreditation Forum (IAF) MLA members and are recognised by other IAF MLA members for product certification. Currently the products certified by SAC accredited certification bodies are mainly electrical and electronics products.
4. This is good news for Singapore electrical and electronics product manufacturers who export to the Asia-Pacific. In 2006, Singapore's electrical and electronic products exports to the region were \$155.7 billion.
5. "With the signing of the PAC Multi-lateral Recognition Arrangement, certification bodies accredited by the SAC will be recognised by other PAC MLA members as providing credible certification services," said Mr Loh Khum Yean, Chief Executive, SPRING Singapore. "Local manufacturers exporting to the Asia-Pacific will now need to certify their products once. This will save them certification costs."
6. Ms Elva Nilsen, the PAC Chair, noted the requirements for entry to the product MLA are high. The SAC was admitted as a PAC MLA member for product certification after successfully completing a stringent peer review for the accreditation of certification bodies. There is a re-evaluation every four years to monitor and ensure that members continue to maintain their systems to the required standards.
7. The PAC MLA for product certification is also recognised by regional and international organisations such as the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations for ensuring the competence of accreditation bodies and their accredited certification bodies.
8. The certification bodies that are currently accredited under SAC's Accreditation Scheme for Product Certification will automatically benefit from the PAC MLA on product certification. The companies which they certify can immediately enjoy the benefit of not having to re-certify their products that they export to PAC MLA member countries in the Asia-Pacific.
9. One such certification body is TÜV SÜD PSB Pte Ltd. "As an SAC accredited organisation, TÜV SÜD PSB's expertise and competence has been internationally recognised by our customers for the past years – enhancing their competitiveness and passing on significant time and costs savings too. Because of SAC and its close collaboration with government agencies, Singapore companies have greatly benefited from the several mutual recognition agreements signed between Singapore and regional and international bodies," said Ms Tan Chiew Wan, Vice-President, Certification, TÜV SÜD PSB Pte Ltd.
10. Companies can expect to save certification costs with Singapore's entrance into the PAC MLA for product certification. Addvalue Communications Pte Ltd and InfoWave Pte Ltd are two local enterprises which have benefited from leveraging on SAC accreditation.
11. "Our Wideye Sabre1 BGAN Satellite Terminal was certified by TÜV SÜD PSB in Singapore for export to the United States and European Union. This has not only saved our company time and money, it has also enhanced our competitive edge," said Dr Colin Chan, Managing Director of Addvalue Communications.

12. Mr Loh Choon Seng, Managing Director, InfoWave Pte Ltd, commented, "InfoWave has benefited from the SAC Accreditation Scheme for Product Certification, in particular, the United States' Federal Communication Commission (FCC) compliance testing and certification for our products for export. Our Waveon 606 Mobile Data Acquisition was recently certified by TÜV SÜD PSB to comply with all relevant directives and standards for sale in overseas markets. We chose a local SAC accredited certification body, as it is responsive to our business needs and also offers flexibility, convenience and knowledge in the certification industry. We were able to achieve FCC certification for our product efficiently and cost effectively."

13. The SAC is also a member of the PAC MLA for Quality Management System. This MLA applies to certification bodies which certify companies to ISO 9001.

14. Some 80 members and associate members of the PAC are attending the 14th Plenary Meeting from 7-14 July 2007. This is the first time the annual Plenary Meeting is being held in Singapore.

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