

IFIA Guidance Document on the Provision of Consignment Based Conformity Assessment Services

IFIA is a trade federation that represents over 60 of the world's leading independent third-party testing, inspection and certification (TIC) companies. IFIA members offer conformity assessment services, including testing, inspection, certification, systems audits, training, technical and documentary support. IFIA members are in the business of reducing risk, including working with government clients to introduce regimes to improve controls of products being shipped to the respective client countries.

In 2010, the IFIA Government Services committee led an initiative to develop a Code of Practice designed to provide confidence to governments, consumers and the trading community that IFIA members operating such programmes would always comply with the recognised industry code. The IFIA committee decided to use the generic name of Consignment Based Conformity Assessment (CBCA) to refer to the business and the CBCA Code of Practice was adopted soon after.

The implementation of technical regulations by a national government is to ensure the health, well-being and safety of its citizens. They are also intended to fight against sub-standard and counterfeit products, with the objectives of protection for the population, investors and to provide safeguards against unfair competition.

As these programmes are specifically targeted against such non-compliant products and prohibited imports, it is essential that the government utilises well founded and conforming services. Such assurance comes from the use of IFIA members who have demonstrated compliance with the CBCA Code of Practice through an annual independent audit.

An up-to-date list covering IFIA members who are approved and adhere to the above requirements are displayed on IFIA's website. The provision of CBCA type services by any of these companies obligates them to good practices. The provision of services by any other provider does not provide the government or consumers with the assurance that an adequate level of due diligence in the certification activities is being observed.

A copy of the Code of Practice is available from IFIA and user Governments are encouraged to follow the guidelines that are contained in the document. The distinct benefit of using an IFIA approved company to support the Government in the implementation of import conformity assessments and enforcement of standards, is the guarantee of the level of competency and ability of the contracted company.

ABOUT IFIA

Founded in 1982, the International Federation of Inspection Agencies (IFIA) is the federation of organisations that provide inspection, testing and certification services internationally. IFIA currently represents over 60 of the world's leading international testing, inspection and certification bodies representing over 300,000 employees and a combined turnover of roughly €23 billion. For more information please visit <http://www.ifia-federation.org>.