



THE INTERNATIONAL TIC SECTOR POSITION IN TRADE NEGOTIATIONS

The independent third-party Testing, Inspection, and Certification (TIC) industry supports trade negotiations that result in comprehensive, high-standard and market-opening trade agreements for all industries, including the TIC industry. We recommend language that:

Reduces duplicative regulatory burdens through national treatment

National treatment means that conformity assessment bodies (CABs) located in the territory of the other party (non-domestic) are accorded treatment no less favourable than CABs located in the territory of the domestic party. This approach:

- allows manufacturers to use the CAB that can provide the services they need; creating efficiencies while reducing costs and time to market.
- provides regulators with greater confidence that requirements are met because regulators approve CABs directly.

Preserves the neutrality of conformity assessment methods

Trade agreements should not prescribe or evaluate conformity assessment methods. On the contrary, they should remain method-neutral. Regulators should have the prerogative and flexibility to decide on the appropriate method of assessing conformity according to their risk assessment, policy objectives, market characteristics, and confidence needs.

Establishes ambitious horizontal provisions through the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Chapter

The TBT chapter should serve as the overarching approach and framework for technical regulations, standards, and conformity assessment-related matters across all disciplines. The inclusion of TBT-like provisions outside of the TBT chapter that degrade the overarching TBT obligations, undermines the strength of the TBT chapter and creates confusion to economic operators and regulators.

Ensures that conformity assessment procedures are accepted by the other party only when they are deemed equivalent

Trade agreements should ensure that products allowed to access the other party without further conformity assessment, have been subject to a conformity assessment method that is deemed at least equivalent by the other party. This ensures that the protection to consumers' health, safety and the environment is not reduced or undermined as a result of the trade agreement. Thereby, regulators and the public's concerns about public policy objectives are addressed.

Promotes good regulatory practices and regulatory cooperation

The TIC industry recommends reducing unnecessary regulatory differences through:

- **Good Regulatory Practices** (i.e. regulatory coherence) with provisions for transparency, stakeholder participation, accountability, impact assessment, impartiality, and due process. Good regulatory practices foster an open, fair, and predictable regulatory environment and provide the foundation for regulatory cooperation while reducing cost and time to market that benefits manufacturers, conformity assessment bodies, and consumers.
- **Regulatory Cooperation**, which must be open, transparent and focus on harmonizing standards, while respecting the different methods of conformity assessment. Regulatory cooperation should take into consideration emerging areas where standards and regulations are still being developed. Attempting regulatory cooperation in areas where rules are already fully established can be extremely time-consuming while producing limited results.

About the TIC Council

The TIC Council is a global association representing over 90 international independent third-party testing, inspection, certification and verification organizations. The industry represents an estimated one million employees across the world with annual sales of approximately USD 200 billion.

TIC Council

Rue du Commerce 20-22, 1000 Brussels, Belgium | +32 2 880 21 37
secretariat@tic-council.org | www.tic-council.org
VAT: BE0724881295 | Transparency Register No.: 840667012559
Formerly known as IFIA and CEOC

TIC Council Americas

PO Box 76960 | 2 Massachusetts Ave NE | Washington, DC | 20013
americas@tic-council.org | www.tic-council.org
Formerly known as IFIA Americas Committee