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albarubens

DOCUMENT REVISION HISTORY

	DATE	REASON		EDIT	APPR
CURRENT:	**28 Oct 2017**	**First release**		**terzaghi**	**deluca**

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COMPARISON CRITERIA BETWEEN SIMILAR STANDARDS

ABSTRACT

The Albarubens laboratory always operates in compliance to the standard ISO/IEC17025.
Large parts of the tests are covered by accreditation, issued by independent accreditation authorities inside the international ILAC scheme.
The accreditation certificate includes a schedule with the accredited test list, typically containing the most representative international standard describing each type of test.

Usually the clients ask for testing under different standards or private protocols.
The overall number of possible testing protocols is practically infinity, but the accredited test list cannot be too large for some practical reasons.
Most of the time the tests are identical, or with little differences, to the main accredited ones.
Of course, Albarubens cannot declare as accredited a test under a standard not included into the official list, although identical.
But the client need the mention of its requested standard into the test report.

The instruction describe the approach used by Albarubens to manage this process, solving the apparent paradox:

1. the client asks for accredited testing under a specific or private protocol;
2. the laboratory is accredited for an identical or very similar test;
3. Albarubens compares the two procedures, declaring under proper responsibility that the tests are fully comparable;
4. the final test report will mention the accredited standard, to allow the accreditation marking;
5. the final test report will declare the comparability between the requested and the executed tests;
6. the final test report will describe this approach, clarifying that the comparison is not covered by the accreditation;

THE FINAL GOAL is to issue an accredited test report, mentioning also the not accredited - but similar - standard requested by the client.

RESPONSIBILITY

The comparison validity is under the professional responsibility of Albarubens.
It may be done only by Albarubens people enabled to write the test procedures.
The accreditation authority is never responsible of the comparisons validity, but it may examine and comment this procedure, the comparison process and the final test report content.

COMPARISON

Main rules:

1. Any comparison process shall be recorded and commented into the Albarubens database.
2. Comparison without specific technical description are not valid.
3. The description may be send to the client and/or included into the test report under request.

The comparison is performed examing the text of the main standard (also called 'accredited protocol') and the text of the compared one (also called 'derived protocol').
Only written and well referenced testing procotocols can be compared to the accredited standards; the original text has to be available into the database.

The comparison result can be four types.

- IDENTICAL

The two protocols are exactly same in process, with possibile differences only in numerical values.

EXAMPLE
A damp-heat test with 85°C and 85%rh is considered identical to an accredited standards for damp-heat with temperature 50-95°C and humidity 50%rh. The difference in humidity is not relevant, because any climatic chamber is capable to mantain both 50%rh or 85%rh, with same metrological requirements.

- SIMILAR

The two protocols includes differences in procedures without scientific relevance.

EXAMPLE
The derived protocol asks to stop the damp-heat at midtime, in order to perform a partial visual examination.

- COMBINED

The derived protocol is the combination of two or more accredited ones.

EXAMPLE
The client protocol asks to perform the dielectric strenght test (accredited) in extreme environmental conditions (accredited).
The derived protocol is recorded as connected to the main accredited one (in this example: the dielectric strenght test).

The comparison form shows the list of all the original protocols.

- DIFFERENT

The client protocol is not derived by an accredited one.

EXAMPLE
A temperature test at 1300°C cannot be considered as derived by a temperature test up to 200°C, because the temperature difference makes the tests qualitatively different.

These comparisons are not listed.

- IN CASE OF DOUBT

Discuss the comparison with the head of the laboratory and/or sumbit the question to the accreditation authority.

REPORTING

The Albarubens ERP (the WebApp) authomatically recognizes the presence of approved comparisons between accredited and derived tests, if any.
Both the commercial quotations and the test report will be issued mention as accredited the primary one, declared as comparable to the test requested by the client.
The general approach is shortly explained, including the accreditation coverage limitation.
The level of comparison (IDENTICAL / SIMILAR / COMBINED) is clearly showed.

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