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About the IWTO Licensed Laboratories



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About IWTO

The International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO) has been the recognized global authority for standards in the wool textile industry since 1930.

With a membership drawn from 22 countries encompassing the wool pipeline “from sheep to shop”, IWTO represents the interests of the world’s wool textile trade at the international level.

By facilitating industry strategy and ensuring standards in manufacturing and sustainability, IWTO fosters connection between members and all stakeholders through mutual support of opportunities for wool. Wool industry players wishing to participate in securing wool’s future should consider the benefits of an IWTO membership. IWTO is based in Brussels.

One of IWTO’s services is providing an international licensing scheme for laboratories in compliance with the criteria required to issue IWTO Test Certificates for specific Test-Methods and Regulations. This initiative gives enhanced credibility to wool testing around the world.

IWTO also develops and regularly updates a number of Test-Methods (“Specifications”) and “Regulations” to ensure standardization and reliability of sampling and testing carried out on the fibre.

About IWTO Laboratory Licensing

Under the IWTO scheme, the International Wool Textile Organisation authorizes licensed laboratories to issue IWTO Certificates, subject to their compliance with the criteria, which have been laid down for that purpose.

Since 1st January 1997, no laboratory may issue an IWTO Test Certificate without being licensed by the International Wool Textile Organisation (IWTO). A licensed laboratory must be situated in an IWTO Member-country or, for laboratories which are situated in countries that are not members of IWTO, they should be able to be licensed if they become Associate Members of IWTO. The application for licensing must be scrutinized by the IWTO Licensing Panel.

An essential criterion for licensing by IWTO is that the applicant laboratory should be accredited by a recognised national laboratory accreditation body to ISO/IEC 17025 for the Test Methods and associated sampling Regulations for which it wishes to issue IWTO Certificates. The Scope of Accreditation, issued by the accreditation body, must indicate compliance with both the Test Method and the applicable Regulation. No Test Method without an associated Regulation could be included in the licensing scheme.

The national laboratory accreditation body must itself have a Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) with similar institutions in other countries in conformity with ISO/IEC 17011.

Laboratories which have been licensed by IWTO to issue IWTO Test Certificates, and the details of the Test Methods for which each laboratory is licensed, are listed on the IWTO website via <https://iwto.org/about-iwto/licensed-laboratories/>

Since 1st January 1999, it has been mandatory for laboratories to show their IWTO License Number on the IWTO Certificates which they issue.

IWTO Test Certificates may only be issued as a result of tests carried out in strict compliance with full IWTO Test Methods and the IWTO Regulations which relate to them. These are listed further down in this document. However, IWTO itself takes no financial responsibility for the accuracy of the tests carried out.

Further details, application forms etc may be obtained from the International Wool Textile Organisation office. Please contact licensing@iwto.org

IWTO Test Certificates

The efficient international trading of wool requires:

- a) clear specifications regarding the quantity and quality attributes of the delivery; and
- b) means by which all parties to the transaction can be assured that these specifications have been achieved.

IWTO Certificates are essential in achieving these requirements. IWTO Testing Specifications and Regulations have been developed by the international wool trade to specifically meet the needs of buyers and sellers. Both parties can utilise IWTO Certificates with confidence, knowing that these certificates are produced by impartial, independently audited test houses and that they are recognised by the IWTO Arbitration process (the “Blue Book”.)

IWTO Certificates

IWTO Certificates have been designed to provide maximum integrity to all trading partners.

This integrity begins at the very first stage - **Sampling** - whereby all bales are weighed and sampled in strict accordance with IWTO Regulations by, or under the supervision of, independent sampling staff. An IWTO Certificate cannot be issued for a test method that is not supported by IWTO sampling Regulations.

At the next stage - **Testing** – several steps need to be strictly followed:

- a) Test Houses must be Licensed by IWTO and undertake testing in strict accordance with the published IWTO Testing Specifications & Regulations.
- b) Each IWTO Certificate must show all relevant test results as detailed in the appropriate Test Specification, as well as reference information to allow verification and trace-back, should a problem occur.
- c) Independent Auditing by an internationally recognised accreditation body must have been successfully completed on at least an annual basis, to ensure the test house meets the technical standards required by IWTO.
- d) IWTO licensed laboratories must demonstrate their ongoing proficiency to accreditation authorities by participation in interlaboratory trials.

Only test houses that meet all these standards can be licensed to issue IWTO Certificates. Fuller details can be found at <https://iwto.org/about-iwto/licensed-laboratories/>

All IWTO Certificates are supported by the IWTO Arbitration Rules that clearly outline the rights and responsibilities of all concerned, including the test house.

Other Types of Documents -Test House Certificates or Test Reports

For a number of reasons, test houses (including those licensed by IWTO) may issue its results on documents that are **NOT** IWTO Test Certificates. Some test houses will issue their own “Test House Certificate” whilst others may call the document a “Test Report”. Some of the reasons for issuing these non-IWTO documents are outlined below:

- the test house is not IWTO Licensed, either for any tests, or for the specific tests reported;
- the test house was not able to meet all the sampling, testing or reporting requirements for IWTO Certificates;
- the test house used an ‘in-house’ or other test method that is not an IWTO Specification;
- the testing was conducted using modified or abbreviated IWTO methods; or
- sampling and bale weighing has not been supervised by independent sampling staff or has not followed the IWTO Regulations.

It should be noted that there are some cases where IWTO-Licensed laboratories issue certificates against nationally approved standards as opposed to IWTO Specifications. Two specific examples are ‘Core Bulk’ and ‘Length After Carding’ (LAC) Tests. These are two test methods, that do have sampling Regulations, but were developed and endorsed by the NZ National Council of Wool Interests and Standards New Zealand. IWTO-Licensed laboratories in New Zealand routinely conduct these tests and issue Test House Certificates to report the results. These certificates cannot be issued as IWTO Certificates because the test methods are not IWTO methods.

Regardless of the reason, trading partners need to be aware that non-IWTO test house certificates and reports carry no official recognition from IWTO.

Commercial Implications

IWTO Certificates: Users of IWTO certificates should ensure that the certificate includes the title “IWTO Test Certificate”, the IWTO License Number and logo, and that the IWTO testing standards used are shown on the certificate. If not, contact IWTO or refer to the published list of Licensed Laboratories at <https://iwto.org/about-iwto/licensed-laboratories/>

Test House Certificates or Test Reports: Users should be aware of how the samples were taken, what standards were used for testing, what data is included and excluded, and whether arbitration is clearly defined. The document could note that an IWTO test method was followed, but this does not give it any official IWTO status. If in doubt, use IWTO Certificates in trading where possible.

National Accreditation Bodies: it is self-evident that national accreditation bodies have a pivotal role to play in the licensing scheme which IWTO has set up. It is their responsibility to ensure that the applicant laboratories do conform in every way to the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025 for the appropriate Test Methods (“IWTO Specifications”) and “Regulations”. It should be emphasized that for purposes of accrediting IWTO Test Methods and Regulations, IWTO does not allow national accreditation bodies to accept any derogation of the above-mentioned Test Methods and Regulations and must also accept that the final interpretation of any IWTO Test Method or Regulations lies with IWTO itself.

Test Methods & Regulations

The International Wool Textile Organisation has established and published (in Specification IWTO-0) detailed procedures for the elaboration, amendment, and/or relegation of its Test Methods. It also subjects its Regulations to similar review and approval by its commercial Committees. This ensures that the wording of these texts has been closely scrutinized, prior to approval by the experts in the field concerned and, therefore, that there are very good reasons why the test procedure is laid down in the way it is.

In view of the above specific provisions, adopted by the International Wool Textile Organisation to provide the required commercial relevance and scientific accuracy in the elaboration of its Test Methods and Regulations, and of the importance it attaches to them being respected, the IWTO Licensing Panel has the prerogative not to license a laboratory.

IWTO is prepared at any time to discuss with accreditation bodies any problems or concerns they may have as they accredit laboratories to ISO/IEC 17025 for IWTO. Test Methods and Regulations. Indeed, it positively welcomes such a dialogue, which can only be to the benefit of the wool textile industry as a whole and will undertake to raise such matters with its relevant Committees or its Licensing Panel at the earliest possible opportunity.

As indicated above, IWTO cannot accept that there be any derogation of the written text of its Test Methods and Regulations. Procedures exist for amendments to be made where necessary, but these can only be made by IWTO itself through its relevant Technical Groups and Committees, after the required data has been presented for peer review.

Only complete IWTO Test Methods may be accredited and under no circumstances can component parts of an IWTO Test Method be sub-contracted to another laboratory, even if that laboratory complies with ISO 17025.

IWTO Certificates are only valid if the methods and procedures laid down by IWTO are applied in complete accordance with the published texts. It is the role of the accreditation bodies to ensure that this is the case, and they cannot allow changes or amendments of any kind to the above texts or procedures, without invalidating the Test Certificates concerned.

In the event of the accreditation body having any concerns or problems in respect of IWTO Test Methods and Regulations, it should refer these to IWTO, which undertakes to examine the matter at the earliest opportunity.

IWTO Licensing Panel

Composition

The Licensing Panel is composed of Members nominated by National Committees. Each National Committee may nominate a maximum of two members.

Functions

1. To regularly review the IWTO licensing procedures and recommend changes, where appropriate.
2. To determine which Test Methods, having related Regulations, are to qualify for IWTO licensing, and from what date such licensing may be implemented.
3. To verify that the accreditation bodies, which have accredited wool test laboratories to ISO /IEC 17025 are themselves operating in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011 and have MRAs with sister bodies as registered by ILAC.
4. To check the conformity of laboratory Accreditation Certificates and supplementary documentation against the IWTO Test Methods and Regulations for which licensing is sought or to be maintained.
5. The Licensing Panel has the prerogative not to license a laboratory, if it considers it has substantive objective evidence that the laboratory and/or the accrediting body have not completely satisfied IWTO's licensing requirements and /or the laboratory is not in full compliance with the Test Methods and Regulations for which it seeks to be licensed. In such cases, the Licensing Panel shall seek clarification from the accrediting body as to the correctness of the information, and provide the laboratory concerned with the opportunity to answer the allegation, before coming to any final decision. If a laboratory has been previously licensed by IWTO for the Test Method in question, it will be given a reasonable time under prevailing circumstances to make whatever changes may be deemed necessary by the Licensing Panel, which shall, in all cases, document its reasons for revoking the license. The IWTO Licensing Panel may require the laboratory concerned to refrain from issuing IWTO Certificates pending implementation of such necessary changes.
6. To give advice to any applicant or accredited laboratories and accreditation bodies that raise questions on specific IWTO licensing issues.
7. To instigate action against any non-licensed laboratory that has issued documents purporting to be "IWTO Certificates" since 1st January 1997, and to advise the President and the Secretary-General as to the most appropriate course of action to counter cases of fraud or of misuse of the name of IWTO, where Certificates bearing its name are concerned.
8. To regularly review the format of IWTO Test Certificates issued by licensed laboratories to ensure that they comply with the relevant regulations and licensing rules. To also review the format of non-IWTO Certificates or Test Reports issued by licensed laboratories to ensure that the IWTO name or logo is not being used improperly.

IWTO Test Methods and Applicable Regulations for which IWTO Certificates can be issued:

Test Method	Title	Applicable Regulations	Example Proficiency Trials
IWTO-6	Method of Test for the Determination of the Mean Diameter of Wool Fibres in Combed Wool Sliver using the Airflow Apparatus	IWTO Regulations for the Testing of Wool Slivers for Mean Fibre Diameter and Mean Fibre Length	Interwoollabs
IWTO-7	Sub-Sampling Staples from Grab Samples	IWTO Staple Test Regulations	N/A
IWTO-10	Method for the Determination of Dichloromethane Soluble Matter in Combed Wool and Commercially Scoured or Carbonised Wool	IWTO Core Test Regulations	N/A
IWTO-12	Measurement of the Mean and Distribution of Fibre Diameter using the Sirolan-Laserscan Fibre Diameter Analyser	IWTO Core Test Regulations IWTO Regulations for the Testing of Wool Slivers for Mean Fibre Diameter and Mean Fibre Length	ILRT (for Raw Wool) Interwoollabs (for Sliver)
IWTO-17	Determination of the Fibre Length Distribution Parameters by means of the Almeter	IWTO Regulations for the Testing of Wool Slivers for Mean Fibre Diameter and Mean Fibre Length	Interwoollabs
	Determination of the Wool Base and Vegetable Matter Base of Core Samples of Raw Wool	IWTO Core Test Regulations	ILRT
	Determination by the Airflow Method of the Mean Fibre Diameter of Core Samples of Raw Wool	IWTO Core Test Regulations	ILRT

Test Method	Title	Applicable Regulations	Example Proficiency Trials
IWTO-30	Determination of Staple Length and Staple Strength	IWTO Staple Test Regulations	ILRT
IWTO-31	Calculation of IWTO Combined Certificates for Deliveries of Raw Wool	N/A	N/A
IWTO-33	Determination of Oven-Dry Mass and Calculated Invoice Mass of Scoured or Carbonised Wool	IWTO Condition Testing Regulations for Scoured or Carbonised Wool	N/A
IWTO-34	Determination of the Oven-Dry Mass, Calculated Invoice Mass and Calculated Merchantable Mass of Wool Tops	IWTO Condition Testing Regulations for Wool Top	N/A
IWTO-38	Method of Grab Sampling Greasy Wool from Bales	IWTO Staple Test Regulations	N/A
IWTO-41	Determination of the Invoice Mass of Scoured or Carbonised Wool or Top or Noils by Capacitance Method	IWTO Condition Testing Regulations for Wool Tops	N/A
IWTO-47	Measurement of the Mean and Distribution of Fibre Diameter of Wool using an Optical Fibre Diameter Analyser (OFDA)	IWTO Core Test Regulations IWTO Regulations for the Testing of Wool Slivers for Mean Fibre Diameter and Mean Fibre Length	ILRT (for Raw Wool) Interwoollabs (for Sliver)
IWTO-56	Method for the Measurement of Colour of Raw Wool	IWTO Colour Test Regulations for Raw Wool	ILRT

Notes:

1. To be licensed by IWTO, laboratories must be accredited to ISO/IEC 17025 by approved national accreditation bodies for those IWTO Test Methods and associated Regulations for which they wish to issue certificates. The Scope of Accreditation, issued by the accreditation body, must indicate compliance with both the Test Method and the applicable Regulation.
2. The IWTO Licensing Panel has published the list of example inter-laboratory proficiency trials for the reference of laboratories wishing to be licensed, and for accreditation bodies. Accreditation bodies are strongly encouraged to require laboratories to demonstrate acceptable performance in one or more of the available proficiency trials when auditing compliance with ISO/IEC 17025. The listed proficiency trial providers are organisations completely independent of IWTO, and each has their own Rules for Membership which may prevent some laboratories participating. Other interlaboratory or 'round robin' trials may be suitable to verify laboratory performance.

The contact details for the proficiency trial organisers listed above are listed:

Independent Laboratories Round Trial (ILRT)

c/o Australian Wool Testing Authority Ltd

David Crowe

PO Box 240

NORTH MELBOURNE

VIC 3051 AUSTRALIA

Ph: + 61 3 9371 2100

Fax: + 61 3 9371 2190

Email: david.crowe@awta.com.au

Interwoollabs

Andrew Lambert (Secretary General)

Wool House

Sidings Close

Bradford BD21AZ

United Kingdom

Phone: + +44 1274 688666

Email: info@interwoollabs.org

For a list of National Accreditation Bodies see:

<https://iwto.org/about-iwto/licensed-laboratories/>