

SGIP release

Wednesday, January 25, 2012

The following was a press release issued January 24 by the National Institute of Standards and Technology.

Updated Guidelines to Help Ensure Electrical Devices are Smart Grid Ready

Taking a step closer to ensuring that new electrical devices will be ready to plug into the nation's next-generation power grid, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST)'s Smart Grid Interoperability Panel (SGIP) recently outlined the process by which test laboratories and certifying organizations are accredited for evaluation of Smart Grid products.

This update to the *Interoperability Process Reference Manual** is a major step forward from the manual's 1.0 version of last year, according to Rik Drummond, chair of the SGIP's Testing and Certification Committee.

"Our objective is to ensure high-quality, easily installed products reach the marketplace that are fully interoperable with the new 'smart' power grid," says Drummond, who is also CEO and Chief Scientist at Drummond Group. "The process of following the guidelines in the IPRM will accomplish that."

Smart Grid technologies aim to transform the nation's aging electric power system into a network that integrates modern communication technologies with the power-delivery infrastructure. These changes will enable two-way flows of energy, communication and control capabilities.

To render the countless devices that connect to the grid fully "interoperable"—able to work together seamlessly—hundreds of new standards are under development by the SGIP membership. Electrical devices—from the largest power generator to the smallest household appliance—will need to adhere to these standards if they are to function as desired. Drummond says accredited testing labs and certification bodies are vital for ensuring broad interoperability and speeding the implementation of the Smart Grid.

"There are so many standards and so many products to certify, no one lab can test them all," Drummond says. "So the IPRM puts into place a process that allows the accreditation of many testing labs and certification bodies to support all the standards. These processes will help ensure a high quality of testing and consistency of test results between different labs."

Having interoperability standards in place is only a first step. To ensure that products bought by consumers will work as advertised, trusted accreditation organizations evaluate the procedures used by testing laboratories. The *IPRM v2.0* outlines the process these objective third parties should follow to accredit a testing and certification lab, as well as what the labs themselves must do to test products.

"The testing and certification process is critical to ensure the interoperability of devices made for the Smart Grid," says NIST's George Arnold, the National Coordinator for Smart Grid Interoperability. "The framework for lab accreditation in the updated manual adheres to international standards, which will be valuable for ensuring products that meet these labs' requirements can reach markets worldwide."

Several accrediting organizations have agreed to offer accreditation that adheres to *IPRM v2.0* procedures; three of these are members of the American Council of Independent Laboratories (ACIL, www.acil.org). These accrediting organizations, along with their contact information, include:

- A2LA, American Association for Laboratory Accreditation. Member of ACIL. Contact: Adam Gouker, agouker@A2LA.org; www.A2LA.org
- ANSI-ASQ National Accreditation Board/ACLASS, a joint effort of ANSI and the American Society for Quality (www.asq.org). Contact: Roger Muse, rmuse@anab-aiclass.org; www.anab-aiclass.org
- ANSI, American National Standards Institute. Contact: Reinaldo Figueiredo, rfigueir@ansi.org; www.ansi.org
- L-A-B, Laboratory Accreditation Bureau. Member of ACIL. Contact: Doug Leonard, dleonard@l-a-b.com; www.l-a-b.com
- PJLA, Perry Johnson Laboratory Accreditation. Member of ACIL. Contact: Tracy Szerszen, tszerszen@pjlabs.com; www.pjlabs.com

*Interoperability Process Reference Manual

Thank you and Congratulations to the Smart Grid Testing & Certification Committee members who were part of this effort.

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