



Australian Government
**Department of Industry,
Innovation and Science**

Contribution of Conformity Assessment to Trade Outcomes

Nicole Henry

WTO Committee on Technical Barriers to Trade

28 March 2017

Challenges in Conformity Assessment

Knowledge of applicable standards

- Challenging for industry to know what standards to apply to certain circumstances
- Complex trading environment with difference requirements across different jurisdictions

Interpretation of standards

- Increasing product innovation and changing regulatory environments
- Cultural and language gaps
- Different interpretations of harmonised standards

Fraud and non-conformance

- Undermines confidence in the capability of the global conformity assessment framework.



Confidence in the accreditation and conformity assessment system

Traditional Supply Chain

The In-House Model (1st Evolution)

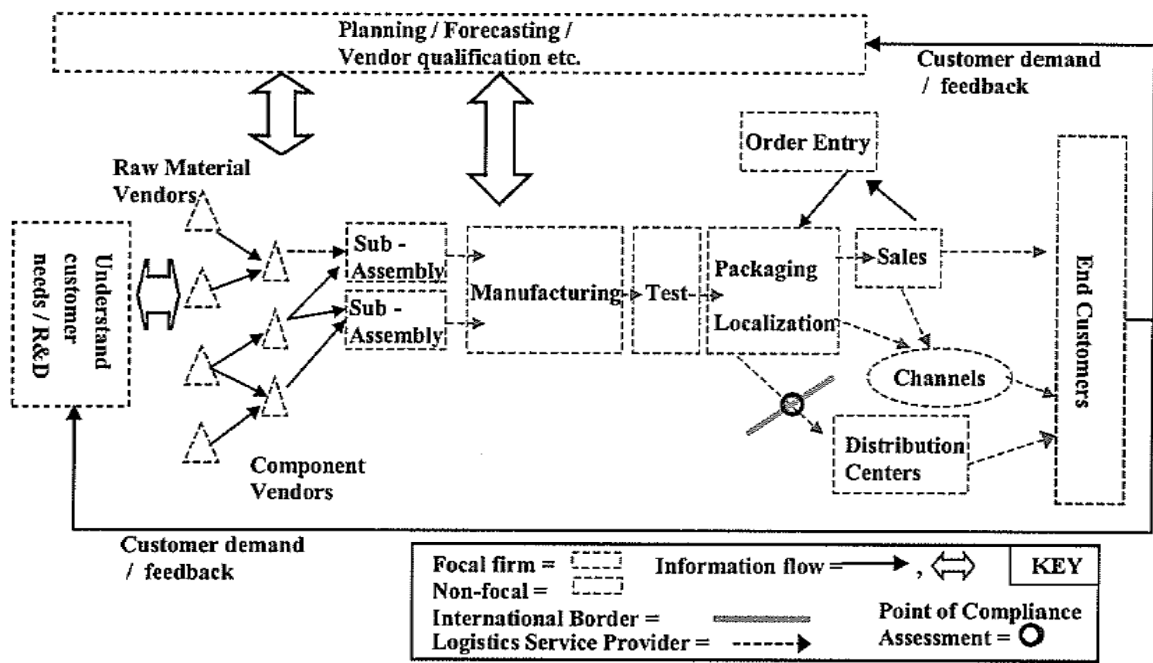


Fig. 2. In-house model: supply network of Hi-tech products (Source: Brenchley, 2000).

20 years on: The modern supply chain

The Virtual Model (3rd Evolution)

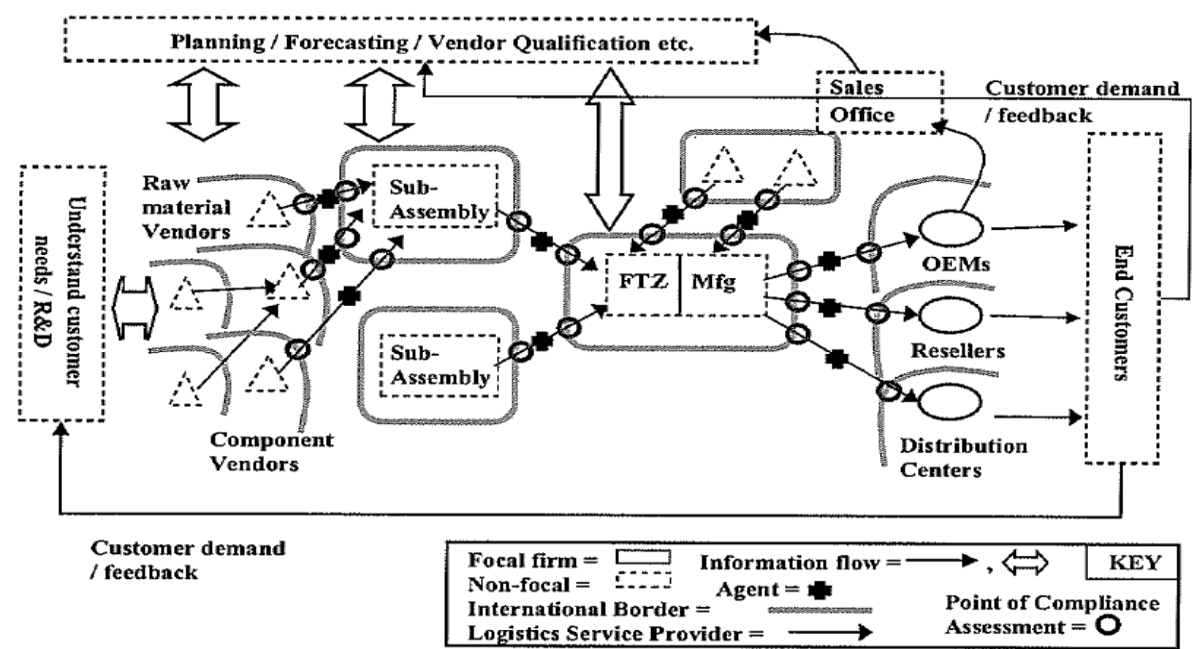


Fig. 4. Virtual model: supply network of Hi-tech products (Source: Brenchley, 2000).

Confidence in the accreditation and conformity assessment system

- Problems with conformity assessment may:
 - undermine market and consumer confidence
 - impact on the processing of goods at borders that can result in subsequent delays for products to reach markets.
- IILAC and IAF create a strategic framework to support international trade:
 - coordinate efforts to enhance accreditation and conformity assessment worldwide
 - internationally recognised as an important alternative to government led mutual recognition arrangements
- Acceptance of conformity assessment results is a critical element of the WTO TBT agreement and reinforced in many Free Trade Agreements.



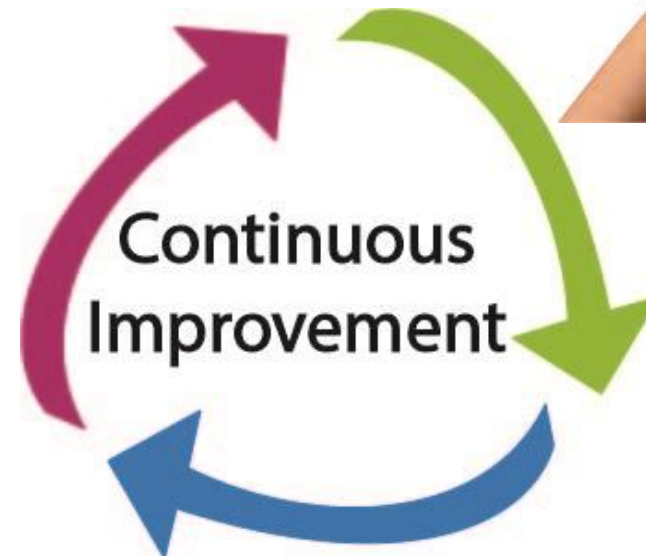
Questions for consideration:

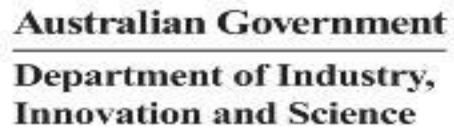
- Is a once every four (4) years 'peer evaluation' process sufficient to establish and maintain confidence in the results produced under the ILAC and IAF MRAs?
- What processes are in place to demonstrate continuous improvement?
- Accreditation bodies that form the membership of ILAC and IAF operate on a voluntary best endeavours basis – is this sufficient to establish and maintain confidence in the results produced under the ILAC and IAF MRAs?



Australian observations and suggestions

- Take a strategic view in addressing current limitations and building improvement to the accreditation and conformity assessment system.
- Examine whether the 'peer evaluation' process continues to be fit for purpose and best practice.
- Explore whether the contribution of the international accreditation and conformity assessment system is adequate to meet the needs of governments and consumers.





Industry House
10 Binara Street
Canberra City, ACT 2601, Australia
APEC.SCSC@industry.gov.au

