



Conformance System Strategy

A COMMON DIRECTION AND GOALS FOR
ENHANCING THE CONFORMANCE SYSTEM



MINISTRY OF BUSINESS,
INNOVATION & EMPLOYMENT
HĪKINA WHAKATUTUKI

[New Zealand](https://www.govt.nz/) Government



Introduction

New Zealand's conformance system plays an important role in our communities and economy. The system is made up of specialist organisations that check if goods and service providers conform to standards or regulations. It is important because it protects people from harm, and supports globally competitive trade.

The New Zealand Government's Conformance System Strategy sets a common direction and goals for enhancing the conformance system.

The Strategy will guide a programme of targeted actions over the next three years (2019 to 2022). The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) is the regulatory steward and the Government's advisor for the system. MBIE will lead the Strategy and monitor progress.

The Strategy is designed to strengthen meaningful partnerships between government and those involved with conformance.

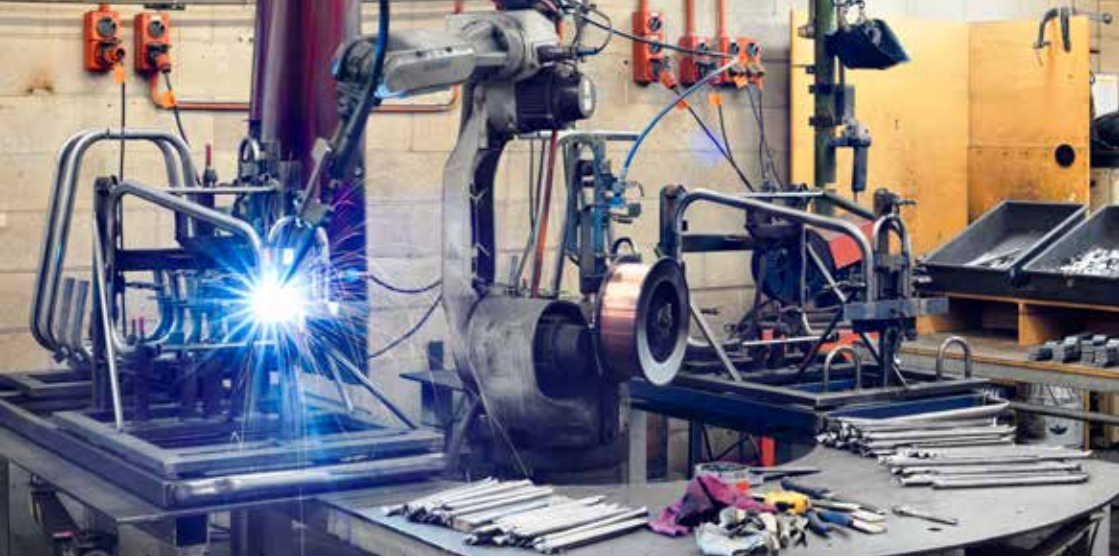


Background to the Strategy

In New Zealand we have two official accreditation bodies – International Accreditation New Zealand (IANZ) and the Joint Accreditation System of Australia and New Zealand (JAS-ANZ). Together, they play a leading part in the conformance system by ensuring the competence of a large number of conformity assessment bodies in different sectors.

MBIE undertook a review in 2018-19 to understand the health of our conformance system, and explore how the system is being used by people, businesses and regulators.

The review was a collaborative process with regulators and stakeholders and found that New Zealand's conformance system is working well. It helps exporters access overseas markets, helps businesses improve the quality of their goods and services and gives consumers confidence. It is also respected internationally. However, there are opportunities for improvement, and challenges to be managed. MBIE used these findings to develop the Conformance System Strategy.



Conformance System Strategy

The overall goal of the Conformance System Strategy is to sustain a trusted, reliable and high quality conformance system for New Zealand to protect communities and support commerce.

The Conformance System Strategy (the Strategy) is a foundation for enhancing conformance in New Zealand

The Strategy sets out the Government's aspirations and plan for the conformance system, which are designed to assist accreditation and conformity assessment bodies and other organisations, agencies and people involved in conformance (the sector). The Strategy addresses a range of current challenges and opportunities.

The Ministry of Business, Innovation and Employment (MBIE) will lead the Strategy. It sets out actions we will take together over the next three years to enhance conformance.

The Strategy has four priority focus areas based on the main challenges and opportunities in conformance

Each focus area includes a relevant goal (outcome), success factors and planned actions. The Strategy is not limited to the planned actions. It is also designed to allow for new conformance sector-led actions and initiatives that contribute to the overall goal. The Government will measure progress against the goals after three years.

■ Focus area ONE: Organisational performance and governance

Outcome: Organisations and arrangements for conformance are working together to uphold and embed best practice.

Success factors:

- › A collaborative approach to enhancing organisational performance and addressing challenges in conformance
- › A culture of continuous improvement
- › Accreditation bodies play a leadership role
- › International cooperation and engagement with overseas peers.

Actions that MBIE will lead:

- › Connect accreditation bodies' accountability arrangements to the focus areas of the Strategy
- › Quarterly Standards, Accreditation and Metrology meetings to coordinate efforts towards the overall goal with relevant peak bodies
- › Deliver an induction package for new accreditation board member appointees.

■ Focus area TWO: Regulatory quality and practice

Outcome: Regulatory systems use the conformance system effectively to support their objectives for public health, safety, prosperity and wellbeing.

Success factors:

- › Regulators commit to best practice for conformance in their regulatory systems
- › More consistent approaches to the design, oversight and implementation of regulations involving conformity assessments and accreditation
- › Clear roles and responsibilities that provide for appropriate accountabilities.

Actions that MBIE will lead:

- › Publish best practice advice for regulators and provide a clear channel for regulators seeking advice
- › Deliver an annual professional development seminar and learning resources on using standards and conformance
- › Establish a regular good practice forum between the quality infrastructure bodies and regulators.

■ Focus area THREE: Partnerships for skills and value

Outcome: The adoption of information and technological innovations is accelerated to create additional value for business and consumers. High quality services are readily available at a reasonable cost.

Success factors:

- › Conformance organisations commit to investing in skills and new techniques
- › Clear career pathways and skills development for conformance professionals
- › New technologies, practices and information are exploited to increase the efficiency, value and knowledge intensity of the conformance system.

Actions that MBIE will lead:

- › Establish an annual forum for conformity assessment and accreditation bodies with an initial focus on skills and technology
- › Initiate a workforce planning project
- › Assist regulators to set clear career pathways and reduce unnecessary demands on assessors
- › Encourage and support conformity assessment and accreditation bodies to lead initiatives that contribute to the outcome.

■ Focus area FOUR: International connections

Outcome: The conformance system upholds market access objectives, encourages innovation and upholds robust and reliable assurances about the quality of our imports and exports.

Success factors:

- › Importers understand conformance and their obligations
- › New Zealand connects with international organisations to support exporters and improve the quality of overseas assurances
- › New Zealand conformity assessment bodies export services overseas.

Actions that MBIE will lead:

- › Provide information to importers to help them carry out due diligence
- › Support ongoing work with the accreditation bodies to lift the effectiveness of overseas conformance through international organisations
- › Promote good practice for standards and conformance internationally.



MORE INFORMATION:

For more information about what is happening with the Strategy and conformance system see www.mbie.govt.nz/conformance

MBIE welcomes any questions, suggestions or comments about the Strategy. You can email us at conformance@mbie.govt.nz