How to become a supplier of Toll Manufactured APAS Approved Products.

Editorial: This version of the document incorporates changes aimed at removing duplication of auditing quality systems between APAS, NATA and ISO9000 auditors as it already is a part of ISO9000. References to Quality Manuals etc have been deleted. References to Product Approvals have been moved to a new document (D192). Improved explanation of how APAS operates.

This document provides advice to local (Australian) paint manufacturers and suppliers on how APAS operates and how to become a supplier of APAS Approved Products to members of the Scheme.

1. HOW APAS OPERATES

(i) APAS registers satisfactory manufacturing units by issuing them “Recognition” which identifies them as having both the technical competence to manufacture quality products and a system which safeguards on-going product quality. As part of that recognition, APAS requires that product manufacture is maintained under the appropriate 3rd party quality system certification. For companies producing in excess of 2 million litres of paint per annum or with a staff exceeding 20, this would necessitate compliance with AS/NZS ISO 9002. For smaller companies, compliance with less comprehensive requirements such as NATA’s Q-Base, Standards Australia’s Core Competency or equivalent, is likely to be acceptable.

The quality control laboratory must be under the umbrella of the National Association of Testing Authorities (NATA) laboratory accreditation scheme or other scheme recognised by NATA as equivalent. This is a requirement because quality management systems such as ISO9000 say nothing about technical competence. Their focus is on quality management procedures and processes. NATA laboratory accreditation ensures the technical competence of the organisation is achieved and maintained to best practice standard.

(ii) The “Recognised Manufacturing Unit” (RMU) applies for Product Approval on the basis of compliance with one or more APAS specifications.

Approval is granted on the basis of the evidence provided, subject to the concurrence, where required, of APAS’s technical experts.

(iii) The “List of Approved Products” is circulated to all government users, and manufacturers are encouraged to market their “approved product” status both by identification on cans and in general promotions.

(iv) Government users of coatings, both Federal, State and Local Government departments, are Members of APAS. They use the Scheme by calling, in tender documents and specifications, for products that comply with the APAS specifications. Other organisations such as Standards Australia and NATSPEC make significant use of, and reference to APAS specifications. Manufacturers and suppliers are not classed as members and they use the Scheme to access this market segment.

(v) RMU’s are required to advise APAS of relevant technical or administrative changes and are inspected by APAS at intervals. Any user complaints or defects identified during
inspection visits or audit testing are followed up by APAS until resolved.

(vi) APAS is governed by a Board, comprised of representatives of Federal and State government departments and instrumentalities. The main function of the Board is to set policy, adjudicate on contentious matters and to receive the report of the Executive Officer. Daily administration of APAS is vested in Scientific Services Laboratory, (SSL - 177 Salmon St. Port Melbourne Victoria 3207 Australia) which operates as part of the Federal Industry, Science & Resources portfolio under the Australian Government Analytical Laboratories (AGAL).

2. HOW TO JOIN THE SCHEME

Where APAS recognition is sought for a toll manufacturing arrangement, all components of the manufacturing/supply process, to be known in this document as the "organisation", must have APAS recognition, ie the parent company (or technical licensor) which provides overall technical control, the local supplier/agent; and the Australian manufacturing unit (or technical licensee).

(i) The Australian supplier/agent should study and become familiar with this document and the other documents supplied.

(ii) When satisfied that the "organisation", will meet the requirements outlined in this document, return the completed "Application Form" (at the end of this document) to APAS.

(iii) APAS acknowledges your application and forwards a questionnaire to obtain basic information regarding the "organisation", and its products.

(iv) the completed questionnaire is returned to APAS with copies of the ISO9000 accreditation certificate and NATA Laboratory accreditation certificate (or equivalent) relevant for each part of the organisation. APAS advises you of any obvious shortcomings which may impede "Recognition".

(v) Once a prima facie case is established that the organisation is likely to be ready for "Recognition", APAS agrees with applicant on an Assessment Team/s and date/s for Assessment Visit/s.

(vi) The Assessment Visit is conducted and at the completion of the visit, the Assessment Team indicates to the applicant the substance of their recommendations to the APAS Board.

(vii) Corrective actions are taken by the organisation as necessary, to the satisfaction of APAS. This may in some instances necessitate a further visit depending on the nature of the corrective actions needed.

(viii) Recommendation of "Recognition" is made to the APAS Board.

(ix) APAS provides a "Recognition" certificate to the manufacturing unit.

(x) Surveillance visits are arranged at two yearly intervals or as otherwise necessary.

(xi) Coincident with Clause 6 below, APAS examines preliminary details of products likely to be tendered for "Product Approval", and if appropriate, provides guidance on any matters which may need to be addressed before a product approval could be granted.

(xii) Once manufacturer "Recognition" is granted by APAS, products may be submitted against relevant product specifications and a "Product Approval" certificate is issued for each complying product.
3. REQUIREMENTS FOR MANUFACTURER (LICENSEE) RECOGNITION

APAS auditors visit the manufacturing unit which is seeking recognition, to obtain evidence to show that the manufacturer's expertise, facilities and systems are of a sufficient standard in the following areas:-

i) an effective, dynamic, quality management system audited by a third party.

ii) sufficient protection for and segregation of raw materials to prevent deterioration or significant cross contamination before use.

iii) the issue of batch manufacturing sheets with adequate and unambiguous instructions to ensure a consistent product.

iv) procedures for the transfer from store, checking of the identity, measuring out and checking quantities into the batch, of ingredients specified on the batch sheet and identification of the batch at all stages of production.

v) general factory operating procedures.

vi) control of the materials and quantities of materials allowed to be added to adjust a batch to meet the specification requirements.

vii) sampling and testing of finished products before release for filling off.

viii) filling off and labelling including the identification of the batch number and/or date of manufacture and the storage of finished products.

ix) quality control laboratories which are NATA registered for a range of APAS and Australian Standard tests appropriate for the products to be approved and manufactured.

x) an effective, working complaints register with evidence if corrective and preventive actions.

xi) adequately trained Technical Service personnel to advise on, investigate and resolve problems experienced in the use of APAS approved products.

xii) signatory or signatories nominated by the manufacturer to be responsible for the endorsement and provision of test certificates, results and records for products manufactured to APAS specifications.

(A signatory must be a person responsible for the quality control function and be qualified by education and/or experience to carry out this function. A NATA signatory would usually be deemed to be an acceptable person as a APAS signatory).

xiii) while the accreditation body which provides certification under AS/NZS ISO 9001 or 9002 will likely examine the documented systems necessary to control the above areas, APAS will examine the technical aspects to ensure that practices followed are consistent with best industry standards.

xiv) retention of batch production records, batch samples and test results.

xv) periodic and systematic review of product test results and batch adjustments.

It is the responsibility of the management of the RMU to inform APAS of any changes to the range of products manufactured, and of any changes to the quality control system, technical personnel or responsibilities in the quality assurance function at any time.

Refer also document D192 “The APAS Approved Product System”.
4. REQUIREMENTS FOR OVERSEAS PARENT (LICENSOR) RECOGNITION

APAS arranges for acceptable local auditors to visit the parent/licensor unit which is seeking recognition, to obtain evidence to show that their expertise, facilities and systems are of a sufficient standard in the following areas:-

i) an effective, dynamic, quality management system audited by a third party.
ii) effective control over formulations to ensure performance properties are not affected by any necessary changes; such changes are properly investigated, authorised and implemented; formulation record keeping is satisfactory;
iii) adequate level of technical assistance is provided to the Licensee.
iv) proper investigation of complaints and implementation of appropriate corrective and preventive action.

It is the responsibility of the management of the Licensor to inform APAS (via their Australian connection) of any changes to the range of APAS approved products developed. Refer also document D192 “The APAS Approved Product System”.

5. REQUIREMENTS FOR RECOGNITION OF AUSTRALIAN AGENT or DISTRIBUTOR

The Australian distributor must demonstrate that they have a system which identifies all customer complaints, the mode of investigation and a resolution system which is consistent with APAS expectations. (This would normally require an audit visit by APAS at least every two years).
MESSAGE:

APPLICATION FOR APAS RECOGNITION

We have examined the APAS documents provided previously and believe we will comply with the detailed requirements for Recognition. Could you please forward a Recognition Questionnaire to facilitate our assessment visit? Basic information regarding our Company and product is as detailed below;

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Please attach a brief description of the product range for which product approval is likely to be sought:

Signed: ................................. Date:  
(print name):