



## Changes within IQNet

**New President:**  
Future Challenges



**New Secretary General:**  
Global Account Management



## Successful IQNet Members



**JQA and IQNet:**  
Environmental Children's Drawing Contest

**KFQ:**  
Successful Certification ServiceS in Korea

**PCBC:**  
IQNet Surveillance Audit in Poland



No.01  
03/2001

## Projects and Studies

New Method for Auditing ISO 9000:2000

Agricultural Safety



Global acceptance of Management System Certificates and world-wide excellence assessments through the International Network

**ENHANCE YOUR REPUTATION WORLDWIDE**



## Successful IQNet customers

**MTR Corporation:**  
First HKQAA Certificate ISO 9001:2000

**YAKULT:**  
IBEC Assessment in Kyoto, Japan

## The new challenges of the global market of the third millennium.

Among the most relevant activities, the study carried out by a special committee with the aim to analyse the main innovations deserves mentioning; the job done has resulted in the issue of a document called "IQNet Position and Guidelines on the application of consistent pair - ISO 9001:2000 and ISO 9004:2000", now available on the web site: [www.iqnet-certification.com](http://www.iqnet-certification.com)

As a confirmation of what has been pointed out above, the document opens with a statement which represents the moving spirit of the whole work:

### **IQNet members consider the new ISO 9000 series of standard to be a great challenge to the quality industry and quality philosophy in general**

This document is one of the most important examples of the outcome of co-operation among members, and it has allowed the association to develop a specific IQNet auditor training course, which has already been supplied several times in many countries all over the world.

This course, as well as many other examples of synergies among the members of the association, proves that this is a winning strategy for the future of the association itself, witness the fact that no other body has been able to develop similar products because of both the high costs of the products themselves and the big amount of resources (human and know how) that must be dedicated to these projects.

IQNet can bypass this kind of problems by dividing up expenses among its members, by distributing workloads among groups of bodies and, above all, by benefiting from the technical experience of an unrivalled pool of experts.

IQNet is making ready to face the challenges of new millennium by relying on "Co-operation" among members, "Synergies" among the different bodies and "Quality" of the services provided by all its certification bodies. The years 2001 and 2002 are definitely going to be a hard test for IQNet and its members as the competition in the certification sector world-wide is becoming more and more aggressive.

However, with more than 100,000 certified companies all over the world, IQNet is aware that it can play a major role on the international market being a unique model of an association of certification bodies that cannot be easily followed.

The values created since its establishment in terms of image on the market (the IQNet mark is well known and appreciated world-wide), credibility (its "peer review" system among members is one of the few working models in the world and its operative rules, gathered in the IQNet Management System Handbook, are the most detailed and strict), ability to satisfy the clients' needs (the IQNet certificate, the multilateral agreement among members, the auditors' and staff personnel's technical competence and language abilities are "added values" for IQNet clients which they cannot find elsewhere), are priceless assets which all IQNet members can benefit from in order to remain favoured suppliers of Management System Assessment and Certification on the global market of the third millennium.

### **The appointment of Dr. Fabio Roversi as IQNet President**

During the General Assembly held on 27-28-29 September 2000 on the KEMA premises in Arnhem (NL), Dr. Fabio Roversi was appointed IQNet President for the 2001-2002 two-year period.



Dr. Fabio Roversi  
IQNet President

#### IQNet PRESIDENTS

Mr. John ROBERTS  
(UK) 1990-1992

Mr. Ivar PALJAK  
(S) 1993-1994

Mr. Peter FALK  
(NL) 1995-1996

Dr. Klaus PETRICK  
(D) 1997-1998

Mrs. Catherine NEVILLE  
(CAN) 1999-2000

Dr. Fabio ROVERSI  
(I) 2001-2002

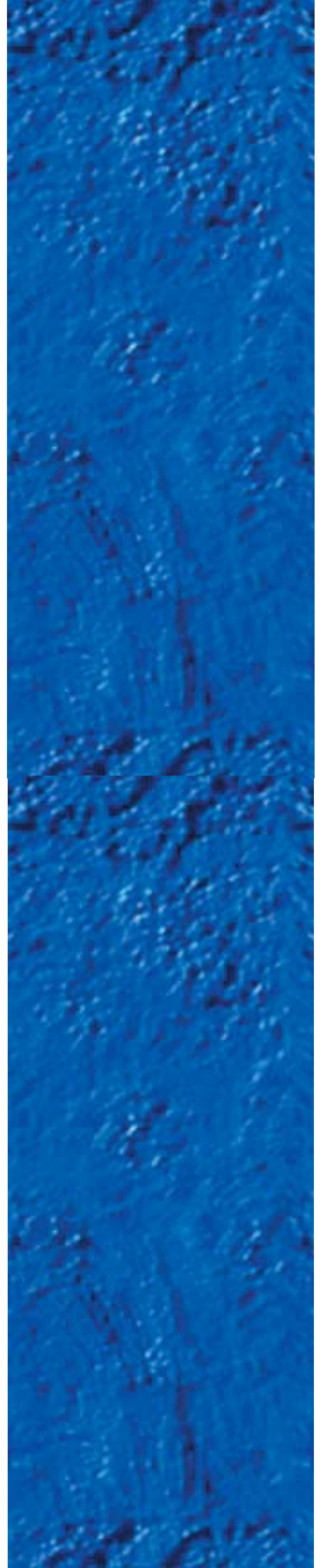
Dr. Fabio Roversi, 46, a Physics graduate, the General Manager of the CISQ Federation and a member of the Board for several years now, is the 6th IQNet President.

This appointment comes in a very particular moment as it coincides with the beginning of a new period in the Management System Certification history represented by the issue of the new ISO 9000: 2000 Standard, which is the main international reference used to grant the Management System Certificates.

Indeed, this revision of the standard is going to affect the value of the certificate itself and the approach methodologies of the certification bodies, since it now mainly prompts certified organisations to achieve predetermined targets rather than meet standard requirements.

As can be easily inferred, this revision represents a tough test for all certification bodies worldwide, because they are requested to make a significant effort to adapt their mind and behaviour to this new philosophy.

IQNet is fully aware of how critical this particular moment is; that is why it has launched some very important initiatives aimed at suitably supporting its members in the management of this change.



## Changes in IQNet Secretariat

### New Secretary General

Armin Girschweiler, the founder of IQNet, retired by the end of 2000. We thank Mr Girschweiler for his contribution to the world-wide quality and certification community and wish him a prosperous future.

Hans Buser is the new Secretary General and Treasurer of IQNet as of 1 January 2001. He is 49 years old, Swiss, born Canadian and is a food specialist. He speaks English, French and German, has been working in the quality business for more than 20 years, was an auditor for ISO 9000 and ISO 14001 management systems and had engagements as a lecturer for quality management.

He is representing IQNet in IAF, ISO TC 176, ISO TC 207 and EA-C5-WG3. In addition he is responsible for the new service "Global Account Management".



Hans Buser, Secretary General of IQNet,

### New Secretariat

IQNet Secretariat moved its office to new premises on 22 January 2001, which are situated only 6 km away from Bern main station and can easily be reached by car as well as by public transportation.

The new address is:

Bernstrasse 103  
CH-3052 Zollikofen, Switzerland.

### New Service "Global Account Management"

The centralised IQNet Global Account Management is a new service. The IQNet Network with 28 local certification partners and numerous subsidiaries can now better satisfy the certification needs of international customers by global contracting. The international IQNet services are described in the brochure "International Certification Services". It is available on the web site [www.iqnet-certification.com](http://www.iqnet-certification.com).

## International Environmental Children's Drawing Contest

On February 6, an exhibition in the United Nations General Assembly Visitors' Lobby was opened, showing drawings by children from all over the world illustrating their feelings about the environment.

These were the award-winning works from over 13,000 submissions from 47 countries, by children aged 7 through 15.

The reception was a great success. Herb Frank, UNICEF, thanked IQNet (International Certification Network) and JQA (Japan Quality Assurance Organisation) for their sponsoring. Dr. Fabio Roversi, President of IQNet, underlined the strong commitment of all IQNet certification bodies towards the environment, which is a major topic for the future of the global society. Mr Masabumi Ono, Chairman of JQA, thanked UNICEF for their work all over the world and made a donation to this organisation of 20,000 US\$.

The contest was established by IQNet and JQA to encourage the world's children to think about the environment which surrounds their everyday life, and how to protect it. The Exhibition was organised by the New York Metropolitan Chapter of the United States Fund of UNICEF.

The 2nd International Environmental Children's Drawing Contest was launched under the same patronage as the first one. Registration deadline is 31 May 2001. IQNet, JQA and UNICEF hope for another good participation.



Reception at the Environmental Drawing Exhibition in New York, 6 February 2001.

From left to right: Dr. Fabio Roversi, President of IQNet; Herb Frank, Chair Group Programs, UNICEF; Masabumi Ono, Chairman of JQA; Hans Buser, Secretary General of IQNet



Japan Quality Assurance Organization (JQA)

ISO Certification Center  
Mr. Chikafumi Morita  
ATT (Akasaka Twin Tower) 4 F  
17-22, 2-Chome  
Akasaka  
Minato-Ku, Tokyo 107-0052  
Japan

Tel: +81 3 3584 9440  
Fax: +81 3 3584 9126

c-morita@jqa-iso.com  
www.jqa.or.jp

## **KFQ - Successful in Certification Services in Korea**

Korean Foundation for Quality (KFQ) is a not for profit organization to have been established as a management system certification body in Korea in October 1993. So as to expand the world-renowned Quality and Environment management systems and to provide high-quality certification services, KFQ became a full member of IQNet in January 1997. Since then, KFQ continued to seek cooperation with other IQNet members, through which it hopes to contribute in enhancing competitiveness of Korean industries.

### **Delivered ISO 9001:2000 Interpretation Package**

Moreover, in recognition of the mounting expectations of Asian companies, KFQ has sought to pursue a better means of cooperation since 1999 at the Working Group meetings of four Asian members, namely, HKQAA(Hong Kong), JQA, PSB and KFQ. The Working Group also made and delivered "ISO 9001:2000 Interpretation Package" to the industries concerned, both to cope with the revision of ISO 9001:2000 standard and to help the industries and certification bodies transit their management systems by conforming to the new standards. Furthermore, APCER(Portugal) purchased and provided the package as training material to the auditors and certified companies that applied for its training courses.

### **Recognized by RAB in U.S.A.**

While recognizing the need to establish an international framework for cooperation, KFQ also understands the need to enhance its competitiveness. KFQ recently registered a total of 24 certification scopes with RAB. With this move, KFQ is sure to become a world-competitive certification body.

### **Recognized for TS 16949**

To provide comprehensive yet focused services to the companies, KFQ is expanding its activities ranging from ISO 9000, ISO 14001, QS-9000, TS 16949 to TL 9000, HAACP, OHSMS and IBEC. In particular, KFQ is the only TL 9000 certification body of Korea to participate as a liaison member to QuEST Forum, while it is also one of the two Asian bodies that was qualified to certify TS 16949 after being designated as the certification body by IATF on November 1st, 2000.

### **Spreading IBEC Business**

As of now, KFQ is exerting full efforts to help more companies utilize IBEC in Korea, with the vision of introducing innovation in management quality of Korean companies. As part of the efforts, KFQ provided IBEC Self-Assessor Training Courses for Korean industries twice in 2000, and hopes to play a leading role in expanding the utilization of IBEC, boosted by the IBEC pilot assessment process that is scheduled to take place this year.

### **Co-operation with JQA and PSB**

A good example would be Hanjin Heavy Industries & Construction Co., Ltd. which is known to be a market leader in Korean construction industry. Hanjin acquired ISO 9001 certification from KFQ in 1997 and moved on to acquire ISO 9001 certification from PSB(Singapore) after going through IQNet co-certification process that requires document review of the KFQ's audit report. With the new ISO 9001 certificate, Hanjin successfully made entry into the Singapore construction market.

Also to expand its scope of certification to medical services, KFQ participated as witness audit in PSB's surveillance audit of Singapore Medical Center from May 11th to 12th last year. Moreover, KFQ joined hands with JQA(Japan) for

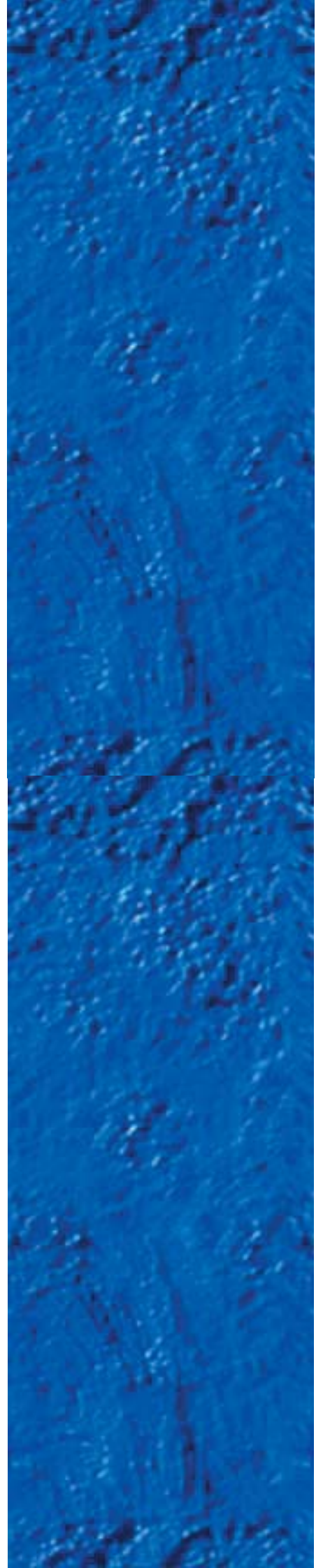


KFQ Korean Foundation for Quality

Mr. Byung Yong Lee  
FKI Building 8th Floor  
28-1 Yoido-dong  
Youngdungpo-gu  
KR-Seoul 150-756  
Korea Tel: +82 2 767 9060  
Fax: +82 2 767 9090

bylee@kfq.or.kr  
<http://www.kfq.or.kr>

surveillance audit of Tokyo Electronics and Rohm Korea, both of which are JQA certified companies, by dispatching its auditor to JQA audit team. In doing so, the two certification bodies were able to provide a more economic and efficient surveillance audit to the companies.



## IQNet Surveillance audit in Polish Centre

### Testing and Certification (PCBC), November 8-10, 2000

Polish Centre for Testing and Certification (PCBC) is the successor of the Central Office for Product Quality and has been established by the Act of Polish parliament of April 3, 1993 on Testing and Certification. PCBC organises and supervises the product testing and certification system, certifies quality management systems and trains auditors for certification bodies according to EOQ requirements.

PCBC is a member of the IQNet since the April 12, 1997. Three years from membership granting, on 08-10 November 2000 in Warsaw, an ordinary IQNet surveillance audit has been conducted.

During the audit the auditors examined the quality system documentation, history and organization of PCBC, services provided, certification personnel, accreditation status and PCBC market position. Business operation and implementation of the IQNet management handbook and associated documents were also evaluated.

The audit was conducted in friendly atmosphere and was well supported by the management and all staff of PCBC. It was also an excellent occasion for interesting discussions, exchange of experiences and better getting know each one of IQNet members' representatives.

The IQNet audit has provided confidence that PCBC constantly follows IQNet rules. The remarks and recommendations raised during the audit will help to further improve satisfaction of PCBC and IQNet Clients.

Despite of tight programme the auditors found time to visit King's Castle - historical seat of Polish Kings erected in XVI century.



Polish Centre for Testing and  
Certification (PCBC)

Mr. Leszek Kielak  
ul. Klobucka 23A  
PL-02-699 Warsaw  
Poland Tel: +48 22 647 0895  
Fax: +48 22 647 0895

pcbc@peryt.net.pl  
<http://www.pcbc.gov.pl>



The IQNet audit team was composed of:

Johnny Olsson  
Lead Auditor, Technical Manager, (DS)

Derek Sawyer  
Auditor, Liaison Officer - Europe, (JQA)

Pedro Alves  
Observer, Certification Manager, (APCER)

The representatives of PCBC:  
Leszek Kielak  
Director of the Quality System Certification Office, Vice-President of PCBC,

Stanislaw Walenta  
Vice-President of PCBC for Co-ordination,

Tomasz Kloze  
Director's representative for quality system in PCBC

Jan Daszewski  
Responsible for quality system in Quality System Certification Office

Piotr Nowak  
Responsible for foreign co-operation in Quality Systems Certification Office

## HKQAA Issued its First ISO 9001:2000 Certificate

**Quality is like a marathon. It involves a lot of hard work day after day and you can never stop. “**

In order to reflect modern management approaches and to improve organizational practices, the year 2000 revisions of the ISO 9000 series of quality management standards were officially released by ISO on 15 December 2000.

On the same day, Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA) issued its first ISO 9001:2000 certificate to the Operations Division of the Mass Transit Railway Corporation (MTR Corporation). Presenting the certificate to MTR Corporation was Mr. Howie Ng, Chief Executive of HKQAA. Also attending the presentation ceremony was Dr. Nigel Croft, Task Group Leader of ISO Technical Committee TC176 from the U.K. who has conducted a number of workshops and seminars on the subject in Hong Kong and throughout Asia.

HKQAA has been tracking the development of the ISO 9000 year 2000 revisions in the last few years. The Agency is proud to have established a strong network of connection on the topic worldwide and has always been in the forefront of the development. Together with the other Asian Certification Bodies in Japan (JQA), Korea (KFQ) and Singapore (PSB) and with the advise from Dr. Nigel Croft, the team has developed an Interpretation Guide to help organizations to establish a thorough understanding of the standard.

**“The certification is continuous proof of our determination in pursuing international standards of excellence,”**

said Mr. Phil Gaffney, Operations Director of MTR Corporation during the presentation ceremony.

In closing the ceremony, Mr. Martin Brown, Head of Operations of MTR Corporation emphasized that

**“Quality is like a marathon. It involves a lot of hard work day after day and you can never stop. “**

By going through the certification process, commitment from top management is further strengthened and co-operation among departments is also improved, producing greater synergy in enhancing organizational effectiveness and responsiveness in customer needs.



Mr. Howie Ng, Chief Executive of Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (left) and Mr. Phil Gaffney Director of MTR Corporation (right) at the certificate presentation ceremony on 15 December 2000.



Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency (HKQAA), a non-profit organization, was established by the Hong Kong Government in 1989 to assist industry and commerce in the development of management systems. Today, HKQAA is one of the leading third party certification bodies on ISO 9000 Quality Management System and ISO14001 Environmental Management System certification in Hong Kong and Mainland China, offering its customers professionalism, integrity and value-added services.

Hong Kong Quality Assurance Agency  
Mrs Angela Lock  
Controller  
Business Development Division  
Tel: (852) 2202 9316  
Fax: (852) 2202 9222  
Email: [a-lock@hkqaa.org](mailto:a-lock@hkqaa.org)

The Mass Transit Railway Corporation, established in 1975 by the Hong Kong Government with principle business of mass transit railway system operation, is currently operating a railway network of 82.2 kilometers route with 44 stations in Hong Kong. With a daily patronage of over 2.2 million passengers, its system is one of the most intensively utilized systems in the world.

## IBEC assessment at YAKULT HONSHA CO., LTD. KYOTO PLANT

On January 30th, 2001, a second IBEC assessment in Japan took place at Yakult Honsha Co., Ltd. Kyoto Plant. The assessment was conducted by Chikafumi Morita, IBEC qualified auditor, also Executive Board Director of Japan Quality Assurance Organization(JQA) and Vice President of IQNet, and Hiroyuki Sakumoto(Deputy Senior Director of ISO Certification Center, JQA) as an observer.

Yakult Group consists of approximately 180 companies, including marketing companies for distribution of Yakult's products, bottling companies, and other relevant affiliates, centering Yakult Honsha Co.,Ltd. Its operation covers food and beverage products, cosmetics, and pharmaceuticals, in pursuit of a company that contributes to 'people's healthy life'.

The IBEC assessment was conducted as follows:

- 1) Interview the top management of Yakult Kyoto Plant and employees of each department. Assess the relative information gathered from the documents and records of Yakult Kyoto Plant.
- 2) Check the information collected against the relevant criteria, using the IBEC assessment checklists. Determine the strengths and areas for improvement.
- 3) Calculate the points of the strengths and areas for improvement for each sub-criteria under each criteria.

The best practices of the Yakult Kyoto Plant were follows:

The leadership of the plant manager was well performed in accordance with the policy and strategy.

The health care management of the employees was strongly emphasized.

The policy of the plant was kept in good consistency with that of the Honsha headquarter.

The ISO9000:2000 process approach was well introduced.

The plant was aiming for a future compliant plant following plant manager's policy and was strengthening the training of the technical skilled people accordingly.

The difficult point encountered during assessment was how to write down in the assessment report about the real complaints of the employees sampled during the 'People Results'.

### The IBEC partial assessment

The IBEC partial assessment was conducted at Yakult Kyoto Plant. Based on the Excellence Model of EFQM, the assessment was integrated with ISO14001, and in accordance with the request from the Yakult Kyoto Plant, three criteria below were assessed:

- 1) Policy and Strategy
- 2) People
- 3) People Results



Yakult Honsha Co., Ltd. Kyoto Plant (Yakult Kyoto Plant), which took the IBEC assessment, is one of the 12 national plants under the management of Yakult Honsha Co., Ltd. Production Department.

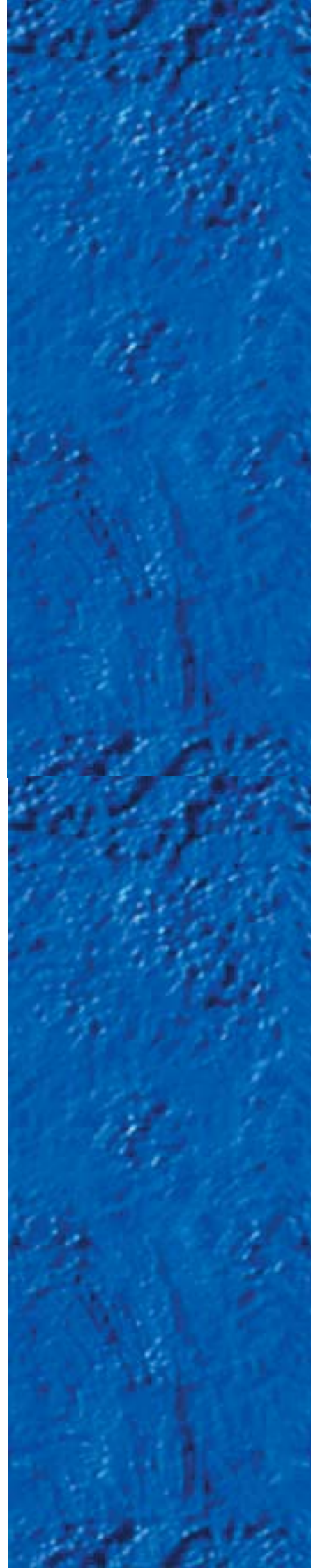
Yakult Kyoto Plant engages in the production of dairy products, lactobacillus-based beverages, and fermented milk, and its turnover for the fiscal year 1999 was US\$110,461,590.

Yakult Kyoto Plant has received HACCP approval from the Ministry of Health and Welfare as well as ISO14001 certificate from Japan Quality Assurance Organization(JQA), a leading IQNet member.

For **'Policy and Strategy'**, the assessment covered how the company plans, implements, reviews, and runs the policy and strategy within the activities of the company.

For **'People'**, the assessment covered how the company manages and develops the people's ability by personal level, team level, and organizational level. In addition, in relation to the Policy and Strategy, the audit assessed whether those activities were effectively planned.

For **'People Results'**, the assessment covered the objectives of the company in relation to its people, how it differs from the people's expectation towards the company, and how much people are satisfied with it.



## New method for auditing ISO 9000:2000

The new auditing methodology was developed to increase the benefit of internal audits. Based on the new standard ISO 9001:2000 the methodology focuses on the top management and its specific audit goals. Additionally the interactions of processes are part of the audit. Konrad Scheiber, the CEO of the leading Austrian systems certification body OQS is the author and creator of this new method. He is direct participant of the ISO 9000:2000 standard revision process.

### Short description of the methodology

<i>Steps</i>	<i>Accompanying activities</i>	<i>Benefits</i>
Clarification of the initial conditions with the auditee	Defining audit objectives, considering requirements and the audit purpose, using standardised audit programmes	Rules of the game are defined at start. The audit partners decide whether only standard conformity or also system impact to be considered.
Discussion of vision, mission, policy and strategy of the organisation	Applying the agreed frame of objectives	Systematic elaboration of audit and system objectives. Systems orientation is basis of the audit.
Definition of system priorities together with the auditee	Using a "normogramm", marking a net of not more than 5 blocks and processes	Focus of top management described and can be followed systematically during the whole audit process
Auditing of processes, considering permanently requirements and audit objectives	Systematic inclusion of interactions with other processes and blocks	Instead of sequential questions on standard requirements, a continual auditing of system impact in relation to the organisation's objectives
Immediate marking of strengths and weaknesses in the "normogramm"	Recognising and illustrating of clusters	System related strengths and weaknesses visualised within the net
Planning and performing audit reviews	Securing holistic audit of priorities and requirements	Each requirement connected with processes and elements
Presentation of audit results	Preparing a strengths-weaknesses-profile and comparing with audit objectives	Subjective perceptions replaced through objective profiles, their correlation with audit objectives easily to be identified.
Audit reporting, including priority of activities for improvement	Applying a standardised report structure	Top management can easily identify the statements of the audit report and can combine the results and their interrelations with the organisation's strategy

For further information or discussion please contact:  
 Mr. Horst Rieger: [rieger@oeqs.com](mailto:rieger@oeqs.com) or Mr. Konrad Scheiber:  
[scheiber@oeqs.com](mailto:scheiber@oeqs.com)



New method for auditing ISO 9000:2000

ÖQS Zertifizierungs und Begutachtungs GmbH

Mr. Markus Klettner  
 Gonzagagasse 1/25  
 AT-1010 Vienna  
 Austria  
 Tel: +43 1 533 3050  
 Fax: +43 1 533 30509

e-mail: Headquarters  
[office@oeqs.com](mailto:office@oeqs.com)

e-mail: IQNet representative  
[markusklettner@es.europost.org](mailto:markusklettner@es.europost.org)

[www.oeqs.at](http://www.oeqs.at)

## SII, The Standards Institution of Israel, and AGREXCO

INTSA Project: Information Network for the Traceability of Safe Agriculture

Author's name:

Yehuda Krudo Head, Agriculture sector, the Standards Institution of Israel.  
Haim Levanon 42 Tel Aviv  
Email: krudo\_y@sii.org.il  
Tel: 052-464561  
Fax: 03-6465205

### Background

The Standards Institution of Israel, which functions as the national certification body, has for long been active in promoting quality in the agriculture sector with the collaboration of Agrexco, a trailblazer in agri-marketing and in the development of quality control systems for fresh produce.

Agrexco has always regarded the European market requirements for the improving and the further developing of Israel's agricultural sector. This approach has encouraged farmers to adopt quality production systems that comply with ISO 9000 standards, that were then audited by the Standards Institution of Israel. Close cooperation between the Standards Institution of Israel and Agrexco has permitted numerous Israeli farmers to be among the most safety conscious producers in the world.

### The Need

Consumer surveys of the past years indicate that the consumers' primary health concerns are the ones associated with the consumption of agricultural produce containing pesticide residues. With the magnitude of global ecological degradation and public demand for increased food safety involving minimal impact on the environment, there is an ever-growing need for effective tracking processes, from the source materials to the farm gate. This must include the traceability of any products failing to comply with the established requirements, to impose greater pressures for nature exploitation. This concept has brought SII and Agrexco to plan and propose an easily accessible system of information gathering in the form of a Quality Traceability Chain that would cover all stages of the growing, processing and marketing cycles.

The aims of the project are the following:

- A stronger orientation towards the requirements and concerns of the end consumer.

- The conservation of natural resources.

- A more competitive, and sustainable agriculture.

- The development of efficient mechanisms and compliance programs to impose greater pressures for nature conservation and safer agricultural products.

- A system of dependable information for Quality and safety food

As an answer to the rise in pressure to disclose any information concerning environmental hazards posed by agricultural activities, the SII and Agrexco wish to develop a system which all interested parties will be able to exchange information concerning all risk-related issues involved throughout the entire

SII - The Standards Institution of Israel

Quality & Certification Division  
Mr. Ehud Gitai  
42 Chaim Levanon Str.  
IL-Tel Aviv 69977  
Israel

Tel: +972 3 6465 194  
Fax: +972 3 6465 205  
gitaie@sii.org.il www.sii.org.il

production process. This will take the form of a framework for organizing and managing of data, in a rational and consistent way, supported by a scheme of rules and agreements for good agricultural practices (GAP), to promote a globalization of standards and the production of safer products in the European agricultural trade.

The traceability system shall install unified patterns that will define new requirements expressed through global and international standards. The development of the project requires the definition of basic tangible pattern for quality agricultural produce, based on international codex standards and trade agreements.

One of the major tasks of the project is to conduct a sufficient powerful mechanism that will be capable not only of overseeing the entire production Process, but will also put together all internationally existing agreements on trade, quality management, food safety and environmental conservation measures. The structure will need to be:

- based on a concept of trust and traceability,
- constantly updated to readily accommodate new partners,
- no more trade-restrictive than necessary,
- based on sufficient and trustworthy scientific evidence,
- Readily visible to all participants in the production chain.

### **EUREPGAP as the Framework**

EUREPGAP requirements are fully implemented by the Standards Institution of Israel and Agrexco; therefore this set of requirements were selected as the main framework to define the goals and targets of the Project. Due to their reputed experience in implementing national food quality certification schemes, these requirements based on Integrated Crop Management practices will form the cornerstone for an internationally compatible crop assurance scheme. The scheme will provide adequate enforcement authority through sophisticated compliance programs and incentives.

### **The Method**

The public's increasing pressure on the producers and retailers for the right to responsive consumer information imposes a need for a greater visibility of the production procedures to the end customer. Thus, any relevant data and information will become available to all interested parties and participants in the food chain.

Growers and organizations participating in the production chain will transmit their input to a Global Megadata Base using Internet throughout all stages of the agricultural cycle, in the form of information and documents such as:

- certificates of health and origin for nursery stock,
- types of chemicals used for field fumigation,
- fertilization and pest control data,
- expected harvest date,
- warehousing data pending the delivery of the product to the consumer outlet,
- Audit reports issued by Inspection and certification bodies.

The far-reaching influence of the system and the transparency of the process will serve as a strong economic incentive to encourage producers to comply with Internationally recognized food safety and environmental agreements. This is particularly important in a world where health and environmental issues are the first thing to be jettisoned in an attempt to reduce costs and increase profits.

One of the means of control over the producers will be a statistical assessment of pesticide residues to evaluate the safety and reliability of the produce. The randomized statistical tracing of pesticide residues will provide the framework with a science-based tool for the evaluation of pesticide residues of the agricultural produce marketed through the system.

A web-based application will enable the participants to access partner-defined information collections using identification parameters and user codes. They will have access to a large list of commodities, and be able to assess any given product's compatibility data to direct their choice according to the local market needs. The retailer will have the possibility to choose a producer, and situate the selected commodity within a digital geographic map to examine the surrounding environment and neighboring hazards of the crop. The selected producer will be prompted to submit any requested information on the crop, including any quality certification documents issued by the accredited bodies.

### **The Advantages**

This system intends to provide advantages to all levels of the production chain, and develop state-of-the-art science-based quality assurance programs for growers, producers, transporters, and retailers, regulators and all persons involved in the food chain. All participants will be provided with rapid access to information covering all issues of the production chain. The major incentive for joining such a project shall be today's constantly rising market prices for the different quality levels. The accumulation of information and data will ensure a constant enhancement of Good Agricultural Practices, and will provide all participants an efficient management tool.

Farmers and producers will constantly improve the quality of their produce to appropriately achieve the level of food safety specified by today's standards. The system will assist farmers and producers through an effective, open, transparent, and timely information exchange regarding good agricultural practices, up-to-date prevention strategies and decision making. Growers, while forced to concentrate on important issues such as safety and environmental issues. The costs of logistics, paperwork burden and segregation costs involved in compliance will considerably reduce farm price return.

This approach will also substantially reduce the logistical concerns involved in the marketing of fresh agricultural produce at all levels, and curtail barriers to trade. Redundant commercial and trade impediments will be lifted, and the myriad of labeling laws will be unified. In an effort to build a consensus on appropriate standards, one of the major tasks of the project will be to identify all loopholes in the existing Regulations, and create a more harmonized level of standardization.

As international trade expands, while shifting regional and seasonal commerce and products to a global marketplace, the challenge of ensuring the safety of fresh produce expands as well. Therefore, the project proposes an integrated and interdependent system to cover the gap caused by differing statutory authorities across Europe. This will result in a unified labeling and "fingerprinting" strategy that will provide retailers or final outlets with improved tools and confidence in the selection of reliable and safe products.

Furthermore, the system will result in a greater cooperation between the different regulatory regimes responsible for surveillance, inspection and enforcement. The project wishes to encourage a more risk-based and problem-solving strategy, while promoting more voluntary approaches for improving food safety. It will strive to constantly and effectively update all compliance programs to ensure the tried-and-true reputation of its products.

The system will also provide any pesticide data, inventories of approved chemicals, pest management models, research results, or any new evidence or up-to-date integrated pest management strategies. Retailers shall have access to the results of the pesticide residue assessments conducted by the framework, and shall use this source as a tool to direct their choice of fresh produce according to the levels of consumer expectations. Therefore, different accepted pesticide residue levels shall be defined for the various quality levels imposed by

the different countries, regions or trends.

As a national certification body with an international expertise acquired with years of cooperation with Agrexco, The SII shall administrate the Quality Management System, and be responsible for the credibility of the streamlined Data.

### **Ethical Issues and Data Security**

The entire production chain and its participants will be protected by an internationally recognized set of rules for the safeguarding of the agricultural expertise and information delivered over the database. Any streamlined Information will be protected by a Code which end users will have to accept when entering the database. The Code intends to create a trustful environment in which ethical behavior is a norm. It will indicate to new members that the system is seriously concerned with responsible and professional conduct, and making the database a trustworthy and safe archive. The Code of Ethics shall define user access to a wide variety of information, and will serve as a collective recognition by the members of the system.

Main aspects:

- safety
- security
- confidentiality
- currency
- accuracy
- authenticity.

A Board of Ethics will define the Ethical Codes and update as needed.

The establishment of a database for partner-defined information collections requires an efficacious authorization system.

There will be a need for user-defined lists. The development of a system of user identification and entry code is extremely important to protect the data at certain levels of the production chain. Not all information will be available to every single end user, and the access of the data will be authorized only to the relevant parties.