



Every two months, IECEx Chairman Prof. Dr. Thorsten Arnhold provides an update on developments within his organisation.

Compared with the success of the IECEx Certified Equipment Program and the Personal Competency Certification program, the IECEx Service Facility Certification (SFC) has seen modest development over the last few years. That situation is now changing!

Recently we have seen a steady double digit growth with a number of new certificates issued. According to IECEx rules, existing certificates must be reissued after three years.

After 11 years in operation we now have more than 270 active certificates in our online database issued for service providers from 25 countries, among them non-IEC member countries such as Vietnam, Azerbaijan and Angola. This is a good indication that a competent third party evaluation of service providers for hazardous areas is very much appreciated by end customers.

The IECEx Service Facility Scheme provides a single international scheme for the assessment and certification of Ex related Service Facilities that impacts on the ongoing compliance of Ex equipment with Ex standards.

Ex service facilities that achieve IECEx Certification are required to demonstrate compliance with stringent IECEx requirements including:

IECEx Certification Program of Service Facilities is getting up to speed

- Operational procedures and explosion protection techniques that satisfy the IECEx Basic Rules and IECEx technical requirements encompassing the relevant IEC 60079 series of standards (i.e. part 10 for zone classification, part 14 for selection, installation and initial inspection, part 17 for inspection and maintenance and part 19 for repair and overhaul)
- Process and maintain in operating condition necessary facilities and equipment including test equipment and traceability of measurements, as appropriate to the service supplied
- IECEx quality system requirements, based on ISO 9001
- Competent personnel with current competencies related to Ex equipment standards and certification requirements.

Another important step was the issue of the first certificate for a Service Facility dealing with inspection and maintenance. IECEx service facility certification started in 2017 and until the end of 2017, 100% of certificates covered repair activities.

The new prominence of the IECEx SFC scheme is the result of the excellent work of our SFC committee under the chairmanship of Ron Sinclair, with the strong support of the IECEx secretariat. Over the last few years all relevant documents have been updated and a lot of effort has gone into international marketing so I am confident the SFC scheme will soon become a similar success story to the IECEx PCC scheme dealing with Personnel Competency, which has also recently taken off.

At the annual IEC General Assembly in Busan, South Korea, I had to provide an update on the current status of our system during the meeting of the Conformity Assessment Board (CAB). I was quite happy to report that the number of Certificates of Personal Competency has

grown up to 2,300 and that the biggest group of certified experts came from our host country, South Korea, with 500 to date. Similar to the situation in Malaysia (440 certificates), Korean regulators acknowledge the importance of competent people working in hazardous areas. We now have people from 35 countries with Certificates of Personnel Competence and I am sure that other countries will follow.

Other highlights of the IECEx world I reported on at the CAB included a number of marketing initiatives undertaken over the year. These included two international conferences with some 400 participants in Split (Croatia) and Jakarta (Indonesia), and presentations at international conferences such as the PETRONAS Electrical Engineers Forum in Malaysia.

We have also agreed to cooperate closely with the International Organization of Legal Metrology (OIML). The president of that organization, Dr. Roman Schwarz (Germany), and the Assistant Director - International Bureau of Legal Metrology - joined our IECEx Management Committee Meeting in Cannes (France) and agreed to start cooperation with the formation of a joint working group. The final goal is to provide common certification services to many manufacturers of measurement equipment that are covered by both sets of regulations. This should help to minimise overlap and provide industry with a single, safe and reliable certification system.

The year 2018 is nearly over and next year will be the last year of my second term as Chairman, after which under IECEx rules I will hand over to someone else. This is for the best: fresh blood and new ideas are important to keep organisations vigorous.

But I still have a year to go and look forward to another exciting and successful year together with our IECEx team! ■