

NIST Special Publication 903, 2001 Edition

*Directory of
U.S. Private Sector Product
Certification Programs*

Charles W. Hyer, Editor

Office of Standards Services
Technology Services

National Institute of Standards and Technology
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-0001

(Supersedes NIST Spec. Publ. 903 1996 Edition)

January 2001



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Library of Congress
Catalog Card Number: 89-600785
National Institute of Standards
and Technology
Special Publication 903
(Supersedes 1996 edition of NIST Spec. Publ.903)
Natl. Inst. Stand. Technol.
Spec. Publ. 903
(Jan 2001)
CODEN: NSPUE2

U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington: 2001

For sale by the Superintendent
of Documents
U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

FOREWORD

This document updates information contained in the 1996 Edition of NIST SP 903, *Directory of U.S. Private Sector Product Certification Programs*. It is one of a series of publications designed to provide information on national, regional, and international organizations that participate in standards-related activities. This directory includes 122 entries on organizations engaging in product certification activities. Entries describe: the type and purpose of each organization, the nature of the activity, products certified, standards used, certification requirements, any accreditation or recognition by a U.S. or foreign government agency or by the private sector, availability of services, methods of cost determination, and other relevant details. Where available, a representation of the organization's mark is included with its entry, as well as a pictorial index of all such marks.

The information contained in this directory is based primarily on information provided by each organization, and therefore reflects the organization's view of its own activities. Users of these certification services are encouraged to review and compare the offered services and to select the program most appropriate to their needs.

This volume supports an effort by the National Institute of Standards and Technology to provide information related to private sector activities in the area of conformity assessment. It is designed to serve the needs of federal agencies and standards writers for information on U.S. private sector certification programs. Manufacturers, engineers, specifiers, purchasing agents, and others may also find this directory of value.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I would like to thank Ruth Schreiber at Quality Word Processing Services in Brookfield, Connecticut, for all the help she provided in developing the database for this Directory. She not only helped with the long and arduous task of entering the data, but also developed the optics methodology for including the program mark for each program and compiling the pictorial index. In addition, her help in converting the Microsoft Word for Mac platform to the PC platform required by NIST was also invaluable.

I would like to also thank NIST's Maureen Breitenberg, the Contracting Officer's Technical Representative (COTR) for this contract, and her supporting staff for the patience and help provided in converting my submission to the desired format. I should also like to thank her for the help she provided in searching the Internet for information concerning organizations that failed to respond to inquiries.

Finally, and of key importance, I would like to thank all the organizations that provided information on their activities. Without their assistance, this directory would not have been possible. While I have tried to be comprehensive, some organizations may have been missed. Organizations which were omitted and which would like to provide updated information to be included in subsequent editions are invited to send pertinent information to:

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Charles W. Hyer
Editor

ABSTRACT

This document, a revision of NIST SP 903: 1996 edition, Directory of U.S. Private Sector Product Certification Programs, presents information on 122 private sector groups in the United States that engage in product certification activities. Entries describe the type and purpose of each organization, the nature of the activity, a pictorial representation of the organization's mark (if available), products certified, standards used, certification requirements, any accreditation or recognition by a U.S. or foreign private sector or government agency, availability of services, methods of cost determination, and other relevant details.

This directory is part of an ongoing NIST effort to establish and maintain comprehensive information on standards, regulations, certification programs and related topics. This material has been compiled to meet the needs of government, industry, and the public for information on private sector product certification programs in accordance with the requirements of the U.S. Trade Agreements Act of 1979 and other relevant legislation.

Key Words: certification; certification mark; certifiers; conformity assessment; grading; inspection; listing; product approval; registered mark; registration; specifications; standards; testing

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INTRODUCTION

NIST's Conformity Assessment Responsibilities:

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) has a number of responsibilities related to conformity assessment. In February 1996, The National Technology Transfer and Advancement Act (NTTAA) of 1995 was enacted by Congress. Section 12 of the Act directed NIST to coordinate conformity assessment activities of Federal, state and local entities with private sector technical standards activities and conformity assessment activities with the goal of eliminating any unnecessary duplication of conformity assessment activities. In addition, the Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Circular A-119, revised February 1, 1998, directed the Secretary of Commerce to issue guidance to the agencies to ensure effective coordination of Federal conformity assessment activities. On August 10, 2000, NIST published its "Guidance on Federal Conformity Assessment Activities" in the Federal Register. (The Guidance is available at: <http://ts.nist.gov/ca>). That guidance outlines the responsibility of each Federal agency for evaluating the efficacy and efficiency of its conformity assessment activities. Each agency is to coordinate its conformity assessment activities with those of other appropriate government agencies and with those of the private sector to make more productive use of the increasingly limited Federal resources available for the conduct of conformity assessment activities, and to reduce unnecessary duplication.

According to the Guidance, conformity assessment means:

"Any activity concerned with determining directly or indirectly that requirements are fulfilled. Requirements for products, services, systems, and organizations are those defined by law or regulation or by an agency in a procurement action. Conformity assessment includes: sampling and testing; inspection; supplier's declaration of conformity; certification; and quality and environmental management system assessment and registration. It also includes accreditation and recognition. Conformity assessment does not include mandatory administrative procedures (such as registration notification) for granting permission for a good or service to be produced, marketed, or used for a stated purpose or under stated conditions. Conformity assessment activities may be conducted by the supplier (first party) or by the buyer (second party) either directly or by another party on the supplier's or buyer's behalf, or by a body not under the control or influence of either the buyer or the seller (third party)."

The guidance therefore views certification as one aspect or activity within a broader range of conformity assessment activities. It defines certification as a procedure used to provide written assurance that a product, process, service, or a person's qualifications conforms to specified requirements.

One of NIST's obligations, which is spelled out in the Guidance, is to "work with agencies through the Interagency Committee on Standards Policy (ICSP) to coordinate Federal, state and local conformity assessment activities with private sector conformity assessment activities. NIST chairs the ICSP; assists the ICSP in developing and publishing policies and guidance on conformity assessment-related issues; collects and disseminates information on Federal, state and private sector

conformity assessment activities; and increases public awareness of the importance of conformity assessment and nature and extent of national and international conformity assessment activities.”

NIST and other government agencies are also responsible for encouraging domestic and international recognition of U.S. conformity assessment results by supporting the work of the U.S. Government in international trade and related negotiations with foreign countries and U.S. industry in pursuing agreements with foreign national and international private sector organizations and any resulting activities/requirements resulting from those negotiations or agreements.

The United States is also a signatory to the World Trade Organization (WTO) Agreement. Each member of the WTO is responsible for the obligations set forth in the Agreement on Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT Agreement). Among other obligations, signatories must ensure that, in cases which require a positive assurance of conformity with technical regulations or standards, conformity assessment procedures are prepared, adopted and applied so as to grant equally favorable access for suppliers of like products originating in the territories of other members. Conformity assessment procedures are not to be prepared, adopted or applied with a view to, or with the effect of, creating unnecessary obstacles to international trade. This means that U.S. government agency conformity assessment procedures must not be stricter or applied more strictly than necessary to give adequate confidence that products conform to applicable regulations or standards.

NIST’s National Center for Standards and Certification Information (NCSCI) is responsible for many of Article 10 of the TBT Agreement’s information and assistance responsibilities related to technical regulations, standards and conformity assessment procedures. NCSCI serves as the U.S. enquiry point and is responsible for answering all reasonable standards and conformity assessment-related inquiries from other signatories and interested parties in other signatory countries. Such requests may include information on any U.S. conformity assessment procedures, or proposed conformity assessment procedures used by non-governmental bodies or by regional bodies of which the United States is a member. NIST is also required to maintain a center for information on standards and such standards-related subjects as conformity assessment under the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Implementation Act.

NIST has many other conformity assessment-related obligations. These include operation of the National Voluntary Laboratory Accreditation Program (NVLAP), which provides third-party accreditation to testing and calibration laboratories in response to Congressional mandates or administrative actions by the Federal Government or to selected requests by private-sector organizations. NIST also conducts research to support the development of standards used in conformity assessment and carries out numerous conformity assessment-related obligations in the field of metrology.

How NIST Carries Out Those Responsibilities:

The Department of Commerce has designated the International Trade Administration (ITA) and the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) (formerly the National Bureau of Standards (NBS)) to carry out departmental responsibilities with respect to the WTO and other trade agreements. The NIST functions are conducted by the Office of Standards Services (OSS). As

noted above, one of the primary objectives of the OSS efforts related to certification is to improve the accessibility and use of information on U.S. certification requirements and programs.

NCSCI, established in 1965, provides information on U.S., foreign, and international voluntary standards; government regulations; and rules of conformity assessment for non-agricultural products. The Center acts as a referral service and focal point in the United States for information about standards and standards-related information. NCSCI contributes to the NIST's goals of improving U.S. competitiveness in domestic and world markets and strengthening and advancing the development and use of the nation's science and technology by providing current information on standards, technical regulations, and conformity assessment programs.

With the signing of the U.S./European Union (EU) Mutual Recognition Agreement (MRA) the need for accrediting private sector product certification programs came into play. NIST, through its Office of Standards Services, operates a voluntary program to evaluate and recognize organizations that support conformity assessment activities. The National Voluntary Conformity Assessment Systems Evaluation (NVCASE) Program recognizes competency in laboratory testing, product certification, and quality system registration. NVCASE evaluation uses established criteria to identify U.S. organizations that effectively demonstrate conformance and capability. The goal is to help U.S. manufacturers satisfy applicable product requirements mandated by other countries based on conformity assessment procedures conducted in this country prior to export.

NVCASE recognition provides other governments with a basis for having confidence that qualifying U.S. conformity assessment bodies are competent and facilitates the acceptance of U.S. products in foreign regulated markets based on U.S. conformity assessment results.

The NVCASE Program recently recognized the competency of the American National Standards Institute's (ANSI) certifier accreditation program in support of the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) domestic Telecommunication Certification Body (TCB) program. This NVCASE program recognition allows ANSI to accredit certification bodies as a basis for designation by the FCC. These TCBs certify products and equipment in accordance with FCC procedures. Additionally, ANSI provides accreditation for certification programs to ensure that the marketplace, including buyers, sellers, and public agencies, can rely on the competence of ANSI-accredited certification bodies for their activities related to products, processes, services and personnel.

The scope of ANSI's program and a list of all accredited certification programs, including TCBs (all of which have been surveyed for inclusion in this Directory), will be found on the internet at: <http://web.ansi.org/public/ca_act.html>.

Information on many of NIST's other conformity assessment-related efforts can be found in the **Guide to NIST**, which is available on the internet at: <http://www.nist.gov/public_affairs/guide/index.htm >.

Purpose Of This Directory:

As noted above, NIST is obligated to provide conformity assessment information, including information on private sector certification bodies, under a number of Acts and international and regional trade agreements. OSS believes that this directory will help to fulfill some of those obligations and will also aid in recognizing the diversity (and therefore the complexity) of U.S. private sector product certification activities. This directory should help government agencies, industry, and other interested parties identify specific programs in their areas of interest.

Scope of the Directory:

This directory summarizes the product certification activities of 122 nongovernmental organizations based in the United States. It includes organizations that operate strictly within the United States, those that operate at both the U.S. and international levels, and those that operate as the U.S. component of an international program. The directory includes organizations that administer a certification program and certify that products meet specified criteria; administer a program using an independent, third-party certifier; or serve as the independent, third-party certifier for a program administered by another organization.

This directory includes only product or facility-related certification programs. It does not attempt to address programs that certify, register, or accredit services, professional skills, or quality/environmental management systems.

To address the importance of international standards in conformity assessment activities, an attempt was made to ascertain whether the program claimed to be in conformance with ISO/IEC Guide 65, "General Requirements for bodies operating product certification systems." Information was also solicited on the extent to which quality system registration to the ISO 9000 Standard Series is employed or relied upon in the conformity validation processes for the listed certification programs. Information provided by the organization on this subject has been included in the directory. It is important to note that some of the listed organizations provide services other than product certification. However, organizations were selected for inclusion in this directory based solely on their involvement with product certification.

Information available on an organization's website to clarify or expand information provided by the organization to the editor of this directory was included to the extent feasible. An Appendix of Non-Responsive Organization Programs (Appendix I) provides information obtained from the websites of major certifier organizations that did not respond to several requests for information on their programs. An attempt was also made to include information from the websites of all organizations listed in the 1996 edition of this directory that failed to respond to requests for information for this edition. These additions were considered necessary to furnish a more accurate view of U.S. private sector certification activities.

An effort was made to standardize the terminology used to the extent feasible to allow program information to be formatted consistently. However, if an organization requested that a different set of terms be used in its entry, its choice of terms was substituted. The experience obtained in

collecting information for this directory highlighted the need for standardized terminology, consistent with internationally available guides, to be accepted and used in the field of conformity assessment.

Inclusion of Marks/Logos in the Directory:

The need for obtaining and duplicating replicas of the marks and logos used by organizations listed in this directory to identify certified products was recognized during preparation of the last edition of the Directory. This is due to the increasing international use of certification symbols and logos, as well as other symbols, to communicate information rapidly. This usage, in turn, has resulted in a rapidly growing dependence by the international marketplace on such communication, especially in multilingual settings. In addition, the third edition of the ISO publication, "Marks of Conformity with Standards" (ISBN 92 67 10090 4), serves as an example of the usefulness of including the marks/logos in any certification directory.

It is important to note that many, but not all, of the marks appearing in this directory are registered with the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office (PTO) within the U.S. Department of Commerce. Registration with the PTO is important since the Commissioner of Patents and Trademarks not only assures the validity of mark ownership of marks filed with the PTO, but also keeps a register of all marks sent to the PTO by international bureaus established under international conventions for the protection of industrial property, trademarks, trade and commercial names.

While many of the marks listed in this directory are registered, not all of them are "certification marks" as defined and registered by the PTO. To explain this situation, it may be helpful to quote selectively from the definitions for the various types of registered marks and related definitions contained in Section 1127 "Construction and definitions," of the Trademark Act of 1946 ("Lanham Act") as amended.

"The term '**person**' and any other word used to designate the applicant or other entitled to a benefit or privilege or rendered liable under the provisions of this Act ... includes a juristic person as well as a natural person. The term '**juristic person**' includes a firm, corporation, union, association, or other organization capable of suing and being sued in a court of law."

"The term '**person**'... includes any State, instrumentality of a State and any officer or employee of a State or instrumentality of a State acting in his or her official capacity. Any State, and any such instrumentality, officer or employee, shall be subject to the provisions of this Act in the same manner and to the same extent as any nongovernmental entity."

"The terms '**applicant**' and '**registrant**' embrace the legal representatives, predecessors, successors and assigns of such applicant or registrant."

"The term '**related company**' means any person whose use of a mark is controlled by the owner of the mark with respect to the nature and quality of the goods and services on or in connection with which the mark is used."

“The terms ‘**trade name**’ and ‘**commercial name**’ mean any name used by a person to identify his or her business or vocation.”

“The term ‘**trademark**’ includes any word, name, symbol, or device or any combination thereof --

- (1) used by a person, or
- (2) which a person has a bona fide intention to use in commerce and applies to register on the principal register established by this Act, to identify and distinguish his or her goods, including a unique product, from those manufactured or sold by others and to indicate the source of goods, even if that source is unknown.”

“The term ‘**service mark**’ means any word, name, symbol, or device or any combination thereof --

- (1) used by a person, or
- (2) which a person has a bona fide intention to use in commerce and applies to register on the principal register established by this Act, to identify and distinguish the services of one person, including a unique service, from the services of others and to indicate the source of the services, even if that source is unknown. Titles, character names, and other distinctive features of radio or television programs may be registered as service marks notwithstanding that they, or the programs, may advertise the goods of the sponsor.”

“The term ‘**certification mark**’ means any word, name, symbol, or device or any combination thereof --

- (1) used by a person other than its owner, or
- (2) which its owner has a bona fide intention to permit a person other than the owner to use in commerce and files an application to register on the principal register established by this Act, to certify regional or other origin, material, mode of manufacture, quality, accuracy, or other characteristics of such person’s goods or services or that the work or labor on the goods or services was performed by members of a union or other organization.”

“The term ‘**collective mark**’ means a trademark or service mark --

- (1) used by members of a cooperative, an association or
- (2) which such cooperative association, or other collective group or organization has a bona fide intention to use in commerce and applies to register on the principal register established by this Act, and includes marks indicating membership in a union, an association or other organization.”

“The term ‘**used in commerce**’ means the bona fide use of a mark in the ordinary course of trade, and not made merely to reserve a right in a mark.”

“The term ‘**mark**’ includes any trademark, service mark, collective mark, or certification mark.”

The directory includes examples of **ALL** of the registration marks defined in the Trademark Act. While the reproduced marks are all employed to identify products certified under the various listed programs, only a relative few are federally registered certification marks as defined by the Trademark Act. It should be noted that unregistered marks (often initializations/acronyms and/or symbols/logos used on letterheads and reports to identify the organizations that provide product certification) were

also submitted in response to the request to the organizations to attach or enclose a reproducible replica of all certification marks, service marks, trademarks or other marks, logos, or symbols used to identify product, process or service program participation. The PTO also provides two other definitions of interest:

“The term ‘**colorable imitation**’ includes any mark which so resembles a registration mark as to be likely to cause confusion or mistake or to deceive.”

“The term ‘**counterfeit**’ is a spurious mark which is identical with, or substantially indistinguishable from, a registered mark.”

The need felt by PTO to define potentially misleading and counterfeit marks may be an indication of the known and/or potential number of such violations of registration rights. The potential for violation, the frequent use by certifiers of unregistered marks, and the lack of understanding of the meaning of various federally registered marks indicate another area where education and the consistent use of terminology may substantially reduce some of the complexity and confusion associated with the U.S. certification system.

Compilation of Information:

One or more requests were sent to each organization asking for information on its program(s). Where available, a copy of an organization’s previous entry in NIST SP 903 was also provided.

It should be emphasized that the entries in this directory are based primarily on information provided by the submitting organizations. No attempt was made to evaluate or to validate the provided information. In a few cases, information from previous listings and/or other sources, such as websites, was used to complete the entries. Users of listed certification services are advised to review and compare the offered services with one another before selecting or developing a program appropriate to their own needs.

Considerable effort was made to be comprehensive in compiling this directory. Since most U.S. third-party product certification agencies/laboratories were initially thought to have federally registered certification marks¹, a list of such marks was obtained with the assistance of the PTO’s internet website. This list, along with other related directories, was used to establish a mailing list. Many organizations were contacted and requested to provide general information on their certification programs and replicas of their marks.

No attempt was made to limit the listing of certification marks when it was discovered that many certifiers did not own or use federally registered certification marks. The PTO list did, however, provide information needed to identify many organizations that administer and/or sponsor product certification programs outside the traditional standardization community. It is interesting to note that most of these programs (e.g., kosher food and equipment certification programs; entertainment software rating systems; and environmental benefits (green marketing programs) are inspection-

¹ For example, all laboratories accredited as Nationally Recognized Testing Laboratories (NRTLs) by the U.S. Department of Labor’s Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) must own and license a federally registered certification mark.

oriented rather than test-oriented. Their marks are more directed towards consumers than are the certification marks that are more oriented to testing/surveillance. The entries and identifying marks associated with less typical certifiers may help to educate the general public as to the potential value of many different types of valid certification programs and their identifying marks. However, the review of PTO registration records to verify federally registered certification marks could not be used as the primary source for compiling a comprehensive list of certifiers, because (as noted above) many certification organizations do not own or use federally registered certification marks.

To obtain broader coverage of possible certifiers, this effort was announced in many industry newsletters, in NIST publications, and in news releases. In addition, the editor sent out over two hundred copies of news releases to potentially interested sources.

Despite all these efforts, other organizations that conduct product certification type activities may have been overlooked. Such organizations are invited to send pertinent information to:

Maureen Breitenberg
Office of Standards Services
National Institute of Standards and Technology
100 Bureau Drive, MS 2100
Gaithersburg, MD 20899-2100

Listed organizations are encouraged to keep NIST informed of any changes in name and address, or in the nature or scope of their programs.

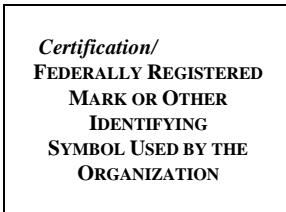
Other References:

Additional NIST documents of possible interest, including primers on certification and conformity assessment in the United States, are listed in Appendix II - List of Office of Standards Services Publications. The reader is encouraged to review this list for other information of interest in this area.

Format of Entries:

Each of the certification program entries is described using the following format.

FORMAT OF ENTRIES



Received: Date information was received

OFFICIAL ORGANIZATION NAME, IN ENGLISH

ACRONYM:	The Initial(s) or acronym(s) of the organization and/or certification program name.
ADDRESS:	The organization's address.
PHONE:	Telephone number (if available). FAX: Fax number (if available).
INTERNET URL:	Uniform Resource Locator. E-MAIL: Address(if available).
LOCATION OF TESTING/ INSPECTION FACILITIES:	Locations of the testing/inspection facilities used to evaluate the product for certification.
FACILITIES ACCREDITED/RECOGNIZED:	Names/identification of organizations that accredit or otherwise recognize testing/inspection organizational competence.
PROGRAM DESCRIPTION/ PURPOSE:	The principal objectives or mission of the program/organization as indicated in its response, or in the organization's published materials.
DATE PROGRAM STARTED:	Date the certification program was begun.
TOTAL PROGRAM STAFF:	Total certification staff. NO. OF PART-TIME STAFF: Part-time staff.
PROGRAM SUBCONTRACTORS:	Information on whether other organizations provide testing or other certification-related services under contract to the certifier.
SERVICES SUBCONTRACTED:	Specific functions subcontracted, including the name(s) of the subcontracting organization(s).
CERTIFICATION AVAILABILITY:	Extent of availability of program participation or restriction of availability.
FEES:	Methods used for assessing fees, i.e., using a fixed fee schedule, basing fees on actual costs, providing service free to members of the organization, etc.
NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING COMPANIES:	Number of organizations/entities which participate in program.

NUMBER OF PARTICIPATING FACILITIES:	Number of factories/locations where participating products are produced, assembled, etc.
CERTIFIED PRODUCTS/ PRODUCT CATEGORIES:	Types, categories, models or other identification/classification of products covered by program(s).
STANDARDS/TEST METHODS USED:	Names, numbers or other identifications for standards, test methods, inspection practices used for the evaluation of participating product.
PROGRAM CRITERIA/ PROCEDURES:	Any documented set of requirements for certification program participation.
PROGRAM CONFORMANCE TO ISO/IEC GUIDE 65:	Certifier's determination as to whether program conforms to ISO/IEC Guide 65 "General Requirements for bodies operating product certification systems."
PROGRAM CONFORMS TO STANDARD OR GUIDE TITLE:	Numbers and titles of any national or international standards or guides/documents to which program conforms.
PRODUCT RETESTING REQUIREMENTS:	Frequency of any retesting of product for compliance with participation requirements.
SURVEILLANCE TESTING REQUIREMENTS:	If surveillance testing of certified product is required, description of the procedures and method of sample selection and frequency.
ISO 9000 OR OTHER QUALITY SYSTEM REQUIREMENTS:	Confirmation of a program requirement that participants must comply with one of the ISO 9000 Quality System Standards or other quality management system requirements.
APPEALS PROCEDURE:	Information on whether certification decisions can be appealed and, if so, a description of the procedures.
PROGRAM LOGO/MARK:	Information on whether a logo and mark is used and if logo/mark is registered with the U.S. PTO.
US PROGRAM RECOGNITION:	Recognition of program by Federal, state or local government agency(s) and information on such agency(s).
FOREIGN PROGRAM RECOGNITION:	Indication of any recognition of program by a foreign private sector or government agency and identification of that organization or agency.
MOU/MRA ARRANGEMENTS:	Information on any Memorandum(a) of Understanding (MOU) or Mutual Recognition Arrangement(s) (MRA) or similar contract with other conformity assessment body(s).
DIRECTORY OF PARTICIPANTS:	Availability of published list/directory of participating organizations and details on how it may be obtained.
DIRECTORY OF CERTIFIED PRODUCTS:	Availability of published list/directory of certified products, processes or services and details on how it may be obtained.

OTHER PUBLICATIONS:

Other information, with document number/title, provided by the organization related to the certification program.