



# National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories

(A Constituent Board of Quality Council of India)



NABL/Labs/2022/001

17<sup>th</sup> May 2022

## Subject: Guidelines for improving quality and standards of laboratories

Dear Sir,

On India's 75th Independence Day, Hon. Prime Minister of India gave a clarion call to the Indian industry to realise *Aatmanirbhar Bharat* by pursuing the highest quality standards and competing in the global markets. A world-class testing infrastructure is critical in increasing this focus on exporting best quality products. Pursuing this vision, the Department for Promotion of Industry and Internal Trade (DPIIT), Ministry of Commerce & Industry, Government of India has issued the annexed **Guidelines for Improving Quality and Standards of Laboratories** on 21 March 2022, to transform the laboratories infrastructure of the country. It is applicable to all laboratories in India. It is circulated for your reference and implementation. Laboratories must prepare a comprehensive list of all products/services that can be tested in the sector in which it is operational. Request is hereby made to provide it to NABL as per prescribed format through portal.

2. All laboratories are encouraged to obtain NABL accreditation for all products it tests and all the applicable test for the product as per the relevant standard, so as to ensure that a customer receives end-to-end solution through a laboratory under ease of doing business principle of the Govt.
3. Special emphasis is laid on Guideline no. 7 which pertains to identifying as an NABL accredited laboratory. It is a fact that NABL accreditation is provided for specific scopes and not to the laboratory at large, and yet, laboratories claim themselves 'NABL-accredited' in general. This kind of messaging has led to several incidences where laboratories mask unaccredited tests under the banner of 'NABL accredited lab' while the accreditation is granted for some other scopes/tests. This severely misleads consumers, industry and the government who place immense trust in NABL accreditation. To address this, in accordance with the Guidelines, we advise all our laboratory to **make no claim of being NABL accredited whether through narrative reference or by usage of NABL symbol unless all tests offered by laboratory are accredited by NABL**. This applies on all publicity and/or advertising materials for promotional purposes, including brochures, business reports & stationery, technical literature, websites or on proposals / quotation.
4. Laboratories must also **indicate against each test parameter whether the test is accredited** by NABL. If the test is not accredited, the fact that the test is not accredited must be indicated. (Ref: no. 10 of annexed Guidelines). Laboratories must clearly display the NABL symbol and QR code issued by NABL on every report.

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5. Laboratories are also advised to **pursue end-to-end digitization** and automation of all processes to remove manual intervention over a period of time. Sample receipt, status of testing, reporting results and dispatch can be IT enabled to track the progress of each sample.
6. **Laboratories are advised to integrate with NABL's blockchain portal.** All reports must be **uploaded on the blockchain portal.** (Ref: no. 9 of annexed Guidelines). These measures build trust in the consumers about the authenticity of their lab reports. The blockchain portal ensures there is no breach of confidentiality related to the information uploaded by the laboratories.
7. Laboratories are also advised to **not indulge in any practice or canvassing in any form to influence the accreditation decision.** (Ref: no. 11 of annexed Guidelines) If any such incidence is found/reported, the accreditation status of the laboratory will be placed under adverse category.
8. Calibration laboratories are encouraged to facilitate the testing laboratories by establishing & obtaining accreditation for the parameters for which the accredited facility is not available in the country.
9. Any sharing of resources (Equipment, Personnel, CRM, etc.) between the laboratories will be dealt seriously.
10. Change in any staff of the Laboratories is to be informed to NABL within 15 days.
11. Laboratories have to inform NABL about visits by Regulators and the outcome immediately.

The compliance to the above points is expected from all the laboratories.

NABL has decided that adherence to these Guidelines shall be verified and validated at the time of next surveillance, if scheduled within next 6 months, or at the time of reassessment within the next one year. We are confident that with our joint efforts we can create an impactful testing ecosystem in India. This would be a true indicator of India's ability to become the manufacturing hub of the world by providing reliable accredited laboratories whose outcomes are accepted by the world.

Sincerely,



(N. Venkateswaran)  
Chief Executive Officer

**Guidelines for improving quality and standards of testing laboratories**

1. Laboratories must prepare a comprehensive list of all products/services that can be tested in the sector in which it is operational.
2. Each product/service must be mapped with its corresponding international standards or Indian Standards (IS), if the IS is adopted based on international standard. Relevant test methods and tests specified under these standards must also be identified. Laboratories may ensure that complete set of tests for the products/services is available at their facility. Special focus may be placed by laboratories to ensure that complete set of test and facilities are available for a product/service under regulation/QCO.
3. Laboratories must then identify the equipment, technology and human resource competence required for performing the tests, and equip themselves with such equipment, technology and human resources necessary for performance of the tests.
4. Laboratories must also ensure regular calibration of their equipment from NABL accredited calibration laboratories.
5. Laboratories must pursue end-to-end digitization and automation of all processes to remove manual intervention over a period of time. Sample receipt, status of testing, reporting results and dispatch can be IT enabled to track the progress of each sample.
6. All laboratories, including BIS Labs, must obtain NABL accreditation for all products and their corresponding tests so as to ensure that a customer receives end-to-end solution through a laboratory.
7. A laboratory should not call it 'NABL Accredited' unless all tests performed by it are accredited by NABL.
8. NABL's accreditation process mandates performance of certain test methods as live demonstrations during accreditation assessment. Laboratories must cooperate with NABL assessment team to ensure that such demonstration is performed through which testing competence can be established. They must also make their relevant subject matter experts available for such demonstrations. The same is applicable to subsequent surprise assessments as well by NABL.
9. Laboratories accredited by NABL must integrate themselves over NABL's blockchain portal and upload reports of customers on the same portal.
10. Laboratories must clearly indicate against each test/calibration parameter in the report whether that parameter is accredited by NABL. Laboratories must clearly display the NABL symbol and QR code issued by NABL on every report.
11. Laboratories must seek accreditation solely on the basis of merit. Laboratories shall refrain from attempting to influence the accreditation process, timelines and decisions of NABL.
12. Laboratories must onboard themselves and continually update their information on the Government India's Parakh Portal which aims to be one-stop repository of information on laboratories and connected services in the country. This will contribute to easier customer acquisition and accessibility through the portal. Suspension or non-accredited status (due to any reason) should also be updated as and when applicable.

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