IQAS-035

SUPPLEMENTARY CRITERIA FOR PT PROVIDER ACCREDITATION (AS PER ISO/IEC 17043:2023)

AMENDMENT SHEET

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1. Introduction

All PT Providers are required to comply with all the requirements listed in the International Standard ISO/IEC 17043: 2023 'Conformity Assessment — General Requirement for the Competence of Proficiency Testing Providers' for all types of proficiency testing schemes. ISO 13528:2022 provides support for the implementation of ISO/IEC 17043:2023 particularly, on the requirements for the statistical design, validation assigned value of proficiency test items, ensuring reasonableness of Standard deviation for proficiency assessment (SDPA), identification of possible blunders (outliers) in case of consensus value approach, review of results, and reporting summary statistics. This document specifies IQAS requirements for provider of proficiency testing to comply along with ISO/IEC 17043: 2023. It contains requirements for PT providers to enable them to demonstrate that they operate competently and can generate valid evaluations of participant performance.

PT involves the use of interlaboratory comparisons for the evaluation of laboratory performance. PT can provide evidence of competence and it can be an indicator of an underlying or emerging problem. The need for ongoing confidence in laboratory performance is essential not only for laboratories and their customers but also for other interested parties, such as regulators, accreditation bodies and other organizations that specify requirements for laboratories.

There are many different purposes for interlaboratory comparisons, which can be addressed by PT schemes, including but not limited to:

a) evaluation of the performance of laboratories for specific measurements, tests, calibrations, examinations, inspections or sampling;
b) identification of problems in laboratories that, for example, can be related to measurement or test methods, effectiveness of training and supervision of personnel, or calibration of equipment;
c) establishment of the effectiveness of measurement or test methods and the comparability of measurement and test results;
d) provision of additional confidence to users of measurement and test results;
e) identification of differences in measurement and test results;
f) education of participating laboratories based on the outcomes of such comparisons;
g) validation of measurement uncertainty claims.

For the following types of interlaboratory comparisons, the term PT does not usually apply because laboratory competence must be established in advance, in order to ensure the validity of measurements or tests, as well as the metrological traceability of assigned values:

a) evaluation of the performance characteristics of a measurement or test method (often described as collaborative trials);
b) assignment of values to reference materials;
c) support for statements of the equivalence of measurements of National Metrology Institutes (NMIs), or their Designated Institutes (DIs) through “key and supplementary comparisons”, conducted on behalf of the International Bureau of Weights and Measures (BIPM) and associated Regional Metrology Organizations (RMOs).

It is recognized that interlaboratory comparisons for purposes h), i) and j) can contribute to independent demonstrations of laboratory competence. The requirements of this document can be applied to many of the technical planning and operational activities for these interlaboratory comparisons.

Types of PT schemes — PT schemes vary according to the needs of the sector in which they are used, the nature of the PT items, the measurement and test methods in use and the number of participants. In their simplest form, most PT schemes feature a comparison of results obtained by one laboratory with those obtained by one or more other laboratories. For more details about types of PT schemes refer Annex A — ISO/IEC 17043: 2023.

2. References

2.1. ISO/IEC 17043: 2023, Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing,

2.2. ISO 13528: 2022 Statistical methods for use in proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparison

3. Specific policy of IQAS for PT providers

3.1. The PT provider shall have conducted at least one PT program in same / similar Matrix (PT item) in accordance with ISO/IEC 17043:2023 for the applied scope of accreditation.

Example -In a group (e.g. building materials, metals and alloys, food and agricultural products etc.) with at least some of the critical parameters.

If PT program not conducted or not completed for any part of scope of accreditation, the PT provider shall at least provide PT design document (detailed document as how the program will be conducted) and identify the PT item/artifact and if possible conduct the homogeneity assessment of the PT items prepared.

Note – The intention of the policy is to ensure competency in preparation of all type of PT items covering appropriate discipline/ group/sub-group etc. pertaining to the scope applied.

3.2. The PT provider shall have completed at-least one Internal Audit and one Management review before applying for accreditation and it shall be conducted after completion of PT program(s).

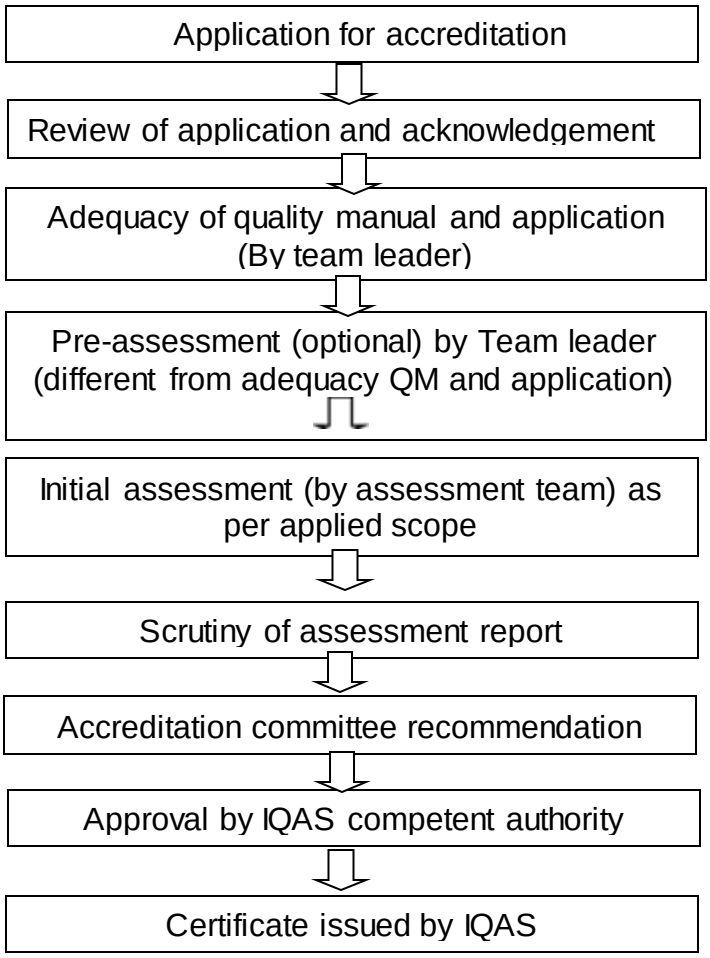
3.3. For calibration PT programs, the Reference standard used for assigning the value of artifact (PT item) shall be calibrated against a standard which is directly traceable to National Metrological Institute - NMI (say National Physical Laboratory NPL, India).

3.4. For Calibration PT programs, where PT artifact is not owned by PT provider (applicable only for the artifacts where site calibration is done), the following conditions shall be fulfilled:

- There shall be a contract between the PT provider and the owner of the artifact. Duration of the contract shall be minimum two years. It shall also describe the conditions for maintenance, servicing, storage, etc., for maintaining integrity of the artifact. It shall also include the condition that during the period of conduct of PT, the artifact shall not be used for any other purpose. The contract shall include among others, requirements for the duration shall not be less than two years.
- The PT provider shall document administrative as well as technical procedure for use of such artifacts, including the system for calibration of the artifact before use/ commencement of PT scheme.
- The PT program shall be completed by PT provider covering all the PT artifacts/ analytes/parameters applied.

The accreditation process is depicted below:

Stage wise accreditation process



Two-way communication between IQAS and the CAB at all linked stages and corrective actions taken by CAB