

Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change

National Environmental Laboratory

Accreditation to new ISO/IEC 17025: 2017 Standards

We are pleased to inform you that the National Environmental Laboratory (NEL), under the aegis of the Ministry of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change has successfully transited to the standard ISO 17025:2017 following an assessment by Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS).

ISO/IEC 17025 standard specifies the general requirements for the competence, impartiality and consistent operation of laboratories. This standard is relevant to institutions that perform sampling, testing or calibration and enables laboratories to show that they are technically competent and they are producing valid and reliable results thereby promoting confidence in their work at national and international level.

The first issue of the ISO/IEC 17025 was published in 1999 by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electro-Technical Commission (IEC). Since its inception, the standard has been revised twice, in 2005 and most recently in November 2017. This recent revision of the standard takes into consideration changes that have taken place in technology, metrology and information management system.

The National Environmental Laboratory became accredited to ISO/IEC 17025: 2005 standard in January 2009 for 18 parameters, in four sections namely General Wet Chemistry, Liquid Chromatography, Trace Metal and Microbiology. Therefore satisfying Section 47(1) of the Environment Protection Act (EPA) 2002 which states that “any analysis conducted by and environmental data provided by a laboratory other than an accredited laboratory shall not be admissible in a court of law or before the tribunal”.

In year 2013, the NEL increased its number of accredited parameters from eighteen (18) to thirty (30) to help the Department of Environment better enforce the National Environmental Standards.

In November 2017, ISO released the revised ISO/IEC 17025 standard and has given accredited laboratories a three-year transition period to implement it. In this regard, NEL took up the challenge to implement the new ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard.

In order to successfully achieve this endeavor, NEL worked out a transition plan for implementation of the new standard, which consisted in updating our existing quality management system to the requirements of the new ISO/IEC 17025 standard before July 2019.

Training was provided to staff responsible for transition and implementation of the new ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard in order to enhance their knowledge and for successful implementation of its requirement.

The quality management documentations which include the quality manual, quality procedures and relevant work instructions were successfully updated. The review of the quality documentations consisted of removal, modification and addition of policies and procedures in line with the requirement of the new standard. Awareness sessions were carried out with all staff to implement the changes brought to NEL's quality management system.

MAURITAS carried out a surveillance and transition assessment to the new accreditation standard ISO/IEC 17025:2017 in September 2019 and found NEL's updated quality management system satisfactory and therefore recommended NEL for accreditation to the new ISO 17025:2017 standard.

Accreditation cycles have a duration of four years after which MAURITAS performs a re-assessment. If the accreditation committee is satisfied with the reassessment exercise, then the accreditation certificate is renewed for another four years and the laboratory only has to undergo a yearly surveillance assessment. MAURITAS has carried out its re-assessment of NEL in July 2020 and the accreditation committee has approved the renewal of the accreditation of NEL to ISO/IEC 17025: 2017 for another four-years, effective as from 15 January 2021.

National Environmental Laboratory

12 May 2021



CERTIFICATE OF ACCREDITATION

This is to certify that

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL LABORATORY

Testing Laboratory No.: T008

is accredited by the ***Mauritius Accreditation Service (MAURITAS)***
for the following Testing field:
ENVIRONMENTAL
as per scope of schedule of accreditation

THIS LABORATORY MEETS THE REQUIREMENTS OF
ISO/IEC 17025:2017

This accreditation demonstrates technical competency for a defined scope and the operation of a laboratory quality management system and shall remain in force subject to continuing compliance with MAURITAS accreditation criteria, ISO/IEC 17025:2017 and any further requirements specified by MAURITAS

Issue Date: 15 January 2021


Director of MAURITAS

This certificate is valid only when accompanied by its schedule of Accreditation.