

**[ DEPARTMENT CIRCULAR NO. 06, S. 2018, March 08, 2018 ]**

**GENERAL GUIDELINES AND REQUIREMENTS FOR THE  
ACCREDITATION OF PRIVATE SEED TESTING LABORATORIES**

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Pursuant to the provisions of Sections 11 & 12 of RA 7308 "Seed Industry Development Act of 1992" creating the National Seed Quality Control Services and the need to accredit private seed testing laboratories to facilitate testing the quality of seeds, the following guidelines and requirements for the accreditation of private seed testing laboratories are hereby issued.

**ARTICLE I  
GENERAL PROVISIONS**

**SECTION 1. Objective**

This Circular aims to rationalize and enhance the requirements and procedures which shall be complied with by any private seed testing laboratory in order to obtain an accreditation from the Bureau of Plant Industry (BPI).

**SECTION 2. Definition of Terms** - for purposes of this Circular, the following terms shall mean:

2.1 Accreditation - The process in which an authoritative body formally recognizes the competence, impartiality and capability of an organization to carry out seed testing.

2.2 Accreditation Body - An authoritative body that performs accreditation and shall refer to herein as the Bureau of Plant Industry - through the National Seed Quality Control Services (BPI-NSQCS).

2.3 Audit - Periodic and systematic evaluation of all documents, procedures and technical competence of personnel involved in compliance to the requirements of BPI-NSQCS.

2.4 Auditors - Persons designated by the BPI Director to carry out audit and provide recommendation.

2.5 Certificate of Accreditation - An official document being issued by accreditation body to the accredited private seed testing laboratory.

2.6 Interlaboratory Comparison (ILC) - Organization, performance and evaluation of measurements or tests on the same or similar items by two or more laboratories in accordance with predetermined conditions.

2.7 ISO/IEC 17025 - General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories, specifies the general requirements for the competence to carry out tests and/or calibrations, including sampling which was published in May 2005 by the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) and the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC). It covers testing and calibration performed using standard methods, non-standard methods, and laboratory-developed methods.

2.8 ISTA - International Seed Testing Association, a leading international organization for cooperation in building seed testing capacity in all regions of the world to develop, adopt and publish standard procedures for sampling and testing seeds, and to promote uniform application of these procedures for evaluation of seeds moving in international trade.

2.9 On site audit - Part of the audit conducted by the auditors to verify compliance of the applicant-laboratory with the accreditation requirements by the BPI-NSQCS which takes place in the premises of the laboratory.

2.10 Private Seed Testing Laboratory - Any non-government entity engaged in seed testing.

2.11 Proficiency Test - A process for checking actual laboratory testing performance, usually by means of inter-laboratory test data comparison.

2.12 Scope of Accreditation - Specifies requirement applicable to a particular test type such as moisture content, physical purity and germination for a specific crop group (ANNEX 1 BPI-NSQCS Crop Group Table) that the applicant-laboratory is applying for accreditation.

2.13 Seed Testing - the accurate and prompt analysis of a seed sample using various test types based on methodologies under the NSIC sanctioned BPI-NSQCS, or ISTA seed testing procedures.

2.14 Test type - Refers to different testing analysis for seed quality such as moisture content determination, physical purity and germination

**SECTION 3. Scope** - This Circular applies to the accreditation of any private seed testing laboratory by the BPI, specifically providing for the accreditation requirements and procedures, evaluation, approval and renewal of accreditation.

## **ARTICLE II REQUIREMENTS**

**SECTION 4. Documentary Requirements** - The following documentary requirements shall be submitted to the BPI for laboratory accreditation:

- 4.1 Letter of Intent addressed to the BPI Director through the Chief of NSQCS;
- 4.2 Accomplished Application Form together with attached latest (within the last 6 months) 2" x 2" colored picture of the applicant or authorized representative;
- 4.3 Board Resolution or Special Power of Attorney, where appropriate, authorizing the applicant's representative to apply for accreditation;
- 4.4 Valid Business or Mayor's Permit (Certified True Copy); and
- 4.5 Certified true copy of the Certificate of Registration from the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) for single proprietorship, Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) for partnership and corporation, or Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) for cooperative, whichever is applicable.

For documents requiring certified true copy, the applicant shall present the original copy for comparison with the scanned or photocopied documents. If the scanned or photocopied document is found to be a faithful reproduction, the same shall be stamped Verified from the Original.

**SECTION 5. Technical Requirements** - the applicant shall comply with the following technical requirements:

- 5.1 Profile of the Laboratory (name, address, organizational chart, contact person, contact number, function, and responsibilities);
- 5.2 Existing seed testing analysis which includes the following;
  - 5.2.1 Scope of test type
  - 5.2.2 Scope of crop group
- 5.3 Private seed testing laboratory that has been in operation for a minimum of one (1) year;
- 5.4 List of laboratory equipment and facilities with records of calibration and verification;
- 5.5 Lay-out of office/laboratory;
- 5.6 List of laboratory personnel involved in the test type being applied for including proof of relevant trainings and educational attainment;
- 5.7 Manual of Operations of the laboratory;

5.8 Copy of documents from international body (a) attesting that the applicant passed the Proficiency Test conducted by the said body and (b) demonstrating evaluation of laboratory performance in the scope applied for, if any. In the absence of these documents, the applicant shall participate in proficiency testing conducted by BPI NSQCS with satisfactory results; and

5.9 Copy of Certificate of Accreditation for ISO/IEC 17025, ISTA Accreditation, or analogous accreditation, if any.

### **ARTICLE III ACCREDITATION PROCEDURE**

#### **SECTION 6. Application Procedure**

6.1 The applicant shall submit to the BPI Director through the Chief of the NSQCS a Letter of Intent including the documentary and technical requirements specified in Sections 4 & 5 hereof. All the documents submitted by the applicant shall be treated with utmost confidentiality.

6.2 Upon submission, the BPI-NSQCS designated staff shall immediately check the submitted documents for completeness of required documents. Applicants with complete documents shall be notified within three (3) working days upon submission of documents and must pay a non-refundable application fee. Applications with incomplete requirements shall be returned to the applicant stating the reason for denial and recommendations.

6.3 Within five (5) working days from payment of application fee, the applicant must attend a one (1) day orientation on the process of accreditation conducted by the BPI NSQCS.

**SECTION 7. Criteria for Evaluation of Application for Accreditation** - The application for accreditation shall be evaluated based on the following:

7.1 Completeness of the required documents submitted;

7.2 Legitimacy of the operation of the applicant's laboratory;

7.3 Methods used are in accordance with NSIC sanctioned, BPI-NSQCS, or ISTA seed testing procedures;

7.4 As a measure of competency, applicants must pass the proficiency test; and,

7.5 As a measure of competence of the analysts/staff, the applicant must pass the on-site audit