

Envirocare Labs Pvt. Ltd. (PT Cell)  
ISO/IEC 17043: 2010 Accredited



**envirocare labs**<sup>®</sup>  
*Proficiency Testing*

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# Proficiency Testing Participation

## Key Issues from Laboratory Perspective

### Frequently Asked Questions

NABL Certificate No. PC – 1041 valid till 05.09.2021

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## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### Commonly used terms:

Terms Used	Meaning
ISO/IEC 17043: 2010	Standard followed for conducting PT schemes/ Programs
ISO 13528: 2015	Standard followed for PT Statistics
PT	Proficiency Testing
PTP	<b>Proficiency Testing Provider</b> An organization which takes responsibility for all tasks in the development and operations of a proficiency testing program
PT Coordinator	<b>Proficiency Testing Coordinator</b> An individual(s) with responsibility for organizing and managing all of the activities involved in the operations of a PT program
PT Item	<b>Proficiency Testing Item</b> A sample, product, artifact, reference material, piece of equipment, measurement standard, data set or other or case study information used for proficiency testing

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### What types of PT Schemes are run by Envirocare?

**Quantitative Schemes:** In this similar PT Item is sent to all participating laboratories concurrently for testing in a definite time period to quantify the measurand value

**Qualitative Schemes:** In this similar PT Item is sent to all participating laboratories concurrently for testing to declare results as present/absent

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### How is my PT performance reported?

For quantitative examinations, where  $|z|$  denotes the absolute value of the z-score. When an outlier is identified the sign of the z-score indicates whether the result is too high (positive z-score) or too low (negative z-score) and how far from assigned value. The following interpretation is given to z score or z' (z prime) score results

Z / Z' SCORES	Interpretation	Coding
$ z  \leq 2.00$	Satisfactory result	Normal Black
$2.00 <  z  < 3.00$	Questionable result	<b>Bold Black</b>
$ z  \geq 3.00$	Unsatisfactory result	<b>Bold Red</b>
No Score	See Below	--

In addition following are reported



<b>Blunders</b>	greater than the assigned value $\pm 5 \times$ SDPA- No score given	<b>B in Red Bold</b>
<b>Results Not submitted</b>	Results not reported by laboratory- No score given	RNS
<b>Results Not Considered</b>	For results reported as zero or non-numerical results e.g. $<0.1$ or $>1$ or even where some results are qualified by * (or any other symbol) and given with any remarks etc. or not detected; in these cases it is not possible to allocate a performance score and participants should assess their performance based on assigned value and satisfactory range given - No score given.	RNC

Some schemes may have **less number of participants**. These will be dealt as per ISO 13528:2015 including where within a scheme with less number of participants some participants may not participate in particular parameters thus further reducing number of participants. **For small data sets where less than 8** results have been submitted, in these circumstances the results are not evaluated. The participants may assess their performance based on participant's or PTP average.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### How is my PT performance reported?

For qualitative schemes the OPI interpretation is as:

OPI $\leq 0.75$	Unsatisfactory	
$0.75 < \text{OPI} \leq 1.50$	Questionable	
$1.50 < \text{OPI} \leq 2.25$	Satisfactory	
$2.25 < \text{OPI} \leq 3.00$	Good	

OPI	Interpretation
Unsatisfactory	Needs comprehensive action / training and validation of competence on test parameter
Questionable	Needs thorough action / training on key critical parameters
Satisfactory	There are areas for improvement in key critical parameters
Good	No Further action, except if any individual performance score is less than equal to 1.5, the issues in key critical parameter be addressed

For qualitative results, where satisfactory performance is based on the participants reporting the same result as the assigned result e.g Absent or Present, the scoring is done as color coding of green (satisfactory) if it exactly matches the assigned value or red (unsatisfactory) otherwise (11.4.3 ISO 13528:2015)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### What is the difference between PT & Inter-laboratory comparison?

In an inter-laboratory comparison, one of the participating laboratory runs the scheme and evaluates test results including their own whereas in proficiency testing an independent organization who is not participating in the program runs the proficiency testing scheme and evaluates laboratories performance.

**Envirocare Labs PT Cell** is a Proficiency Testing provider.

It runs PT schemes covering accredited parameters, non-accredited parameters as well as both accredited parameters and non-accredited parameters

You can view our proficiency testing scope under NABL accreditation as per as per ISO/IEC 17043 2010 PT on <https://nabl-india.org/proficiency-testing-provider/pt-providersprogram/>

Envirocare Labs identifies non-accredited parameters and or PT scheme and issues reports in line with NABL-133 requirements.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### **If I have participated in ILC should I participate in PT for those parameters?**

Inter-laboratory comparison (ILC) is an **additional tool to ensure validity of results** and **not a replacement for Proficiency Testing**.

Refer NABL-163 for further clarifications.

**ILC may be additionally required e.g.**

- To ensure effectiveness of corrective actions taken in case of an outlier in Proficiency Testing
- To conduct method validation
- ILC can be participated in when Proficiency Testing programs are not available



## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### How to choose among accredited PT providers?

There may be two or more PT Providers that you come across which one I should opt for?

It is fairly natural that a laboratory will choose a PT provider whose schemes costs low. However it is imperative that as a laboratory, you do not compromise on the quality of your test results. Proficiency Testing is a tool designed to ensure and assure the quality of your test results. Envirocare Labs has 40+ years of analytical testing expertise and owing to this we are ensuring that the best quality Proficiency Testing programs are offered to our customers. Our programs are designed in a manner such that they are cost-effective and also ensure that we encompass a wide range of matrices and testing parameters under the biological discipline.

Envirocare recommends that since the implications of your testing results are significant, the choice of a Proficiency Testing provide should not depend on the cost but on the Quality of the services rendered. We ensure that our programs are designed in a holistic manner such that participation will give you the assurance that you are looking for, with sound technical expertise, cost-effective programs that will surely help you achieve confidence in your methods and processes.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### What should a PT participant look for while participating in PT programs?

#### Range of scope and parameters covered:

The range of matrices covered and parameters that the PT program encompasses plays an extremely vital role. It is essential that the participating laboratory pays specific attention to this while selecting PT programs. Envirocare Labs PT Cell offers proficiency testing programs in an array of matrices including water, wastewater, food & agricultural products, dairy & dairy products, Ready to cook/ Ready to eat, Fruits & Vegetable Products, Spices, Bakery & Confectionary products and Beverages & Drugs and Pharmaceutical products non-sterile pharmaceutical products thereby offering a very broad category of matrices and parameters ensuring that our customer's diverse PT requirements are met.

Retention Benefits: Envirocare Labs PT Cell provides discounts to the participants and existing customers based on the participation.

Participation in Outliers at a nominal cost: If you have an outlier in a PT program in a parameter, you have to re-participate, we provide re-participation for the outlier parameter at a nominal cost of Rs.2000/-

Envirocare Labs PT Cell is equipped with sound technical expertise who will help you in accreditation process by providing support in case of outliers and in enhancing the overall competence.

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

### What are the benefits of participating in PT schemes with Envirocare?

Envirocare Labs PT Cell provides Proficiency Testing Programs that caters to the requirements of our customers. Here are some of our key USPs:

- **Cost Effective:** Testing Laboratories from across the globe, especially developing nations can participate in our extensive, cost effective programs.
- **Holistic Reports:** Our extensive reports confer participants with one-shot data about their performance, provide insights into comparative benchmarking and helps identify the key performance indicators and areas of improvements.
- **Large Laboratory Database:** Our large laboratory base facilitates you to benchmark your performance against laboratories with a global span across diverse range of methods & instruments
- **Swift Process:** Our online registration systems reduce unnecessary burden & act as an environment friendly means to ensure smooth process flow saving valuable time & efforts
- Nominal costs for re-participation for outlier parameters
- A wide range of scope. The schemes are aligned as per NABL-120 and product protocols
- Minimum Turnaround Time: 60-90 Days
- Guidance in root cause analysis
- Regular feedbacks are taken from customers for improvement
- Paperless work including online payments

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## What to do if I have an outlier?

In case of an outlier, the laboratory in question must undertake detailed root cause analysis, take appropriate corrective action and identify improvements or risks as in line with ISO/IEC-17025: 2017. Outlier in proficiency testing is not a negative factor, rather the purpose of entire exercise is to help identify the problem areas and undertake appropriate measures that will improve the laboratory's performance. The root cause and corrective action is to be completed within 1 month as per NABL 163. At the time of next assessment, NABL assessors shall verify whether the participating laboratory has taken the necessary corrective action or not.

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of corrective actions ensure validity of results as given in 7.7.1 of ISO/IEC 17025: 2017:

- Use of quality control samples
- Control charts
- Testing of Blind samples
- Repeat testing immediately followed by participation in PT again for outlier parameter

## Why I should participate in PT regularly

- Proficiency Testing is a mandatory requirement as per clause 7.7.2 of ISO/IEC 17025: 2017, thus laboratories must participate in PT programs regularly
- If you are a new applicant per NABL-131 and NABL-163 “Applicant CAB shall successfully participate in at least one PT program prior to gaining accreditation in each discipline applied”
- Scope expansion also requires PT participation
- Any major changes in equipment (measuring instruments), personnel requires PT participation for validity of the test results
- Proficiency Testing acts a great tool for monitoring and establishing competence of the personnel and the laboratory

## When to register for PT program?

- PT schemes conducted by PT providers may not match laboratory’s audit cycle, hence register in time so that you have at least some results available at the time of your audit
- Plan your PT Schedule in line with PT Calendars released by PT providers for better execution
- PT programs need minimum number of participants to run which is why sometimes these may have to be extended. Therefore don’t worry if results of a program are not available at the time of audit. As long as you have participated in the program it is acceptable
- **In case you wish to participate in a program, but the registration date is over** please write to the PT provider along with Scheme code number from PT calendar in which you want to participate. Sometimes registration is accepted even after registration closure date (1) If program is extended or there is change in schedule (2) If sample preparation or material procurement has not started. The decision of PT provider for this kind of appeal is final

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## **How to communicate with PT Provider?**

You can communicate to us via email to avoid any confusion or to gain clarity. Envirocare Labs PT Cell is not responsible for communications made by telephonic conversations. It is recommended that all communications regarding proficiency testing take place via email communications. Our PT cell will respond to your queries within a span of 48 – 72 hours, in case there is a delay due to unforeseen reasons and you do not receive a revert within the stipulated time frame, you can contact us via whatsapp to +91-9167702413.

Since there are multiple Proficiency Testing programs that we conduct, we request that the communication give a reference to the program code and your lab code in which participation has made this will help us resolve your queries quickly.

For. E.g: 2020MWW01P1 – 01, where 01 is the lab code

PT Program code is always mentioned in our PT Calendar. Your Lab code is given in the letter which is sent with the samples.

Contacts:

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## **FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

## When I will get my PT sample for testing?

- Please check our Proficiency Testing calendar and see the Date of Closure of registration.
- PT samples are dispatched normally between 20-40 days after date of closure of registration

## When I will get my report?

- Please check our PT calendar and see the Date of Report release
- Reports are provided mostly  $\pm$  10 days from Date of Report Release (Sometimes due to holidays etc. or other unavoidable circumstances there may be delays), participants are informed in such an eventuality

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## What are steps in PT Scheme?

Steps involved in PT Programs	Timelines
Registration Closes	00.00.00
PT Provider checks registrations, confirm number of participants and issue reminder for payments if payments are not made	5 <sup>th</sup> Day
PT Provider informs participants “ Program is being run” if sufficient participants are there or extend the program if minimum number of labs (8) are not there and inform the participants about changed schedule	8 <sup>th</sup> Day
If program is run PT provider prepares samples	15 <sup>th</sup> Day
Samples tested for Homogeneity	25 <sup>th</sup> Day
Samples are dispatched to participants	30 <sup>th</sup> Day
Samples reach participants	45 <sup>th</sup> Day
Participants test samples and send results back to PT Provider	60 <sup>th</sup> Day
PT Provider sent Draft Result Sheet to participants	70 <sup>th</sup> Day
PT Provider sent Final Report to participants	90 <sup>th</sup> Day

**The timelines mentioned above is to give a tentative idea only  
There may be changes in timelines due to holidays or any technical issues, homogeneity studies or an unforeseen situations.**

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)



## What is Draft Result Sheet?

- Draft Result Sheet is a summary of the results of all participating laboratories for the said PT program against the assigned lab code
- Draft Result sheet is shared with the participants. The sole purpose is only for crosschecking the data entered as per result sheets submitted by participants for the programme.
- It is submitted only to verify that the data read and entered by PT provider is correct and there are no readings or typing errors on part of PT provider. The data values are however rounded to the decimal points as per standard practice laid down by IS e.g. If reporting decimal point (DP) asked is 2 and lab report results as 23.445, then it is recorded 23.45 and if lab reports as 23.444 then it is recorded as 23.44

### **Note:**

***No requests for any change in results are accepted except if there are typing and reading errors at the end of the PT provider***

**FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)**

## Why are my results not reported by the PT provider?

Your results may not be reported by the PT provider in the following cases:

**RNS:** Results Not Submitted by the laboratory or submitted later than the due date

**RNC:** Results Not Considered for results reported as zero or non-numerical results e.g. <0.1 or >1 or even where some results are qualified by \*(or any other symbol) and given with any remarks etc.; in these cases it is not possible to allocate a performance score and participants should assess their performance based on assigned value and satisfactory range given - No score given

*It is thus imperative that the laboratory report results strictly as asked by PT provider. Don't change reporting format; don't change units of reporting*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## What to do if PT provider has informed sample is sent but I have not received?

- PT Provider ensures that the samples reach the participating laboratories maximum within 10 days depending on distance or otherwise informed
- In case you do not receive samples even after 6-7 days from date of dispatch, immediately inform the PT provider

### Please take care of following like situations at your end till PT provider reverts:

- Many times quality manager has not informed other lab people about PT participation.
- Samples may have been received in your laboratory and may have been processed as 'routine testing'.
- The corresponding person in the lab has left, PT samples are received but new person does not know anything about PT participation. Sample is lying unattended in laboratory.

These instances may happen in your case too, please make sure that you check for such situations before contacting the PT provider.

*All PT samples sent by Envirocare Labs PT Cell are marked appropriately as PT samples and the sample is accompanied by Lab code and Forwarding letter to avoid confusion.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## I am not receiving any information from PT provider, what should I do?

- While filling in the PT Registration form, kindly provide email ids so that there is no error
- Two or Three email ids are asked at time of registration, please provide email id of persons who will be involved in testing or are looking after PT Participation.
- Sometime lab gives email id of persons who are not checking mails regularly or are in field most of the time or are not directly involved in activity.

### Note:

*It is thus the responsibility of the participating laboratory to take utmost care while providing the contact information while filling the PT Registration forms, since the PT provider always sends all correspondence on the same registered email IDs.*

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## Confidentiality and Use of PT Report

### Confidentiality:

- Identity of participants is kept confidential by unique coding. Participants may be given the same code number in different PT scheme by chance.
- Envirocare Labs PT Cell has a continuing obligation to identify and report any actual or potential conflicts of interest arising during the performance of its PT programs. If an actual or potential organizational conflict of interest is identified, Envirocare will immediately make a full disclosure to the appropriate parties.
- **The information provided by participants to PT providers is kept confidential:**
  - When PT provider is required by law or authorized by contractual arrangements to release confidential information, the consent of participating laboratory is taken, unless prohibited by law.
  - As per NABL-181 Issue-2 Dated 5.2.18 the records of PT program participation shall be accessible to NABL if so desired by it
  - Participants can also be asked to waive of confidentiality within the PT scheme for the purpose of discussion and mutual assistance or as required due to very nature of PT scheme
  - PT provider shall share data with organizations providing recognition e.g. NABL as part of its audit or assessment requirements.
  - PT provider may also use data and experience from operation of PT schemes for the purpose of further developments including, but not be limited to, use for research publications or conferences, however, identity of participants shall be kept confidential
  - The identity of any subcontractor used is not disclosed in report to ensure confidentiality

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

## Confidentiality and Use of PT Report

- The PT report is strictly for use by participant laboratory for
  - to monitor its performance and, if applicable, to improve the laboratory's activities
  - to show to the laboratory's customers, regulatory authorities and organizations providing recognition as part of audit or assessment requirements.
  
- PT report in part or whole shall not be given by participant laboratory to anybody for any reason other than stated above without taking the permission of PT coordinator in writing.
  
- If recipient is not the intended individual or organization for the report, it has been sent to you by mistake. Do not circulate the report or its contents further and write to [pt@envirocare.co.in](mailto:pt@envirocare.co.in)

## FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs)

**Envirocare Labs Pvt. Ltd. (PT Cell)**  
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PT Calendars and Registration Form are available upon request, write to us at [pt@envirocare.co.in](mailto:pt@envirocare.co.in)

You can send us a message with your email id for emailing you latest PT Calendars and registration forms.

**Contacts:**

**Ms. Anuprita Raichurkar**    **+91-9167702413**    **[pt@envirocare.co.in](mailto:pt@envirocare.co.in)**

**THANK YOU..!**



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