



---

*Publication  
Reference*

**EA-2/18: INF 2015**

---

**Guidelines for  
Accreditation Bodies on  
The Contents of the Scopes of  
Accreditation for  
Proficiency Testing Providers**

***PURPOSE***

These guidelines have been prepared to give guidance to ABs on how to define the scope of accredited PT Providers in order to ensure an appropriate level of harmonisation of scopes due to the fact that the standard ISO/IEC 17011, cl. 7.9.5 does not provide any additional information about it.

*Authorship*

This document has been written by the EEE-PT WG in close co-operation with the EA Laboratory Committee.

*Official language*

The publication may be translated into other languages as required. The English language version remains the definitive version.

*Copyright*

The copyright of the publication is held by EA. The publication may not be copied for resale.

*Further information*

For further information about this document, contact the EA Secretariat. Please check the EA website for up-to-date information (<http://www.european-accreditation.org>).

**Category:** Members' Procedural document with a guidance/informative status

**Date of Publication:** 16 Octobre 2015

**Implementation:** Date of publication + two years

**Transitional period:** None

---

**CONTENTS**

---

1. INTRODUCTION..... 4

2. CONTENTS OF SCOPES OF ACCREDITATION..... 4

3. ANNEX A: EXAMPLE OF A SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION..... 7

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Accreditation bodies (ABs) have been undertaking the accreditation of providers of Proficiency Testing (PT)/External Quality Assessment (EQA) for over ten years. During that period there has been no specific guidance on the content of the scopes of accreditation.

Currently ABs produce a certificate accompanied by a detailed scope of accreditation or include the scope of accreditation as an annex to the certificate.

Whichever form is used it is mandatory that the following information required in ISO/IEC 17011 (8.2.1) is made publically available either within the certificate or the scope of accreditation:

*The accreditation body shall make publicly available information about the current status of the accreditations that it has granted to each Conformity Assessment Body (CAB). This information shall be updated regularly. The information shall include the following:*

- a) *name and address of each accredited CAB;*
- b) *dates of granting accreditation and expiry dates, as applicable;*
- c) *scopes of accreditation, condensed and/or in full. If only condensed scopes are provided, information shall be given on how to obtain full scopes.*

The EEE-PT Working Group was requested by the EA Laboratory Committee to review the current scopes of accreditation being provided by ABs and to consider any necessary guidelines. An initial review was undertaken of those scopes that are issued by the ABs that are members of the EEE-PT WG. This review was supplemented by a survey undertaken by a PT Task Force of the EA Laboratory Committee regarding the implementation of ISO/IEC 17043 [1].

The review of the scopes of accreditation currently provided to PT providers illustrated some significant differences in the detail and structures from different ABs.

These guidelines have been prepared to give guidance to ABs on how to define the scope of accredited PT/EQA Providers in order to ensure an appropriate level of harmonisation of scopes. The document is applicable to all types of PT.

## 2. CONTENTS OF SCOPES OF ACCREDITATION

The level of detail included in the scope of accreditation will depend on the degree of flexibility that is offered by the AB. However, to ensure that PT schemes can easily continue to develop in order to meet laboratory needs, it is strongly encouraged that all PT providers are granted a certain level of flexibility. Irrespective of the degree of flexibility of the scope of accreditation the PT provider shall maintain an up-to-date list containing all the test/calibration items and properties used in their PT schemes that are part of its accreditation scope with a statement that this list is available on request. This approach is fully in line with overall EA principles on flexible scopes as published in EA-2/15 [2]. Such a list should show the individual test items and properties for PT schemes in the field of testing and quantities for PT schemes in the field of calibration that will be included in the scope of accreditation. If necessary, additional finer levels can be added. The following table illustrates the type of list that should be maintained by the PT provider:

<b>PT Scheme Identification</b>	<b>Technical field</b>	<b>Test Item level 1</b>	<b>Test Item level 2</b>	<b>Property level 1</b>	<b>Property level 2</b>	<b>Date of introduction to scope</b>
PT Chem	Beverage Testing	Alcoholic beverages	Beer	Metals	Iron	01.11.2012

Within the scope such information may be broadly defined in groups (Level 1) or stated in more detail (Level 2) depending on the level of flexibility being granted by the accreditation body, as agreed at the point that accreditation is granted. Based on the information in the above table, the scope could, for example include the following options depending on what is included in the scope:

- Property level 1 and 2, test item level 1 and 2 in scope: Fixed scope
- Property level 1, test item level 1 and 2 in scope: Flexible scope
- Property level 1 and 2, test item level 1 in scope: Flexible scope
- Property level 1, test item level 1 in scope: Flexible scope

Although this illustrates four options, there can be various levels of flexibility within the same scope of accreditation.

Whilst the scope of accreditation will normally be issued in the local language of the AB (sometimes in more than one language), PT providers are free to translate the scope into other languages but these shall, in accordance with EA-3/01, only include the AB symbol with the permission of the AB.

Specific guidance is given below on the information that should be made publicly available either within the certificate or the scope of accreditation:

**Accreditation number:** this shall, in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011, always be included

**Accreditation standard:** the standard ISO/IEC17043 to which the PT provider is accredited shall, in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011, be stated including issue or revision used for assessment

**Name and address of PT provider:** these shall, in accordance with ISO/IEC 17011, always be included. For PT schemes managed at multiple sites, the address of each site should be provided and it should be made clear which scheme(s) is managed at which site. It is preferable that the schemes provided within the same location are indicated as a group in the scope and not dispersed within the scope of accreditation.

**Date(s):** it is stated in ISO/IEC 17011 [3] that the accreditation body shall make publicly available information about the accreditation, including dates of granting accreditation and expiry date, as applicable. However, as there is no obligation to specifically include this information as part of the scope of accreditation, a possible mechanism for providing such detail might be made possible by the inclusion of an issue version or date of issue on the scope of accreditation (possibly as part of document control). Through the document control implemented by the AB it would be envisaged that an issue version or date of issue would be included on the scope of accreditation.

**PT scheme Identification:** the scheme(s) shall be easily identified within the scope by including the designated name or a specific reference. Where relevant, a distinction between the qualitative, quantitative and interpretative schemes can be made.

**Technical field:** the technical field shall be stated, for example biological testing, environmental testing, food testing, clinical testing etc. The testing/calibration fields listed on the EA website ('EA Search Facility – Keyword search') provide some useful guidance. For PT schemes in the field of calibration these listed EA calibration fields are recommended.

**Test item:** whilst a reasonable degree of flexibility is encouraged, the description of the test item shall not be as broad as a specific sector e.g. 'environmental' 'food', 'clinical etc since they represent technical fields. However, it should not be necessary to define a test item to a very detailed description. For example soil should be sufficient for a test item i.e. no need to specify the type of soil. The table below provides guidance for a number of technical fields, although the list is neither comprehensive nor exhaustive:

<b>Technical Field (for example)</b>	<b>Test Item (for example)</b>
Environmental Testing	Soil, Water, Air
Food Testing	Dairy, Cereals, Fruit, Meat, Vegetables
Clinical Testing	Blood, Urine, Oral Fluid, Hair
Mechanical Testing	Metals, Plastics

Calibration item: calibration items are generally not required to be described in the scope

**Property/Quantity:** it is not considered necessary to list every individual property/quantity in the scope of accreditation, but neither is it simply appropriate to use a very broad category such as chemical parameters, microbiological parameters, physical parameters etc. For example, it would not be appropriate to state chemical parameters in water but it would be sufficient to state inorganic parameters, non-volatile organic parameters, volatile organic parameters etc.

**Contact details:** this is recommended since it will provide useful information in the PT scheme selection process.

Based on the above requirements and recommendations an example of a scope of accreditation is provided in Annex A, which is provided as guidance rather than as a template.

**References:**

- [1] ISO/IEC 17043:2010 Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing
- [2] EA-2/15:2008 EA Requirements for the Accreditation of Flexible Scopes
- [3] ISO/IEC 17011:2004 Conformity assessment — General requirements for accreditation bodies accrediting conformity assessment bodies

**ANNEX A: EXAMPLE OF A SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION**

**SCOPE OF ACCREDITATION**

**Issued by**

**XXXX ACCREDITATION SERVICE**

**{Address .....**

**Accreditation Number:** XXXXPT001

**Accredited to:** ISO/IEC 17043:2010

**PT Provider:** ABC Proficiency Testing Services

**Address:** .....

**Contact:** .....

**Site Locations:**

Location A: ABC proficiency Testing Services (Testing)  
{Address .....}  
{Contact: .....}

Location B: ABC proficiency Testing Services (Calibration)  
{Address .....}  
{Contact: .....}

**Issue No:** 001

**Issue Date:** xxyyzzzz

**Expiry Date:** xxyyzzzz

### ACCREDITATION SCOPE

Scheme Identification	Technical Field#	Test Item	Property/Quantity	Location
PT1	Environmental Testing	Water	Volatile Organics	A
PT1	Environmental Testing	Water	Non-Volatile Organics	A
PT1	Environmental Testing	Effluent	Inorganics	A
PT1	Environmental Testing	Soil	Inorganics	A
PT2	Food Testing	Meat	Microorganisms	A
PT2	Food Testing	Sugar	Microorganisms	A
PT2	Food Testing	Meat	Inorganics	A
PT2	Food Testing	Fruit	Non-Volatile Organics	A
PT3*	Beverage Testing	Orange Juice	Glucose	A
PT3*	Beverage Testing	Orange Juice	Fructose	A
PT3	Beverage Testing	Orange Juice	Metals	A
PT3	Beverage Testing	Alcoholic Beverages	Alcohol by Volume	A
PT3*	Beverage Testing	Beer	Iron	A
PT4	Clinical Chemistry	Blood	Electrolytes	A
PT4	Clinical Chemistry	Urine	Hormones	A
PT5*	Haematology	Blood	Factor II	A
PT5*	Haematology	Blood	Factor V	A
PT6	Clinical Microbiology	Stained slide	Parasites	A
PT7	Mechanical Testing	Metals	Tensile & hardness parameters	A
PT7	Mechanical Testing	Plastics	Tensile & hardness parameters	A
PT7	Mechanical Testing	Concrete	Strength & Density	A

\*These examples within the PT3 & PT5 programs represent a fixed scope whereas the other examples show degrees of flexibility

For PT schemes in the field of calibration, a table format as illustrated below might be more appropriate. The technical fields relate to the EA scope codes for fields of calibration as specified in Annex B of EA-2/14 - Procedure for Regional Calibration ILCs in Support of the EA MLA

<b>Technical Field</b>	<b>Quantity Constraint/Subfield</b>	<b>Conditions/ further specification</b>	<b>Scheme Identification</b>	<b>Location</b>
Accelerometry, velocity and displacement	...			
Acoustics and ultrasonics	...			
Chemical (pH, gas mixture analysis,...)	...			
Density and viscosity	...			
Dimensional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hand held instruments</li> <li>• Texture</li> </ul> ...			
Electricity DC and LF	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High voltage</li> </ul> ...			
Electricity HF	...			
Flow (incl. velocity of fluid)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gas flow</li> <li>• Liquid flow</li> </ul> ...			
Force and torque	...			
Hardness	...			
Humidity	...			
Ionising radiation	...			
Magnetism	...			
Mass	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weights</li> <li>• Balances</li> </ul> ...			
Optical	...			
Pressure and vacuum	...			
Reference materials	...			
Temperature	...			
Time and frequency	...			
Volume	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volume of liquids</li> </ul> ...			
Other	...			