



CEC's Position on ISO 17043:2023 and ISO 17025 Accreditation

Dear Members of CEC,

We have recently had some questions relating to the ISO standards ISO 17043:2023 and ISO 17025. A specific question related to whether CEC is required to have ISO 17043:2023 accreditation in order for individual test laboratories to obtain ISO 17025 accreditation. This letter provides guidance from the CEC Management Board (MB) on this subject following several discussions on the topic.

ISO 17043:2023

This standard refers to the general requirements for the competence of proficiency testing providers. Broadly it indicates that a specific test provider is providing consistent operation of testing such as Round Robins and statistical evaluations.

CEC MB view is that CEC does not need to be accredited against ISO 17043:2023. This standard is generally used if there are several potential providers of Round Robin and related statistical evaluations. It can be used by a provider to demonstrate a level of competency above those not accredited in a competitive environment.

In the case of CEC, we develop and manage the test methods however we do not compete with other bodies. The methods are managed according to our own internal procedures and guidelines which are agreed by the member organisations who are also key users of the tests. In these circumstances there is no benefit to CEC or users in seeking ISO 17043:2023 accreditation.

ISO 17025

This standard enables laboratories to demonstrate that they operate competently and generate valid results, thereby promoting confidence in their work to clients.

ISO 17025 accreditation is not something CEC can obtain because CEC does not run laboratory tests. Individual laboratories running CEC tests may wish to gain ISO 17025 accreditation in order to demonstrate their operational competence. This would require an external audit of activities including the running of CEC tests.

CEC MB view is that if laboratories wish to show the competency of CEC in managing Round Robins and associated statistical evaluations, this can be done under a confidentiality agreement with the auditor. The CEC website shows the statistics manual relating to Round Robin testing by CEC and can be confidentially shared with an auditor to support CEC as a competent proficiency testing provider.

Please share this information with members of your group. Should you have any questions, concerns or need clarification, please contact your MB representative, the CEC Secretariat, the Chair or Vice-Chair of CEC MB.

Best Regards,

Phil Reeve
CEC MB Chair

Mike Conroy
CEC MB Vice-Chair

On behalf of CEC Management Board

19th February, 2024