



Concept for authorisation of verification laboratories

1. Introduction

The organisation implementing the Federal Law of Metrology (Measurement law, MessG; SR 941.20) for those categories of measuring instruments which fall under the jurisdiction of the Federal Government, is the responsibility of METAS. Legal entities from the public or private domain can be in charge of the task of implementing the measurement law (Article 18 section 3 MessG). The regulation for jurisdictions of measurement (ZMessV; SR 941.206) establishes the legal framework for outsourcing the task of implementation to the so-called *verification laboratories*.

Independent of whether METAS authorises verification laboratories in a domain or no, METAS is responsible for the implementation of the measurement law in this domain and maintains the specialist competence at all times.

The measuring instruments which requires verification are divided in three categories, in order to determine whether a particular official verification can be outsourced to external verification laboratories, :

- Measuring instruments in trade and commerce
- Measuring instruments for human and animal health and for environment protection
- Measuring instrument for public safety and official confirmation of facts.

Primarily, in all three application areas, the generally accepted criteria should be fulfilled. Thereafter, depending on the category, different criteria for the authorisation of the verification laboratories are applicable.

2. Criteria

2.1. General criteria

- All categories of verification laboratories are expected to have high standards of autonomy and competence.
- In order to ensure high quality work from the verification laboratories, care should be taken that the number of verification laboratories authorised is limited to such an extent that each laboratory can handle a minimum volume of tests per year.
- At the same time the number of authorised verification agencies must be sufficiently large so that if a site shuts down, the workload can be taken up by the remaining sites. If this is not possible, then no verification laboratories will be authorised for the particular field.
- After being authorised, the verification laboratory should not have an advantage compared to its competitors.

2.2. Trade and commerce

This includes, in particular, the supply counter (*Utility Meter*) (electricity meters, gas meters, heat meters). Since a large number of measuring devices are required for verification of utility meters, a decentralised organisation is specified. For these measuring instruments private verification laboratories can also be authorised.

2.3. Human and animal health and environment protection

This includes in particular measuring instrument for ionizing radiation, combustion exhaust measuring instrument and acoustic measuring instrument.

The requirements for verification laboratories in this category with respect to autonomy suggest that tests are not outsourced to private companies, but at best to government-related institutions. In such institutions, the risk of an unexpected termination is also significantly less compared to private companies. Hence, in this category, even with a small number of verification laboratories, it is not imperative that METAS operates similar measuring sites.

2.4. Public safety and official confirmation of facts

This includes speed and alcohol in breath measuring devices.

Verification of these measuring instruments is carried out only by METAS. Outsourcing of this task is not intended.

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