

Expression of Ranges

21st July 2005

Expression of Ranges on INAB Scopes of Accreditation

INAB welcomes all feedback on the accreditation services it provides and has recently reviewed comments aimed at clarifying the stated measurement range for chemical analysis expressed on Scopes of Accreditation.

In order for a laboratory to become accredited it is required to validate test methods and the measurement ranges for which the laboratory intends to apply these methods. . Clearly, INAB cannot permit a laboratory to claim accreditation for a testing range that it has not validated. Consequently, the INAB Scope of Accreditation must reflect the validated measurement range.

A number of laboratories have been identified which have the instrumental measuring range together with the statement "*range may be extended by dilution*", or variations thereof, recorded on the Scope of Accreditation without clarification as to the extent to which the range may be extended by dilution.

It is clear that a Scope of Accreditation providing information on the instrument measurement range only does not adequately reflect the capabilities of the laboratory or provide transparent information to the customer on the actual range for which the laboratory has achieved accreditation.

Henceforth, this anomaly shall be resolved by quoting the actual validated measurement range on Scopes of Accreditation for each test method.

INAB does not anticipate that this will involve extra work as the laboratory will previously have determined the appropriate measurement range for the accredited test method and matrix.

In order to avoid confusion, INAB wishes to clarify that it does not prevent dilution of samples; indeed this is clearly necessary when the concentration of the sample is above the linear calibration range of the instrument. The laboratory will be required to provide validation data, including the impact of measurement uncertainty, to justify the extent to which dilution could be effectively performed for the applicable test method.

The laboratory is requested to contact their INAB officer to verify the measurement ranges on their Scope of Accreditation. These values will be confirmed by a review of the validation data at your next INAB visit.

Your co-operation on this matter in working towards clarity and transparency on Scopes of Accreditation is appreciated.