Enhancing Public Health and Sustainability: NABL’s Initiatives for Clean Water, Medical Testing, and Soil Health in India

Introduction

Proficiency testing (PT) is widely recognized as an essential tool for demonstrating the competence of conformity assessment bodies (CABs). It is an external and independent assessment of a CAB’s capability to conduct a specific test or measurement.

National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories (NABL) in India, has introduced three schemes based on 100% PT participation for the scope. These schemes are focused on three critical domains: Clean Water, Medical testing, and Soil health. Schemes are based on achieving proficiency in all the parameters to ensure standardized testing, enhance laboratory competence, and safeguard essential resources.

Access to clean drinking water, high-quality medical testing, and fertile soil is fundamental for public health and sustainable development, and NABL’s initiatives in these areas aim to uphold these vital necessities.

NABL’s Water Quality Testing Scheme

Scope for recognition

Independent Quality Assurance

NABL has launched scheme to sensitize the Government Drinking Water Testing Laboratories at Block / Sub Divisional Level performing basic water quality testing to ensure the availability of standard water quality testing laboratories, for people living in rural, urban & peri urban areas.

This scheme is based on satisfactory proficiency testing (PT) performance and valid for a cycle of three years. This is applicable only for the critical tests specified for water and will be continued on renewal basis after every three years.

The laboratory shall continue participation for its scope in PT programs during recognition period (minimum 1 PT program per year covering the entire scope).

Ensuring Clean Drinking Water

Access to clean drinking water is vital for public health. Contaminated water can lead to severe waterborne diseases. NABL’s scheme enhances the availability of standardized water quality testing facilities, ensuring safe drinking water through rigorous proficiency testing in all parameters.

This scheme ensure access to clean drinking water in India, thus contributing quality in health sector.

704 laboratories benefited by the scheme

NABL’s Soil Testing Laboratory Scheme

Scope for recognition

Independent Quality Assurance for Soil Testing

NABL has launched scheme to sensitize the Soil Testing Laboratories performing basic testing to ensure the quality of soil for the majority of citizens especially those residing in villages and small towns.

This scheme is based on satisfactory proficiency testing (PT) performance and valid for a cycle of three years, which will further be continued on renewal basis after every three years.

The purpose of this scheme is to ensure the availability of standard soil quality testing laboratories and the improvement of soil health.

Supporting Sustainable Agriculture

Soil, as a vital resource, underpins agricultural sustainability, environmental protection and food security. The availability of standardized soil quality testing laboratories and the assurance of accurate testing results, contribute significantly to achieve these objectives. NABL’s initiatives align with India’s commitment to sustainable agriculture and a healthier environment.

It’s in the budding state, around 2000 soil testing labs available in India

NABL’s Medical Testing Laboratory Scheme

Scope for recognition

Accessible Entry Point

The NABL Medical (Entry Level) Testing Laboratories (NABL M(EL)T Lab) Program is an entry level program for medical laboratory under which laboratory shall be recognized for basic routine tests based on the satisfactory proficiency testing (PT) performance, it empowers laboratories to establish credibility within their local communities.

This scheme is valid for one cycle of three years. The laboratory shall continue participation for its scope in PT programs during recognition period (minimum 1 PT program per year).

Local Community Impact

The NABL M(EL)T lab scheme stands as a commendable initiative by NABL, striving to elevate the quality of medical testing in India. This program equips laboratories with the tools to improve the standard of healthcare sector at the grassroot level and strengthens patient’s confidence.

694 laboratories benefited by the scheme

Conclusion

NABL’s proficiency testing based schemes for clean water, soil quality, and medical testing collectively contribute to achieve Sustainable Development Goals, particularly SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 15 (Life on Land), and SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being). These efforts ensure quality testing and ultimately promotes public health and the sustainable development of the country.