

Subcontracting of measurements under the CIPM MRA

In some cases, a NMI or other designated institute, either for unexpected reasons or on a continuing basis, may sometimes subcontract a small part of its calibration, measurement or CRM certification activities under the CIPM MRA to another competent laboratory with which it collaborates and which acts as a subcontractor.

In this document, collaboration with another expert laboratory, as is often done in a CRM certification process and as is described in ISO Guide 34, is considered as a form of subcontracting.

In this document no distinction is made between “subcontracting of tests and calibrations” as mentioned in ISO/IEC 17025:1999 and “use of collaborators” as mentioned in ISO Guide 34:2000. Both forms of cooperation with other laboratories are considered and treated in the same way, irrespective of how the cooperation is organized, formulated or financed.

Examples:

1. *An institute does not have an expensive facility like a reactor for instrumental neutron activation analysis, but this facility is needed in addition to in house capabilities and competences in the same field. In this case, subcontracting to a competent reactor institute should be possible. Usually the staff of the NMI or the designated institute concerned is involved in the performance of the work at the reactor institute.*
2. *In order to increase the reliability of values assigned to a CRM which is provided by an NMI or a designated institute, and which is delivered as a means of disseminating traceability to its customers, the institute may make use of another expert laboratory and may routinely establish a collaboration as part of the certification process. This form of subcontracting to a competent, collaborating expert laboratory should be possible.*
3. *An expensive and unique length comparator with a better performance than an in house device is available at another laboratory. Establishing a collaboration to enable subcontracting of part of the calibration work to this “collaborating laboratory” should be possible. Usually the staff of the NMI or the designated institute concerned is involved in the performance of the work at the collaborating laboratory.*

In cases of subcontracting the following criteria have to be fulfilled:

1. The NMI or other designated institute, which subcontracts work to another laboratory, shall assure itself of the capability and competence of the collaborating laboratory. It shall also keep records of evidence of the capabilities and competences of this collaborating laboratory and its compliance with ISO/IEC 17025 and/or ISO Guide 34 or equivalent.
2. The subcontracting NMI or other designated institute has to take full responsibility for the work subcontracted and carried out by the collaborating laboratory, as well as for the use of the results obtained from the subcontracted/collaborating laboratory by the subcontracting NMI/Designated Institute.
3. The NMI or other designated institute subcontracting work to another competent and collaborating laboratory shall have its process of subcontracting/collaboration described in its quality system.
4. A competent subcontractor is one that, for example, complies with ISO/IEC 17025 for the work in question.

5. A reference material producer subcontracting part of its work to a collaborating laboratory shall ensure that the collaborating laboratory complies with any clauses of the ISO Guide 34 relevant to the tasks performed by it for the reference material producer.
6. The sub-contractors quality system must cover, as a minimum, the part of the work subcontracted to it.
7. In its internal and external reports to clients, the subcontracting NMI or other designated institute shall clearly state which part of the work has been carried out by a subcontracted/collaborating laboratory.
8. If possible, the subcontracting NMI or other designated institute shall inform its clients in advance when subcontracting is considered.
9. Subcontracted/collaborating laboratories may only be used when these laboratories have an added value in addition to in-house capabilities and competences in the field concerned, for example by having an additional technique available.
10. The designated NMI or other designated institute shall keep a register of subcontracted and collaborating laboratories used.
11. The name of a subcontracted, collaborating laboratory is not published in the Appendix C of the CIPM MRA because this laboratory is not designated to act as a national metrology institute for measurements of those quantities, measurands and measurement ranges which are subcontracted to it. However, the contribution of the collaborating laboratory should be mentioned in the calibration, measurement or certification report.
12. The calibration certificate, measurement report or CRM certificate issued by an NMI or other designated institute, and which includes results of subcontracted work, shall be issued in the usual way on the NMIs (or designated institute's) certificate paper and be signed by the responsible person in the NMI or other designated institute. If an important or significant part of the work has been subcontracted, it is possible that the certificate is co-signed by the subcontractor.
13. A collaborating laboratory carrying out work subcontracted to it as part of a CMC claim of an NMI or other designated institute cannot claim the same CMC if it subsequently becomes a designated institute.
14. Participation of a subcontracted, collaborating laboratory in a Key Comparison is possible, if not required in some cases, under the name of the subcontracting NMI or other designated institute concerned; eventually indicated as "name NMI/name collaborating laboratory".
15. Subcontracts are restricted to the scope and designation of the subcontracting institute.

Sèvres, 27 July 2005