

## Food Laboratories in India

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### SUMMARY

Food Testing and analysis is an essential part of the food safety ecosystem to assure that the food is safe to consume. For the same, FSSAI recognizes and notifies NABL accredited food laboratories under Section 43 of FSS Act, 2006. FSSAI is also recognizing foreign laboratories to reduce the time in clearance of food consignments at ports.

### INTRODUCTION

FSSAI approved notified laboratories as National Reference Laboratories (NRLs) and as ancillary facility of NRLs (ANRLs) for specific purpose. Lists of all these laboratories are given below-

#### Primary Food Laboratories:

The Food Authority notifies food laboratories and research institutions accredited by National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories or any other accreditation agency for the purposes of carrying out analysis of samples by the Food Analysts. Presently there are 187 Primary food laboratories.

#### Referral Food Laboratories:

The Food Authority recognizes referral food laboratories for the purposes of carrying out analysis of appeal samples. Presently there are 18 referral food laboratories.

#### National Reference Laboratories

FSSAI has recognised National Reference laboratory (NRL) to set up a country wide standard for routine procedures, validation of such standard procedure / testing methods, development of new methods and ensuring proficiency in testing across the food laboratories with special reference to the risks or food categories. Either a primary food laboratory or a referral food laboratory can be considered for declaration as a NRL. Presently there are 12 National Reference Laboratories and 2 ANRLs



#### Appointment of Reference Laboratories

- The Food Authority may recognize any notified food laboratory or referral food laboratory as reference laboratory for the purpose of developing methods of testing, validation, proficiency testing and training. The reference laboratory shall carry out the following functions, namely:-
- Be a resource center for provision of information for certified reference materials and reference materials;
- Develop standards for routine testing procedures and reliable testing methods;

- Provide technical support in the area of competence;
- Evaluate the performance of other notified laboratories;
- Coordinate exchange of information amongst notified food laboratories;
- Collaborate for data generation among the network of notified food laboratories and referral food laboratories and collate the data related to their specific domain; and (g) such other functions as may be specified by the food authority.



### Criteria for Notifying and Recognizing Food Laboratories

- Accreditation against ISO/IEC 17025 by the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories or such other equivalent accreditation agency as may be approved by the Food Authority.
- Adequate capability and competence for testing of food safety and quality parameters as per the requirements of the Act.
- Person possessing qualification and experience required for being appointed as Food Analyst under rule of the Food Safety and Standards Rule, 2011
- The infrastructure and facilities including equipments required for carrying out the analysis as per the scope applied for

### Procedure for Notification of Food Laboratories:

- A food laboratory desirous of being notified fulfills the criteria submit an application in form through online platform of the Food Authority along with the documents specified therein and a fee of rupees one thousand.
- A food laboratory owned or controlled by a Government institution including research institution or established by the Food Authority or any other statutory body and accredited by an accreditation body and desirous of being notified as referral laboratory
- The Food Authority shall scrutinize all applications and inform the deficiency, if any, to the applicant within thirty days from the date of such receipt and the applicant shall remove such deficiency within thirty days of receipt of the information, failing which the application shall stand rejected without any further reference and the fees so paid shall not be refunded.
- An application which is complete in all respect shall be registered by assigning a registration number which shall be used in all future correspondence with the laboratory concerned.
- The Food Authority may carry out adequacy audit of a laboratory and on being satisfied, decide to notify such laboratory.
- The Food Authority may reject an application for the reason to be recorded in writing.

- Where the Food Authority decides to notify a food laboratory, such laboratory shall execute an agreement with the Food Authority agreeing to comply with all the terms and conditions specified in such agreement.
- The food laboratory to be notified shall deposit rupees one lakh as interest-free security deposit at the time of signing the agreement: Provided that no such security deposit shall be payable by a laboratory owned or controlled or funded or operated by any statutory body or Government institution
- The Food Authority shall, by notification in the Official Gazette, notify the food laboratory and also upload on its website the details of notified laboratories including scope of accreditation of such laboratories.
- The agreement executed shall come into force with effect from the date of notification and shall be valid till the validity of accreditation certificate issued by an accreditation body or till the recognition and notification is continued by the Food Authority, whichever is earlier.

**REFERENCES**

Food Safety and standard act 2006

Food Safety and Standards (Recognition and Notification of Laboratories) Regulation, 2018

[www.fssai.co.in](http://www.fssai.co.in)