

SPICES BOARD
(Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India)
Sugandha Bhavan
N.H. Bye-pass, Palarivattom P.O., Kochi 682 025

**Notice Inviting Tender for region-wise Empanelment of Laboratories
as per Laboratory Empanelment Scheme of Spices Board**

Spices Board (Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India), invites applications from Food Testing Laboratories (FTL) accredited under ISO/IEC 17025:2017, for region-wise empanelment as Board's recognised laboratory for analysis of mandatory parameters in spices / spice products for export consignments, as per the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme (DOC No.SB/QEL/RS/02) **attached**.

1. Empanelment of a responding FTL for analytical services will be based on recognitions of the FTL with Spices Board for the purpose, details of which are elaborated in Spices Board's Laboratory Empanelment Scheme, attached as well as published in the website of the Board.

2. Spices Board reserves the right to change the list of parameters for which the service of the FTLs will be availed. The present list of parameters for which analytical service is required, is furnished under **B** of Annexure 1 of the Manual on Laboratory Empanelment Scheme.

3. Empanelment will be granted to a laboratory based on evaluation of qualification criteria elaborated in the referred Scheme & on competitive L-1 rate basis, initially for a period of two years.

4. Schedule of fees to be paid by the laboratories is furnished in Annexure-IV of the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme. The **Application Fee & Processing Fee** of Rs.15,000/-+GST as applicable shall be paid on line through the link, <https://fas.spicesboard.gov.in/accounts/OnlinePayLogin.aspx>.

For detailed information, application format & other annexures to be furnished along with the filled in application form, please refer the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme mentioned afore.

Duly filled application with the supporting documents, viz.,

- Annex.II, III & V to XI in the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme,
- & invoice generated after having paid the Application Fee & Processing fee *on-line* through the link, <https://fas.spicesboard.gov.in/accounts/OnlinePayLogin.aspx>

to be submitted by Post/Courier, addressed to "SCIENTIST(C), QUALITY EVALUATION LABORATORY, SPICES BOARD, SUGANDHA BHAVAN, N H BYE-PASS, PALARIVATTOM, KOCHI, KERALA 682 025, duly superscribing on the envelope as "**Application for Empanelment of Laboratory**", so as to reach before 3 p.m. on 15.01.2025.

Applications with incomplete documents are liable to be rejected.

The tender(s) received will be opened at 11.00 a.m. on 17.01.2025 in the Conference Room in Sugandha Bhavan of Spices Board at Palarivattom, Kochi, in presence of the bidders, if any, present.

Query, if any, in this regard may please be addressed to the office of the Quality Evaluation Laboratory of the Spices Board, during office hours (9 a.m.-5.30 p.m.) to Extn.No.326 of TEL : 0484-2333610-13/16, or to the email id srilatha.cm@nic.in

Date : 17.12.2024

Sd/-
Scientist (C) &
QEL in-charge



SPICES BOARD

(MINISTRY OF COMMERCE & INDUSTRY, GOVT OF INDIA)
SUGANDHA BHAVAN, N H BYE-PASS, PALARIVATTOM P.O.,
ERNAKULAM, KOCHI 682 025, KERALA.

Website: www.indianspices.com

DOC No. SB/QEL/LRS/02

LABORATORY EMPANELMENT SCHEME

'Analytical Laboratory Network for Spice Exports'

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1. Introduction

Spices Board, constituted as per the Spices Board Act 1986 (No. 10 of 1986) is one of the five commodity Boards functioning under the Ministry of Commerce and Industry, Government of India. The Spices Board is responsible for the export promotion of the 52 scheduled spices and spice products and the development of cardamom (Small & Large). The main functions of the Board include research, development, and regulation of domestic marketing of small and large cardamom, post-harvest improvement of all spices, promotion of organic spice production, processing, and certification of spices, development of spices with a special focus on North East Region, quality evaluation services, and export promotion of all spices through support such as technology and quality up-gradation, brand promotion and product development. In this context, the Spices Board has established a network of eight Quality Evaluation Laboratories (QELs) of its own in the country to cater to the testing of the spice samples meant for exports under its mandatory sampling and testing program.

2. Objectives of the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme

This Laboratory Empanelment Scheme (LES) has been formulated with the objective of having sufficient number of competent laboratories in India, in addition to the Spices Board's Quality Evaluation Laboratories (QELs), to cater to the needs of Indian spices exports considering the upcoming challenges of various quality and safety requirements set by the importing countries Viz. mycotoxins, phytotoxins, synthetic food dyes, pesticide and other agrochemical/processing residues, allergens, residues of mineral oil components, microbial contaminants, etc.

3. Scope of Laboratory Empanelment Scheme

- 3.1 This Scheme lays down the criteria, terms, and conditions for the granting and operation of recognition, suspension or withdrawal of recognition, revocation or renewal of recognition, appeals, complaint handling, related administrative instructions, and charges relating to recognition of labs and testing of samples other than Spices Board in India.
- 3.2 The Scheme intends to recognize food testing laboratories in India for testing of spices and spice products as per the requirement of the Spices Board. The scheme does not recognize the in-house testing laboratories of food industries. The recognition also excludes those laboratories that are being managed or owned by the organizations/groups/individuals associated with the food industry.
- 3.3 Services of the recognized labs are intended to be utilized for the analysis of spice samples under the purview of Spices Board's mandatory sampling and testing, and other export promotion services.
- 3.4 Samples for testing will be allotted to the recognized laboratories to meet the requirements of spice export only under any of the following conditions
 - When there are no Board's own QEL in the region.

- When QELs encounter limitations in terms of resources such as manpower, equipment, etc.

-When QELs anticipate delay in developing capability for commencing the analytical service against the immediate quality and safety requirements of the importing countries.

-When Board decides that it is not economically feasible to set up a QEL/commence testing for a particular parameter.

3.5 The empanelment in no way guarantees minimum number of samples for analysis to the recognized laboratories by the Spices Board.

3.6 In general, Spices Board accepts application once in two years and the empanelment will be valid for two years. During this time period, if any new analytical requirements arises, the Board will select the labs from the existing list of recognized labs. If sufficient number of empanelled labs (EL) are not available to meet the requirement, then only the Board will re-open the procedure for the recognition for the new parameters.

3.7 The Schedule of Fees for the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme for Laboratories is given in (Annexure IV) of this scheme.

4. Granting of Empanelment

Empanelment is granted to such laboratories which meet the criteria specified in this for empanelment, as elaborated in this Scheme, and which can demonstrate the technical competency required for testing of spices and spice products covered or proposed to be covered under the Lab Empanelment Scheme (LES) by the Spices Board and payment of fees as prescribed by the Spices Board from time to time.

4.1 General Criteria for the empanelment

The laboratory (LAB), seeking empanelment under the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme of the Board, shall meet the following criteria:

4.1.1 **Accreditation:** The LAB shall be accredited under ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for the parameters in the scope of empanelment as desired by the Spices Board from time to time. At the closing date of the application, the LAB should have a valid ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation for the parameters to be recognized under the LES.

4.1.2 The LAB shall follow only the national/international/in-house validated methods/methods suggested by the Spices Board which are under the current scope of recognition for testing, as per 4.1.1. The LAB should also be ready to do the analysis as per the methods suggested by importing countries in specific cases.

4.1.3 The empanelment can be for a parameter, a group, or groups of parameters as per the discretion of the Board and to meet its time-to-time requirement as per the Annexure 1 - Specific Criteria.

4.1.4 Subcontracting of tests under the scope of the LES by the LAB shall not be allowed.

4.1.5 The LAB shall be carrying out all testing-related activities on the same premises. For the purpose of this Scheme, the term 'same premises' would mean the following:

- (i) Single address

(ii) Premises comprising of number of buildings within the same perimeter of the address all of which are under authorized ownership/lease rights of the laboratory.

(iii) In case of LAB operating from different areas (within the same premises) which have different identifications (such as different flat No., plot No., wing, floor, etc.), all such areas should be part of the document authenticating the address of the premises.

4.1.6 **Impartiality**

As per the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025, the following has to be ensured by the LAB for the purpose of impartiality;

a) Laboratory activities shall be undertaken impartially and structured and managed so as to safeguard impartiality.

b) The laboratory management shall be committed to impartiality.

c) The laboratory shall be responsible for the impartiality of its laboratory activities and shall not allow commercial, financial or other pressures to compromise impartiality.

d) The laboratory shall identify risks to its impartiality on an on-going basis. This shall include those risks that arise from its activities, or from its relationships, or from the relationships of its personnel. However, such relationships do not necessarily present a laboratory with a risk to impartiality.

e) If a risk to impartiality is identified, the laboratory shall be able to demonstrate how it eliminates such risk.

4.1.7 **Confidentiality**

The laboratory shall be responsible, through legally enforceable commitments for the management of all information obtained or created during the performance of laboratory activities. The laboratory shall inform the Spices Board in advance, of the information it intends to place in the public domain. Except for information that is made publicly available, or when agreed between the laboratory and Spices Board, all other information is considered proprietary information and shall be regarded as confidential except to Spices Board.

4.2 **Submission of Application for Empanelment**

4.2.1 When the Spices Board invites applications for recognizing laboratories, any laboratory fulfilling the 'General Criteria for Recognition' (4.1) and 'Specific Requirements and Criteria' (Annexure 1) as laid down by the Spices Board from time to time may apply for recognition in the prescribed application form (Annexure II) along with the requisite documents and fees.

4.2.2 The following documents, duly authenticated, shall be submitted along with the application form:

- a) Legal Identity of the laboratory : any one or more of the following documents
 - i) Certificate of Registration by Company Registrar and Memorandum of Articles in case the laboratory is a Limited Company
 - ii) Partnership Deed in case the laboratory is a Partnership entity

- iii) Certificate from Chartered Accountant establishing the proprietorship or Affidavit on Non-Judicial Stamp Paper of Rs.200/- by Proprietor that he is the sole Proprietor, duly attested by Notary Public in case of the laboratory being a proprietorship business entity.
 - iv) Certificate of Registration under the Shops and Establishment Act
 - v) Certificate of Registration under the Goods & Service Tax Act.
 - vi) For the purposes of legal identity, a governmental laboratory is deemed to be a legal entity on the basis of its governmental status.
- b) Authenticating premises of the laboratory: Any one or more of the following documents indicating and covering all the areas where laboratory activities are carried out and which are proposed to be covered under recognition:
- i) Certificates from Registrar of Firms or Directorate of Industries or Industries Center
 - ii) Municipal Corporation/Local Body/Central Insecticides Board or Drug Controller/ Pollution Control Board or any such bodies, indicating premises of the applicant laboratory
 - iii) Rent Agreement, duly notarized.
 - iv) Authentication of the premises of a governmental laboratory will be carried out on the basis of its governmental status.
- Note:** In case the document(s) of address proof and legal identity is (are) in the local language, then their authenticated English Version/Translation may also be provided.
- c) Other Documents Required:
- i) Certificates of accreditation for ISO/IEC 17025 and scope of accreditation covering all the test parameters for which recognition is sought.
 - ii) Layout Plan of the Laboratory indicating key facilities, sample receipt, remnant store, etc., and including floor plans covering all areas under the address.
 - iii) Declaration regarding requirement-wise details of test facilities available for each parameter for which recognition is sought shall be submitted on the prescribed proforma (Annexure III) separately for each parameter.
 - iv) The applicant laboratory shall submit the declaration about its status as a non-in-house laboratory (Annexure III).
 - v) Details of reference materials required and used for testing and calibration with details of traceability to national/international standards and validity.
- d. Copies of the following documents/records of the laboratory that cover the requirements specific to this scheme which **inter alia** include, but are not limited to the following are to be submitted to the Spices Board on a need basis.
- i. handling of samples, and disposal of remnants of tested samples
 - ii. confidentiality, and impartiality:

- iii. review of test requests,
- iv. testing of samples as per the test method,
- v. handling of complaints, queries/disputes related to test requests, analysis of samples and analytical reports, if any, provision for retesting/witnessing of testing.
- vi) Any other document pertaining to the activities coming under the recognition of the laboratories as required by the Spices Board.

4.2.3 The application form, duly filled in, shall be signed by its owner/top management, i.e., Proprietor, Partner, Director, Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Head, as the case may be, or any other person so authorized for the purpose by the Management. The name and designation of the person signing the application shall be recorded legibly in the space for the purpose of the application form. In case the application is signed by an authorized signatory, a certificate from the top management of the laboratory, on its official letterhead, bearing the seal of the laboratory and clearly attesting to the signature of the authorized signatory, shall also be required to be submitted with the application.

4.2.4 The application form in the prescribed format (Annexure II) along with the required documents (Annexure III, V to X) and the covering check-list (Annexure XI), BY POST/COURIER, shall be submitted to the Spices Board's HO, in the following address:

Scientist C
Quality Evaluation Laboratory, Spices Board,
Sugandha Bhavan, NH Bye-Pass, Palarivattom, Cochin, Kerala 682025

The envelope containing the application along with accompanying documents, as above, shall be superscribed with '***Application for empanelment of Laboratory***' .

4.3 **Process of Empanelment**

4.3.1 **Verification of the application:** A Verification Committee (VC) constituted by the Board for the purpose will verify the application and other submitted documents. If required, the committee shall call for further clarifications and documents from the LAB. Based on verification of application, certificate, and scope of accreditation (ISO/IEC17025: 2017), findings, closure of all non-conformities observed, if any, and confirmation on record that criteria for recognition are met, the application along with the report of verification will be forwarded to the 'Empanelment Committee' (EC) for further necessary actions.

4.3.2 **Provisional Empanelment of the Laboratory:** The Empanelment Committee (EC) constituted for the purpose will examine the report of the VC. The EC may accept, reject, or return the application to the VC for further clarification. The Secretary, Spices Board, or the officer authorized by the Secretary for the purpose will be the authorized person to issue the provisional empanelment to the LAB based on the recommendation of the EC, by placing a formal Work Order on the Empanelled Laboratory (EL).

4.3.3 The empanelment shall be for two years and the EL has to pay the applicable empanelment fee for the empanelled period, followed by entering into the MOU with Spices

Board. The LAB shall pay the empanelment fees within 15 days from the date of receipt of communication of the empanelment from the Board. After receipt/realization of payment, and MOU, a recognition letter, along with a certificate, as per the MOU will be issued to the laboratory for tests to be undertaken for two years from the date of empanelment. A unique Empanelment No. shall be allotted to the EL.

4.3.4 **Onsite Assessment of the Laboratory.**

The empanelment conferred as per 4.3.2 will be provisional in nature till the onsite verification. Currently Spices Board has entrusted NABL for the onsite verification of the LAB as a part of the NABL integrated assessment programme. The LAB has to ensure that the assessment and accreditation of the parameters recognized under the Spices Board LES has to be completed within six months from the date of provisional empanelment through the main assessment or scope addition assessment.

4.3.5 **Regularization of Empanelment**

The EL has to submit the report of successful completion of the onsite assessment along with the approved scope to the Board for the regularization of empanelment. Accordingly, the Board will issue a letter of confirmation for the regularization of the empanelment.

4.3.6 Failure of the EL to complete the on-site assessment within SIX months from the date of empanelment will lead to the suspension of the empanelment. If the LAB is not able to complete the on-site assessment procedure within TWELVE months from the date of provisional empanelment, the empanelment will be treated as cancelled without further notice.

4.3.7 It will be the sole responsibility of the LAB to arrange the on-site assessment through the Spices Board authorized accreditation agency in a time-bound manner. The Spices Board will not hold any responsibility in intimating, updating, or reminding the LAB on the timely completion of on-site assessment and accreditation as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

5. **Terms and Conditions of the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme**

5.1 Every laboratory empanelled by the Spices Board (EL) shall abide by the following terms and conditions:

a) The EL shall inform the Spices Board about major changes made, if any, to the Laboratory Quality Management System which forms the basis for the grant of the recognition.

b) The EL shall ensure that infrastructure, testing facility, and manpower required as per the relevant scope must be maintained on a continuous basis. Any change in the status, i.e., either upgradation or disruption of facilities shall be promptly informed to the Spices Board.

c) In case of changes in the infrastructure, testing facility, and manpower that adversely affect the laboratory's capability to test any requirement(s) as per the scope of

recognition, the testing should be suspended under intimation to the Spices Board. The Spices Board may, at its discretion, decide to impose conditions for verification of corrective actions before permitting normal operation under the Scheme.

d) The EL shall inform the Spices Board as and when it plans to shift its laboratory premises to an address other than that declared and verified at the time of grant of recognition. In such cases, re-verification is required. The EL shall not accept samples for testing at the new premises without prior permission of the Spices Board.

e) The EL shall inform the Spices Board as and when there is any change in status, e.g., expiry, withdrawal, extension, date of validity date of accreditation for ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

f) The testing charges for the EL during the tenure of the empanelment shall be declared and fixed by the Spices Board at the time of its empanelment for two years or as and when the requirement for an analysis arises. There shall be no upward revision in the testing charges during the empanelled period of two years. The EL shall follow the policies of the Spices Board regarding the testing charges as amended from time to time.

g) The EL shall issue the test results containing the information as per the latest requirement under ISO/IEC 17025:2017 including information related to the sample, code, date of commencement and completion of testing, clause reference of the tests performed, relevant standard, amendment, and its specified values. The laboratory shall issue results in the formats prescribed by the Spices Board, wherever applicable. Accordingly, the test report to the exporter for effecting the shipment or otherwise shall be issued by the Laboratory concerned of the Spices Board.

h) The EL shall issue the test results as per the time schedule decided by the Spices Board. Under no circumstances the issuance of test results shall be withheld by the laboratory for any reason.

i) The EL shall facilitate and permit access to the Spices Board or the agency authorized for the purpose for visits related to the empanelment scheme, surprise audits, and investigations that the Spices Board may carry out, with or without prior announcement to the laboratory, and provide the required information as sought.

j) The EL shall give a minimum of 30 days' notice while surrendering empanelment status and shall comply with the instructions given by the Spices Board for handling and disposal of samples/remnants pending with it. The laboratory shall not claim a refund of the empanelment fee for the unutilised period of empanelment.

k) The EL shall retain remnants of the samples for a minimum period of 3 months from the date of issuance of the test report. The laboratory shall maintain proper records of the disposal of remnants and produce the same as and when required. The Board reserves the right to increase or decrease the retention time for the samples as per the requirement of

regulations or the decisions by the Board.

l) The EL shall pay such fees for application, empanelment, renewal, and enhancement of scope of empanelment and other services as applicable and pay such additional fees on account of revision of the Manual from time to time. The fees once paid will not be returned under any circumstances.

m) The application for renewal of empanelment, if desired by the laboratory, shall be submitted along with the requisite fees (Renewal and Recognition Fees) and the required documents at least 6 months prior to the expiry of recognition.

n) The EL shall not accept any Spices Board sample for testing during the application stage or after the validity of empanelment.

o) The EL shall not accept any Spices Board's samples during the period of suspension of empanelment and shall inform the details of the sample pending with it at the time of suspension.

p) The EL shall maintain records of all complaints received by it for the Spices Board samples and test reports issued for the same and shall document the actions taken for the complaints so received. The laboratory shall give full details of actions taken in response to complaints or discrepancies in test results and allow access to all relevant records and documents for the purpose of any investigation and provide certified copies thereof.

q) The EL shall have the relevant national/international standards required for the testing of products covered under the scope of empanelment.

r) As and when any standard for which empanelment is granted or their cross-referred standard is revised or any amendment is issued to it, the laboratory shall review and update its test facilities to implement such revision/amendment and inform the Spices Board accordingly.

s) The EL shall neither entertain nor contact any customer for samples received from the Spices Board. For any clarification that may be required for the sample, the EL shall contact the Spices Board's office/laboratory from where the sample is received.

t) Upon withdrawal of empanelment or expiry of the empanelment, the laboratory shall discontinue claiming Spices Board's empanelment and withdraw all publicity material (both in print and electronic media) which may contain reference thereto.

u) The EL shall submit a statement of samples received and test results issued for Spices Board's samples on a fortnightly basis along with their claim for agreed testing charges and as and when required by the Spices Board.

v) The EL would be required to work through the available Spices Board software portal as per the instructions provided by the Spices Board for receiving, accepting, forwarding, and uploading test reports, etc.

w) The EL for testing spices and spice products covered under the testing

programme of Spices Board, shall adhere to programme-specific guidelines issued by Spices Board from time to time.

x) The EL shall participate/perform in the quality control programs organized by the Board. Failure to participate/perform in the quality control programme shall lead to disqualification from the empanelment.

6 **Operation of Laboratory Empanelment Scheme**

6.1 **Witnessing of Testing:** The EL shall agree and facilitate witnessing of its testing of any sample as decided by the Spices Board.

6.2 **Surveillance inspection:** The Spices Board or the agency authorized by the Board shall carry out surveillance inspection with or without prior notice.

a. To ensure continuous compliance with the requirements

b. Based on the complaints on the quality of testing, border rejections, etc.

c. Non-conformities, observed if any during the inspection, shall be dealt with in the same manner as in the initial empanelment.

d. The expenses related to the inspection will be borne by the Board

e. The EL shall be required to pay the charges associated with visits required to verify the corrective actions taken for the non-conformities raised during the surveillance inspections.

6.3 **Modification of the Scope of Parameters**

6.3.1 Extension of Scope of Empanelment shall be dealt with as follows:

a) The EL shall make a formal request for an extension of scope for the addition of parameters to its scope along with the prescribed fee and Declaration regarding the test facilities for the additional parameter to the Board or to the agency authorized for it.

b) The test facilities for the addition of the parameter in the scope of empanelment would be verified during surveillance.

6.4 The EL shall participate in all the quality control programs organized by the Spices Board.

7. **Suspension of Empanelment**

The status of empanelment would be liable to be suspended as and when non-compliance to fulfillment of the empanelment criteria and/or violation of terms and conditions of this Scheme are observed or reported. The causes that may lead to the suspension of empanelment are as below:

(a) EL fails to observe terms & conditions and undertaking of the Lab Empanelment Scheme.

(b) Break down of system as observed during surveillance or otherwise.

(c) Non-intimation of significant changes in lab management (as per signed undertaking submitted).

(d) Lack of cooperation with the Spices Board in the conduct of inspections or in resolving various related issues.

(e) Prima-facie evidence suggests that the test results reported by the lab are not genuine/ valid and/or the laboratory does not carry out the test(s) properly as per the requirement.

(f) Failure to take corrective actions on NCs reported within the stipulated time frame.

(g) Shifting of laboratory premises without intimation and re-reorganization by the Spices Board.

(h) Prolonged closure of laboratory due to any reason whatsoever.

(i) Re-occurrence of similar NCs.

(j) The accreditation body withdraws accreditation as per current requirements under ISO/IEC 17025:2017 during its validity period.

(k) Occurrence of any natural calamity that affects the operations of the laboratory.

(l) The EL continues testing and issuing test reports for the product(s) related to Spices Board's testing programme which is beyond the scope of empanelment, without seeking formal inclusion of the product(s) in their scope of empanelment.

(m) If a complaint is established.

7.1 Revocation of suspension/partial suspension when necessary corrective actions are confirmed by the lab, Spices Board may consider revocation of suspension based on satisfactory assessment including on-site verification, if necessary.

7.2 Empanelment fee is payable even during the period of suspension.

7.3 Partial Suspension : During the operation of the scheme, empanelment of the lab may be suspended partially for a product/ a group of products/ product field due to any of the following reasons:

7.3.1. Inability of the laboratory to demonstrate its capability of testing a product or a group of products.

7.3.2. Failure to take corrective actions on NC reported during surveillance within the stipulated time frame.

7.3.3. Re-occurrence of similar NCs pertaining to a product or a group of products or product field(s).

7.3.4. The accreditation body withdraws accreditation as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for the particular product(s)

7.4 During the period of suspension/partial suspension, the lab shall not accept and test any sample forwarded by the Spices Board or by authorized sampling agencies.

7.5 Samples pending with the lab at the time of suspension/ partial suspension shall not be tested without prior approval of the Spices Board. The laboratory shall furnish to the Spices Board the details of samples pending for testing or under test at the time of suspension/partial suspension on the same day. If the statement is not received, the Spices Board will not

consider the test results of such samples.

7.6 Maximum period of partial suspension: The period of partial suspension normally shall not exceed three months. It may be extended beyond three months in special cases with valid reason(s) by the Spices Board and shall not exceed six months. The parameters for which the empanelment of the laboratory has been suspended will be processed for deletion from the scope of the laboratory. The empanelment of the laboratory shall be withdrawn after six months of suspension.

7.7 Revocation of partial suspension: When necessary corrective actions are confirmed by the laboratory, the Spices Board may consider revocation of suspension based on satisfactory assessment including on-site verification, if necessary for which the laboratory will be required to pay the necessary inspection charges.

7.8 Empanelment fee is payable even during the period of suspension

8. Renewal, Expiry of Renewal, and Withdrawal of Empanelment

8.1 Renewal

8.1.1. For renewal of empanelment, the laboratory shall apply to the Spices Board on the application form as prescribed at least three months before the validity date of the empanelment along with requisite fees as prescribed and related documents. A renewal inspection may be carried out before considering further renewal. The Spices Board may also take a decision regarding renewal of empanelment without carrying out any renewal inspection on a desktop verification basis if past performance during surveillance has been reported satisfactory.

8.1.2. Renewal fees for which verification is already carried out are non-refundable. However in case renewal has been done without renewal verification, the renewal fees will be refunded.

8.1.3. If renewal of empanelment is pending with the Spices Board due to any reason that cannot be assigned to the Laboratory, though renewal application along with requisite fees, and dues have been received before the expiry date of empanelment, the Laboratory shall be allowed to function as a recognized laboratory till a decision on the renewal application is taken by Spices Board or provided all the other conditions are satisfied.

8.1.4. In case the laboratory is under partial suspension, then renewal for the laboratory under suspension may be considered only if the action taken was found satisfactory for the aspects for which partial suspension was imposed.

8.2 Expiry of Renewal

The period of expiry of renewal may be extended in exceptional situations with the approval of the Spices Board.

8.3 Withdrawal of Empanelment

The empanelment of the laboratory may be withdrawn at any time during the empanelment period by the Spices Board for any of the following reasons:

1. The laboratory surrenders the empanelment
2. Continuation of the empanelment of the laboratory would not be of any assistance to

the Spices Board.

3. The laboratory does not maintain adequate confidentiality and impartiality pertaining to the sample(s) under test and test results;

4. The laboratory acts/works directly or indirectly against the interest of the Spices Board in any form or in any manner;

4.1.1 The laboratory is found indulging in unethical practices as detailed below :

4.1.2 Laboratory tries to influence the Spices Board through unethical means to procure more business.

4.1.3 The laboratory allows Spices Board customers to approach them or their representatives at any stage of their activities.

5. The laboratory after the imposition of suspension does not take corrective actions within the stipulated period, does not communicate as per the documented procedure or the corrective actions taken are found not satisfactory.

The partial suspension/ suspension continues beyond the permissible period for reasons for which the laboratory is responsible.

8.4 For the reasons mentioned above, empanelment of the laboratory shall be suspended with immediate effect (if not already under suspension). The process for withdrawal of empanelment will be initiated by issuing a notice for withdrawal of recognition to the laboratory with the provision of a personal hearing to explain why such proposed action may not be taken against the laboratory. If no reply is received within 15 days if the reply is found unsatisfactory or if the plea(s) extended at the time of the personal hearing are not acceptable to the Spices Board, the empanelment of the laboratory shall be withdrawn.

The cooling period for any laboratory whose empanelment is withdrawn shall be a minimum of 3 months and the maximum shall be 1 year. The cooling-off period and notice shall not be applicable in case of surrender of empanelment by the laboratory; however, the Spices Board may confirm the request for surrender of empanelment.

9 Changes in management/structure of the laboratory

9.1 During the process of empanelment, a number of special situations may arise on account of changes in the management/structure of the laboratory. The situations may be of the following type:

1 Change in address of the laboratory premises;

2 Change in the name of the laboratory without change of ownership and management;

3 Change in the ownership of the laboratory, with or without change in the name;

4 Division of the laboratory into two or more units with one of them retaining the original name;

Division of the laboratory into two or more units none retaining the original name;

9.2 Merging of two or more laboratories into one entity with a change in name or retaining one of the original names.

In the case of 10.1(a), the laboratory is required to inform the Spices Board in advance about shifting the laboratory and stop testing at the old premises. On receipt of this information, the empanelment will be suspended by the Spices Board. On completion of shifting the laboratory will intimate this fact to the Spices Board along with the following documents:

- (i) Any legal document authenticating the new premises as per clause 4.2.2(b)
- (ii) Certificate of Accreditation of the laboratory for the new premises as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017.

Spices Board in turn would arrange for verification at both locations and shall consider revocation of suspension of recognition subject to satisfactory.

9.3 In the case of 10.1(b), any of the legal documents as specified in 4.2.2 shall be resubmitted along with a fresh undertaking (Annexure III) in the application form with the new name of the laboratory.

9.4 In the case of 10.1(c), any of the legal documents as specified in 4.2.2 shall be resubmitted, along with a fresh undertaking (Annexure III) in the application form with the inclusion of the new owner/management.

9.5 In the case of 10.1(d), the laboratory is required to inform the Spices Board immediately and stop testing at all the units. The laboratory will also not issue any test results from any of the units. On receipt of this information, the empanelment will be suspended by the Spices Board. The Spices Board shall consider revocation of suspension of empanelment subject to the satisfaction of the recognized laboratory retaining the original name and on submission of the following documents by the laboratory:

1. No objection Certificate from the other unit(s) and/ or any other suitable legal document.
2. Fresh undertaking in the application form.

Any of the documents authenticating the premises as specified in 4.2.2

9.6 In the case of 10.1(e), the units will be treated as new entities and they may apply for recognition afresh.

9.7 In case of the merger of two or more labs into one entity (10.1 (f)) with or without a change of name, the empanelment of the laboratory shall stand withdrawn. The merged entity shall be treated as a new entity & it may apply for empanelment afresh.

10 Analytical Fee

10.1 The analytical fee for each parameter payable for the EL for the empanelment period of two years shall be fixed by the Spices Board on competitive L-1 rate basis. The Board will give an opportunity to technically qualified LABs to match the competitive L-1 rate fixed as above by the Board. The LABs those agree to accept the analytical fee fixed by the Board,

as above, will be empanelled for two years. The applicant LAB has to submit its quotation for the analytical charges as per the format given in Annexure 5 along with the application. Application without the quotation will be summarily rejected.

10.2 There shall be no upward revision in the testing charges during the empanelment period of two years.

10.3 The laboratory shall follow the policies of the Spices Board regarding the testing charges as amended from time to time.

10.4 To ensure confidentiality and impartiality in the process, the analytical charges will be collected by the Board, directly from the customer and will be paid to the EL against satisfactory completion of the analysis and invoice submitted by the EL.

11 General

The empanelment is non-transferable and any situation not covered under this Scheme, will be considered by the Spices Board and the decision of the Spices Board shall be final.

12 Jurisdiction

All the legal disputes regarding the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme will be under the jurisdiction of Hon. High Court of Kerala, Cochin.

Scientist (C) & in-charge,
Quality Evaluation Laboratory

ANNEXURE 1

Specific requirements and criteria for empanelment of analytical laboratories for testing spices and spice products (2024-26)

A. Table 1. Prime Consideration for Empanelment:

Region A	Region B	Region C (need-specific)
1. Spices Board have QELs 2. Spices Board QELs have resources to cater the requirements	1. Spices Board have QELs 2. Limitations in facilities of Spices Board QELs such as overload/breakdowns of equipment/ not analyzing this parameter	1. No QEL & nearby QELs not analyzing these parameters/overload/ limitation/ breakdown of equipment
No out-sourcing	Partial out-sourcing integrated with QEL	Complete outsourcing

B. The food testing laboratories fulfilling the requirements in General Criteria and having valid accreditation as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for the parameters described in Group 1, and Group 2 in Table 2 are eligible for the Spices Board LES.

LAB can apply for recognition for Group 1 or Group 2 or for both. Parameter-wise partial recognition within a group is not allowed in this scheme.

Table 2. Parameters included in the empanelment scheme

Parameters to be tested in spices		Test Method	LOQ	
Group	Parameters			
Group 1: Chemical Contaminants	1: Aflatoxins	Aflatoxin B1	Immuno-affinity	≤ 1 µg/L
		Aflatoxin B2	column clean-up	≤ 1 µg/L
		Aflatoxin G1	followed by HPLC-FD	≤ 1 µg/L
		Aflatoxin G2	analysis	≤ 1 µg/L
		& Total aflatoxins		
	Sudan dyes	Sudan I	LC-MS/MS Analysis	≤ 10 µg/L
		Sudan II		≤ 10 µg/L
		Sudan III		≤ 10 µg/L
		Sudan IV		≤ 10 µg/L
	Ethylene oxide	Ethylene oxide including 2-Chloroethanol	GC-MS/MS Analysis	≤ 0.01 mg/L
Heavy metals	Pb, As, Hg, Cu, Mn, etc.....	ICP-MS Analysis	≤ EU MRL	
Pesticide residues ¹	LC-MS/MS, GC-MS/MS and ICP-MS ² Analysis		≤ EU MRL	
Group 2: Microbiological Contaminants	<i>Salmonella</i>	Automated analytical methods such as PCR/Immuno-Assay Based		

¹ Pesticide residues: The requirement of testing of pesticides in spices for importing countries used to vary from time to time. Hence the minimum eligibility to be empanelled

for Group 1 - pesticide residues is the availability of a minimum of 200 No of pesticides for spices accredited under ISO 17025:2017. The laboratory should have the capability to test pesticides required as per the regulations of importing countries like the EU, UK, China, Japan, USA, Saudi Arabia, etc. The Board will contact the laboratory to confirm on its readiness to accept samples for pesticide residue analysis, as and when required. The LAB should have all the compounds in its accredited scope as per the requirement of importing countries to make it eligible to receive samples for the analysis. A compound including its metabolites as per residue definitions will be taken as one compound.

² ICP-MS analysis for metal-based pesticides,

C. Table 3 Geographical requirements of analytical laboratories

Regional Spices Board QELs	Jurisdiction
Chennai	Tamil Nadu
Guntur	Andhra Pradesh, Telangana & Odisha
Mumbai	Maharashtra, Goa, Madhya Pradesh & Jharkhand
Kandla	Gujrat & Rajasthan
Narela	Delhi, Haryana, Punjab, UP, Bihar, Chattisgarh, Uttaranchal, Uttarakhand, HP, J & K,
Kolkata	Kolkata & other area in the North Eastern India
Kochi	Kerala
Tuticorin	Tamil Nadu & Karnataka

Annexure II

Application for Laboratory Empanelment

(Under the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme of the Spices Board)

PART A

SUMMARY OF APPLICATION

			For office Use Only
1	Type of Laboratory (please tick)	Private / Government	
2	Type of Recognition (Please tick)	Fresh/ Renewal	
3	Name and Address of the Applicant Laboratory		
4	Group(s) for which recognition is sought		
5	Group 1 : Chemical Parameters		
	Group 2 : Microbiological Parameters		
6	Whether all the parameters in Group I have valid accreditation as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017.		
	Whether all the parameters in Group 2 have valid accreditation as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017.		
7	Name and details of the contact person		
8	Details of Fee. Application Fee in the form of online payment to Board's bank account through payment link indicated in the Notice Inviting Tender. Copy of the invoice that can be generated on effecting on-line payment shall be furnished in the application form.		

PART B

I	Details of the Laboratory	
1	Name of the Laboratory	
2	Address of location for which recognition is sought	
3	Phone, and Email	
4	Address of Head office (if different from 2)	
5	Phone, Fax, and Email (if different from 3)	
6	Type of Organization (Govt./Semi Govt./Private)	
7	Legal status and date of establishment of the laboratory (Please give the registration number and name of the authority who granted the registration with all documentary proof). <i>(Attach the documentary Proof as Attachment 1)</i>	
8	Laboratory Premises / Layout	
8.1	Total space available (Sq. Feet)	
8.2	Layout plan of the laboratory indicating testing areas, seating plans, receipt and storage of samples, administration, and other facilities <i>(Attach Layout Plan as Attachment 2)</i>	
9	Other Accreditation s / Recognition s / Approvals. <i>(Attach copies of recognition as Attachment 3)</i>	1. 2. 3.
10	Name and designation of the Laboratory in charge.	
11	Name and designation of the person responsible for technical operation/ Technical Manager(s)	
12	Name and designation of the person responsible for Quality Management Systems/ Quality Manager	
13	Total No. of technical personnel available in the laboratory	Group 1
		Aflatoxins & Sudan:
		Ethylene oxide and pesticides:
		Heavy Metals:
	Group 2: Microbiology:	
14	List Authorized signatories for issuance of test reports <i>(Attach a List as per the format in Annexure VI)</i>	
15	Scope for empanelment proposed or Recognized scope by Spices Board (in case of renewal of recognition). <i>(Please attach in the format as per Annexure VIII)</i>	
16	Date of validity of recognition (in case of renewal of recognition)	
17	Whether accredited by NABL as per ISO/IEC	

	17025:2017	
18	If yes, does the scope of accreditation cover the scope applied for Spices Board recognition? <i>(Attach certificate and relevant pages of scope of accreditation (highlight the parameters) as appendix II)</i>	
19	Date of last ISO/IEC 17025:2017 assessment	
20	Validity of existing ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation	
21	List of equipment pertaining to the scope of recognition with laboratory <i>(Attach a list as Annexure VIII)</i>	
21	List of Standard/ Certified reference materials (SRM/CRM) Microbial cultures available for use: <i>(Attach a list as Annexure IX)</i>	
22	Proficiency Testing: Participation in International and National PT programs: <i>(Attach details as per format at Annexure 10)</i>	
23	Attach the quote for the analytical fee as Annexure V.	
24	Undertaking as per Annexure III is submitted	YES/NO
25	Any complaints/disputes from Government in the last three years pertaining to laboratory testing activities <i>(if so, please attach details as appendix-I)</i> .	

G. Declaration by the Laboratory:

We declare that

- a. We have read and understood the requirements, terms and conditions of the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme of the Spices Board and are willing to abide by them
- b. We agree to comply fully with ISO/IEC 17025:2017 for the recognition of testing laboratory
- c. We agree to comply with recognition procedures of the scheme and pay all expenses related with inspection, verification, surveillance, and re-inspection visits irrespective of the outcome.
- d. We agree to cooperate with the inspection team appointed by the Spices Board for the examination of all relevant documents by them and their visits to those parts of the laboratory that are part of the scope of recognition.

- e. We satisfy all national, regional, and local regulatory requirements for operating a laboratory.
- f. In case of breach in any of the terms and conditions of the Laboratory recognition scheme of the Spices Board, the decision to invoke action/ Bank guarantee/ payment made, by the Spices Board is final and binding on us.
- g. We shall abide by the terms and conditions laid down by the Spices Board from time to time regarding the laboratory for recognition.
- h. All information provided in this application is true to the best of our knowledge and belief.

Date:

Signature of Authorized Signatory

Place:

Name:

Designation:

Stamp:

Annexure III

Undertaking by the laboratory for empanelment

We,

M/s. _____

located

at

_____ applying for empanelment

under Laboratory Empanelment scheme of the Spices Board undertake that:

1. Group/Parameter(s) for which the application has been made for recognition under Laboratory Empanelment Scheme (LES) of the Spices Board have valid accreditation under ISO/IEC 17025:2017 and maintain the accreditation status for the recognition period. .
2. Complete testing facilities required as per the accredited methods for the parameter for which the application has been made for recognition under the Laboratory Empanelment Scheme (LES) of the Spices Board are available with our laboratory.
3. The testing facilities available for the parameter for which the application has been made are as per the range and accuracy mentioned in the ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation.
4. The laboratory will ensure that the assessment and accreditation of the parameters recognized under the Spices Board LES is completed within six months from the date of provisional recognition.
5. Neither we are an in-house laboratory for the food industry nor our management is involved in any food business.
6. We shall abide by the terms and conditions laid down by the Spices Board from time to time regarding the laboratory for recognition.

Date:

Place:

Signature

(Owner/ Partner/ Director of the laboratory)

Name:

Designation

Seal

Annexure IV
Schedule of Fees for Laboratory Empanelment Scheme

Sl. No.	Item	Fees/Charges (Rs.)
1	Application Fee & Processing fee (<i>To be paid on-line through the link, proof of which shall be attached along with the application and tender documents</i>) ¹	15,000/- + GST as applicable
2	Empanelment Fee for 2 years ²	50,000/- + GST as applicable
3	Processing fee for extension of scope per parameter	5,000/- + GST as applicable
4	Processing Fee for reinstating the empanelment after suspension/cancellation ³	10,000/- + GST as applicable
5	Expenses for onsite verification for reinstating the empanelment status/extension of scope (if required)	10,000/- per Man day 5 + GST as applicable
6	Onsite assessment charges ⁴	As per NABL

Note:

¹ Applications without application and processing fees will summarily be rejected.

² Empanelment fee shall be payable within 15 days from the date of receipt of communication of recognition from the Spices Board prior to entering into the MOU.

³ To be paid along with the application/request for reinstating of recognition.

⁴ To be paid directly to the NABL.

ANNEXURE V**Quotation for analytical charges for the empanelment under Spices Board****Name and Address of the Laboratory :**

The offer is valid till the end of the two years tenure of the contract of empanelment

SI No	Parameter	Analytical Charges ¹
1.	Aflatoxins B1, B2, G1 & G2 and total aflatoxins	
2.	Sudan Dyes I, II, III & IV	
3.	Ethylene Oxide	
4.	Heavy metals ²	
5.	<i>Salmonella</i>	
	Pesticide Residues ³	
6.	Pesticide Residues upto 5 compounds	
7.	Pesticide Residues 6-10 compounds	
8.	Pesticide Residues 11-50 compounds	
9.	Pesticide Residues 51-100 compounds	
10.	Pesticide Residues 101-200 compounds	
11.	Pesticide Residues 201-300 compounds	
12.	Pesticide Residues 301-500 compounds	
13.	Pesticide Residues more than 501 compounds	

¹ Applicable taxes etc.

² Analytical charge for per metal is required.

³ Compound with its metabolites will be counted as a single compound

Date:

Place:

Signature

(Director/Accounts Officer/the person authorized to provide price Quotations)

Name:

Designation

Seal:

ANNEXURE VI
Details of Authorized Signatories

S. No.	Laboratory/ Department/ Section	Name & Designation of Signatory	Qualification with Specialization	Experience in years related to present work	Relevant Training	Authorized for which specific area of testing	Specimen Signature

ANNEXURE VII
Details of test facilities for the parameter to be recognized

S. No	Group	Name of parameter	Test Method	Validity of ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Accreditation*	Page No & Sl. No. in the accredited scope	Range of testing / LOQ	Major Instrument Involved
1	I	Aflatoxins					
2		Sudan 1,2,3 & 4					
3	II	Ethylene oxide					
4		GC Pesticides#					
5		LC Pesticides#					
6		ICP-MS Pesticides#					
7	III	Heavy metals Pb, Cu, As, Hg, Al, etc.					
8	IV	<i>Salmonella</i>					

* The accreditation should be for the category for Spice and Spice products as per the NABL/FSSAI classification. Appropriate validation in individual spice matrices is also to be ensured as per the requirements of importing countries if any.

Names of individual pesticides are not required in this stage. Total numbers are to be mentioned. If a pesticide is analyzed using more than one method, one most appropriate method is to be selected. The LAB will be contacted for the detailed list of compounds on need basis.

ANNEXURE VIII
Details of Equipment

S. No.	Name of equipment	Make / Model / year of make	Receipt date & date placed in service	Range and accuracy	Purpose / scope of the equipment	Maintenance (In house/ outside)	Date of last calibration	Calibration due on	Calibrated by

ANNEXURE IX
Details of Reference Material / Culture

S. No.	Name of reference material/ strain/ culture	Source	Date of expiry / validity	Traceability

ANNEXURE X

**Details of Participation in Inter-Laboratory Comparison (ILC)
Proficiency Testing (PT) Programmes**

S. No.	Product/ Material	Details of Test(s)	Date of Testing	Nodal Laboratory	Performance in terms of Z score	Corrective action taken (If any)

Annexure XI
Check List

S.No	Name of the Document	Enclosed <input type="checkbox"/>
1	Application form in prescribed format duly filled along with recommended Annexures (II to III, V to XI), duly filled, signed and sealed by the competent authority legally responsible	
2	Proof of application fee & processing fee remittance	
3	Certificate of Accreditation as per the latest version of ISO/IEC 17025:2017	
4	Document towards the legal identity of the laboratory	
5	Document authenticating the premise of the laboratory	
6	Layout of the laboratory	
7	Declaration about its status as a non-in-house laboratory	
8	Undertaking by the laboratory with regard to maintenance of impartiality as per clause 4.1.6	
9	Self-attested copy of Tax Registration (GST) or Self-declaration for not having GST	
10	Self attested copy of PAN Card of firm/owner	
11	List of Annexures	

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

1. **Accreditation** : Authoritative body (NABL) gives formal empanelment of technical competence for specific tests/measurements, based on third-party assessment based on ISO/IEC 17025:2017 standard.(Current valid)
2. **Corrective actions**: Action taken to eliminate the causes of non-conformities or other undesirable situations, so as to prevent recurrence.
3. **Competent laboratory**: Laboratory with sufficient equipment, and personnel with expertise to carry out the specific tests in Spices according to the approved methods as per the Scope of Testing recommended by NABL (ISO/IEC 17025:2017). It shall participate in and successfully complete in PT/other inter-laboratory quality control schemes,pertaining to those tests in specific spices,as approved by NABL.
4. **Confidentiality**: The lab shall be responsible through legally enforceable commitments for the management of all information obtained during the performance of lab activities.
5. **Impartiality**: Lab results cannot be influenced, or have the appearance of being influenced by any relationships the laboratory or the people involved in laboratory activities may have with the customer. Laboratory activities 256678/2021/QUALITY LAB also cannot be influenced by any undue pressure being put on the people involved in conducting those laboratory activities.
6. **ISO/IEC 17025:2017** : (latest implemented/concurrent version) The ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Certification is an accreditation, that is granted to the laboratory by an ILAC/APLAC approved accreditation body. This ISO/IEC 17025:2017 certification is given in India by MRA like NABL.
7. **LAB**: The laboratory that applies for the recognition or is recognized under the scheme.
8. **Laboratory Empanelment Scheme (LES)**: A formal empanelment given to selected ISO/IEC 17025:2017 Accredited spices testing laboratories in India, for the required parameters specified by the Spices Board. The scheme does not recognize any firm or laboratories that are directly or indirectly associated with any type of trade in spices & herbal business.
9. **Non-conformity (NC)**: Is any failure to meet a requirement as specified in the Standard/Document/Scheme.
10. **QEL**: Spices Board Quality Evaluation Laboratories
11. **Quality control programs**: All those processes and procedures designed to ensure that the results of laboratory analysis are consistent, comparable, accurate, and within specified limits of precision.
12. **Reference material**: Material that is “sufficiently homogeneous and stable with respect to one or more specified properties, which has been established to be fit for its intended use in a measurement process”.
13. **Scope of empanelment**: Is the official and detailed statement of activities for which the laboratory is accredited as per ISO/IEC 17025:2017. Basically, it is an official list of tests that the laboratory is accredited to perform on a particular spice with the approved method and stated accuracy with other specific requirements.
14. **Traceability**: Property of a measurement result whereby the result can be related to a reference through a documented unbroken chain of calibrations, each contributing to the measurement uncertainty.”
