

National Laboratory Association – South Africa NPC

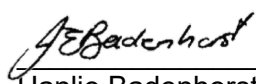
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Proficiency Testing Scheme Pesticide Formulations Brochure 2026

Approved by:


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Background

The Pesticide Formulation Proficiency Testing Scheme (PTS) has been running under the auspices of the National Laboratory Association – South Africa (NLA – SA) since February 2007.

The NLA – SA is a representative body that evolved from the previous National Laboratory Accreditation service. Following the assumption of overall responsibility for accreditation (including laboratory accreditation) by the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) during 1998, it was decided that a new independent body should be created. This body NLA – SA, now looks after the interests of the large number of laboratories in South Africa. The acronym, NLA – SA, which was linked to the previous National Laboratory Accreditation service was retained, both for the purpose of continuity and because it was well-recognised and respected. During 2019/20 the NLA – SA, a Not-for-Profit organisation, restructured Board representation and formed a board committee which is now named the 'Council'. This was done to provide a wider input into its strategic intent. The formation of the Council has meant that interests from the government Technical Infrastructure organisations are accommodated; this includes NMISA, SANAS, SABS – Standards and the NRCS, as well as various other interests without having to be co-opted on to the board which was previously required. The NLA – SA's focus is primarily on the representation of the activities, interests and opinions of all members' laboratories. Membership of NLA – SA is voluntary and open to all companies that have laboratories.

In 2015 the NLA – SA was accredited as a proficiency testing provider (PTP) according to ISO/IEC 17043:2010 and in 2024 successfully converted to ISO/IEC 17043: 2023. The Pesticide Formulation PTS is included under the scope of accreditation.

What is Proficiency Testing?

- Proficiency testing is a powerful quality assurance tool for analytical measurement laboratories.
- Samples are distributed to laboratories for testing, the results evaluated, and a report generated.
- Laboratories should use their routine, validated test methods.
- Proficiency testing should be used as an educational tool to identify and address measurement problems.

Benefits of Proficiency Testing

- Provides a regular independent check on the quality of analytical measurements.
- Enables participants to compare their performance with peer laboratories.
- Facilitates the demonstration of competence to accreditation bodies, regulators and customers.
- Enables monitoring of trends, over time, in the quality of measurements.
- Assists in the evaluation of methods and instrumentation.
- Helps educate laboratory staff.

Why participate in Proficiency Testing?

Many international and national standards emphasise the importance of maintaining environmental quality. The science of pesticide formulations forms an integral part of this responsibility. To ensure a safe environment, analytical results are frequently used as a measuring tool and have to be accurate and reliable. Participation in a PTS provides the opportunity to measure the quality of analysis. It also helps laboratories to meet the requirements of accreditation standards and assists laboratories to optimise their quality control and analytical performance for the benefit of their customers. It provides independent evidence of laboratory performance for both laboratory management and customers.

Scope

The scheme consists of three rounds this year. Each laboratory will receive a formulation as well as the relevant technical standard. The following tests are included for this year:

Tests offered	Round 1 Metaldehyde RB	Round 2 Glyphosate SL	Round 3 Metribuzin SC
Sample appearance	Yes	Yes	Yes
Active ingredient	Yes	Yes	Yes
Density	No	Yes	Yes
Persistent foam	No	Yes	Yes
pH (1% solution in distilled water)	No	Yes	Yes
Suspensibility	No	No	Yes

Laboratories are afforded the opportunity to submit up to three sets of results from the samples that they receive, at no additional cost. Additional samples may be purchased if more sample is needed to enable more personnel to participate. This needs to be arranged when participants register. The provider may not be able to accommodate late registrations.

Programme

The programme for the 2026 PTS and the costs involved are as follows:

	Description	Return date for results in 2026	#Total cost for NLA members	#Total costs for non-NLA members
Round 1	Metaldehyde RB	11 August	R 9500 excluding VAT	R 11390 excluding VAT
Round 2	Glyphosate SL	14 September		
Round 3	Metribuzin SC	19 October		

- Courier costs for participants from South Africa are included in the price. Courier costs for other countries are not included in the cost and will be additional.

Distribution of samples

The samples for the three rounds will be shipped as a single consignment. It will be separately packed and clearly marked to avoid confusion. The vial with the technical standard will be attached to the lid of the bottle containing the sample. The package will reach you via a courier service. A protocol for each round will be e-mailed 4 weeks prior to the closing date of the round. Participants may select to arrange collection of their samples using their own courier company. This needs to be communicated to the provider when registering to participate.

Important: Participants must ensure that the courier is a qualified and certified logistics agent that meets all the requirements for shipping dangerous goods. The Pesticide Formulation PT samples are classified as dangerous goods.

Submission of results

Results must be submitted online. Participants access a web-based platform using their unique login details which consists of the laboratory identification code (Lab ID), username and password. Details regarding the results submission process will be communicated with each PTS round.

No late submissions will be accepted, unless the laboratory experienced problems and communicated that timeously to the scheme coordinator.

Evaluation of results

After the return date for results, the scheme coordinator will email a final reminder to laboratories who did not submit results. Results not submitted within a week of the final reminder will forfeit the opportunity to be evaluated for that specific round.

Reporting of results

A final report will be issued 3 to 4 weeks after the return date for results. This report contains a compilation of the submitted results, identified only with the allocated Lab ID codes to maintain laboratory confidentiality, an evaluation of performance of each participant and comments on the results. The reports will be e-mailed to the participants.

Recognition for participation

Certificates of participation will be issued annually to indicate participation in the scheme.

Confidentiality

Participating laboratories will be identified by a unique Lab ID code to ensure confidentiality. Results may be presented on relevant occasions but not to harm any individual or to identify a laboratory.

How to join the PTS

Laboratories wishing to join the scheme should complete the PT Scheme Participation Application Form for Testing (NLA-PT-F-01-14) as well as the Declaration Form (NLA-PT-F-08-03). Note that the persons indicated as the contact and the alternate will receive all communications, including those concerning sample delivery, and the reports.

The completed forms should be sent by e-mail (esnap@nla.org.za) to the scheme coordinator, Ms Esna Portwig.

Please return the completed forms on or before **8 May 2026** and you will be invoiced. Terms of payment are strictly 30 days unless arrangements have been made with the NLA – SA finance section.

Customer participation

The continuation of the PTS relies on the commitment of analytical laboratories involved in Pesticide Formulation analysis. Comments and suggestions for changes are always welcome from customers on all aspects of the scheme.

Events Calendar 2026

Event	Date	Responsibility
Mail PTS brochure and forms for participation in 2026	23 April	NLA – SA
Returning of completed registration forms	08 May	Lab managers
Despatching samples for rounds 1, 2 and 3	29 June	NLA – SA
Return results for Round 1	11 August	Participants
Report back to participating labs Round 1	31 August	NLA – SA
Return results for Round 2	14 September	Participants
Report back to participating labs Round 2	05 October	NLA – SA
Return results for Round 3	19 October	Participants
Report back to participating labs Round 3	9 November	NLA – SA

Please incorporate these dates into your annual planning to ensure a successful programme. If any of these dates have to be changed due to unforeseen circumstances, you will be notified in advance.