



# VGL DIMENSIONS

QUALITY | COMPLIANCE | RELIABLE



## VGL DIMENSIONS (PTY) LTD OBTAINED INTERNATIONAL ISO/IEC 17025:2017 ACCREDITATION FOR SAMPLING OF FOOD, FEED, CARCASSES, SWABS AND WATER.

The process for obtaining accurate, reliable and consistent laboratory results requires two distinctive steps:



### SAMPLING

Taking the sample, transport and submission to laboratory



### TESTING

Receiving of samples, testing and reporting of results

If the sample was compromised in any way during the sampling step, the results obtained from the testing laboratory can be seen as questionable and unreliable.

There are various factors that may affect final laboratory results during the sampling process such as aseptic techniques, sample size, sample packaging, sampling equipment, temperature during transportation, time interval between sampling and testing, competency of samplers, etc.

ISO/IEC 17025:2017 – General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories now (since December 2017) includes the definition of a “laboratory” as “a body that performs one or more of the following activities: testing; calibration and sampling, associated with subsequent testing or calibration.”

In other words, sampling activities associated with subsequent testing, also falls under the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2017, which is a global standard. This standard specifies the requirements for the competence, impartiality and consistent operation of laboratories (including sampling activities).

Accreditation of laboratories according to ISO/IEC 17025:2017 confirms the competence of laboratories to perform the specific laboratory activity. Therefore, if sampling activities does not appear on the schedule / scope of accreditation of the testing laboratory, it suggests that sampling is not part of the scope as assessed by the accreditation body, therefore competency was not verified.



Reliability and accuracy of sampling is one of the biggest challenges experienced by food and related industries and, therefore, VGL Dimensions embarked on the opportunity to obtain ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation for Sampling, as a stand-alone activity. The only accreditation body that could provide this scope of accreditation is ANSI National accreditation board (ANAB).

**In June 2020, VGL Dimensions (Pty) Ltd successfully obtained ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accreditation in the field of Sampling, for the following scope:**



TECHNOLOGY, SPECIFICATION, STANDARD, METHOD OR TECHNIQUE	ITEM SAMPLED
<b>QM No. 7.2/SM-01</b> Sampling of Food and Feed <i>(based on ISO 17728)</i>	Poultry and Poultry Products, Meat and Meat Products, Fish and Fish Products, Spices and Herbs, Vegetables and Fruits, Eggs, Nuts, Ready-To-Eat Meals, Animal Feed Stuffs.
<b>QM No. 7.2/SM-02</b> Sampling of Water <i>(based on ISO 5667 and ISO 19458)</i>	Potable, Treatment Works and Storage Tanks, Main Distribution, Consumer Taps, Bottled, Borehole and Wastewater.
<b>QM No. 7.2/SM-03</b> Sampling of Surfaces <i>(based on ISO 18593)</i>	Surface Swabs, Hand Swabs, Equipment Swabs, Contact Paddles, Rodac Plates.
<b>QM No. 7.2/SM-04</b> Sampling of Carcasses <i>(based on ISO 17604)</i>	Carcass Excision, Carcass Swabs, Carcass rinsing.
<b>QM No. 7.2/SM-05</b> Sampling of Milk and Milk Products <i>(based on ISO 707)</i>	Raw and heat-treated milk, whole, partly skimmed and skimmed milk, flavored milk, cream, fermented milk, buttermilk, liquid whey and similar products. Evaporated milk, sweetened condensed milk and milk concentrate. Semi-solid and solid milk products. Edible ices, semi-processed ices and other frozen milk products. Dried milk and dried milk products. Butter and related products. Cheese.

**Accreditation certificate no: AS-2880**

VGL Dimensions (Pty) Ltd is an ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accredited sampling organisation and the first of its kind in the services of Sampling. It was established to provide an impartial, reliable service to get the best out of the sample taken, also to benefit our customers compliance to various requirements and ensure public safety as a result of independently taken samples.

Some of the benefits of making us of the VGL Dimensions ISO/IEC 17025:2017 accredited sampling services, include:

## 01. IMPARTIALITY

- All sampling activities are done completely independent.
- No affiliation with the customer where sampling is executed or the testing laboratory, ensures all activities to be executed in an impartial manner.



## 02. PERSONNEL COMPETENCY

- Stringent training program for all samplers according to approved procedures.
- Demonstrable knowledge about the items to be sampled and the processes or systems.
- Competency assessment ensures that only trained, skilled and authorized staff can perform sampling. To present their competence, the sampler has to successfully execute the technical sampling procedures. The personnel must prove they know how to follow procedures and handle any problems that may arise during the activities.
- Demonstration of competence provides assurance that the sampling activity will be valid. If all the processes of sampling are managed and validated, then the reputation of the sampling laboratory will be sustainable.
- Continuous competency assessment of all samplers through witnessing of activities to ensure competence is maintained.

## 03. ENVIRONMENTAL CONTROL

- Environmental conditions from sampling site, through transportation and delivery at the laboratory is monitored and recorded to ensure no adverse influences on the sample.
- Sampling is conducted in a well-defined area in order to avoid difficulties in the executing of procedures, reduce the risk of contamination and cross contamination, enable the proper execution of sampling methods and include all necessary safety and health precautions to the sampler and environment.



## 04. EQUIPMENT CONTROL

- Equipment are controlled through performing external accredited calibrations and internal intermediate checks (verifications) to ensure that all equipment operate optimally at all times.
- Equipment are therefore, traceable to international SI units of measurement to ensure metrological traceability is maintained.
- All equipment and auxiliary materials are maintained in a clean and operational conditions. This is verified before and after each use.
- Equipment are handled only by authorised personnel, who have been deemed competent to handle such equipment.

## 05. USE OF SAMPLING CONSUMABLES/MATERIAL

- Only approved sampling material and consumables are used and procured through approved suppliers with the applicable certifications in place.
- The laboratory has a program that verifies the consumables and materials used in sampling to ensure the intrinsic flora of the sample is not compromised.

## 06. SAMPLING METHOD COMPETENCE

- Sampling methods meets international scientifically recognized principles and procedures.
- Laboratory sampling methods are developed and validated according to scientifically recognized principles.
- The use of recognized international sampling methods will ensure a standardized administrative and technical approach and will facilitate the interpretation of results of sampling.
- Each sampler is trained and declared competent per sampling method. Includes rigorous training and witnessing between the trainer and trainee. Customer specific sampling is conducted to ensure different types of products are included within the scope of sampling.
- Sampling requires clearly recorded methods that are matched to the purpose of the further tests or inspections.
- Samples are selected in such a way as to be representative of the entire sample available. They provide the most valid or credible results because they reflect the characteristics of the entire sample from which they are selected.

## 07. TRACEABILITY OF SAMPLING ACTIVITIES

- At all times, managers and samplers can identify all prepared samples waiting to be transported, received or processed;
- Full traceability on each sampling activity, as described the VGL Dimensions quality management system, can be made available for audit or verification purposes.



## 08. REPORTING OF SAMPLING ACTIVITIES

- For each sampling activity undertaken, a Certificate of Sampling is generated.
- The certificate includes, as a minimum: Unique certificate number, report date, customer information, sampling activity information (sampler name, plan, location, method, equipment used, sampling date, start time and end time), testing laboratory information (laboratory name, accreditation no, contact person, submission date and time, condition of sample upon submission, samples received by, etc), sample information (unique number, type, description, sampling temperature, temperature upon submission at lab, etc), sample photos and supplementary aspects of sampling (environmental conditions during sampling, information to evaluate measurement uncertainty for subsequent testing, etc).
- Each Certificate of Sampling is evaluated by an approved Technical signatory for accuracy and reliability of sampling activity outcome.

## 09. CONTROL OF NONCONFORMING WORK

- Implementation of the requirements as set out in the quality management system continuously evaluated and controlled.
- Any deviations from the quality management system will be evaluated to determine the impact on the sampling activity and actions implemented accordingly.

## 10. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

- When nonconforming work is identified, the sampling organisation should take action to control and correct it, conduct root-cause analysis, implement action, review the effectiveness of the action taken, conduct risk assessment and implement the necessary changes.



## 11. CONTINUOUS RISKS ASSESSMENTS

- One of the requirements of ISO/IEC 17025:2017 is to conduct continuous risk assessments on all activities associated with sampling undertaken.
- VGL Dimensions performs various risks assessments throughout the system on a continuous basis in order to prevent, or reduce, undesired impacts and potential failures in the sampling activities performed and within the quality management system. This also ensures continuous improvement.

## 12. INTERNAL AUDITS

- It is required that the sampling organisation conduct internal audits at planned intervals to provide information on whether the management system conforms to the sampling organisation own requirements and activities and whether it conforms to ISO/IEC 17025:2017, accreditation, regulatory and customer requirements.

*“The test result is no better than the sample that it is based upon”*



**FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ON ACCREDITED SAMPLING ACTIVITIES, CONTACT:**

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