



**Specific Accreditation Guidance
Infrastructure and Asset Integrity**

NDT facilities engaging external resources

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1. Accreditation coverage provided from another site within an organisation

In some cases the accreditation scope at a site may not cover all the required testing for a particular project and it is becoming more common for NDT organisations to send an NDT operator and equipment (typically specialized equipment) from one of its facilities holding accreditation for such work to assist another of its facilities to perform testing on an individual project.

In general, technical control over testing (including reporting aspects) is to be provided by the site holding accreditation and so, for the above situation, the technical control of the externally supplied testing is provided by a different base facility than the technical control for the everyday testing on the project. In practical terms this means that the base site with technical control over the externally supplied testing has effectively established a supplementary work site to service the testing needs of their intrastate/interstate colleagues (i.e. their 'client'). The supplementary worksite can be considered as simply another worksite under NATA's NDT Work Site policy (*NDT Appendix G NDT Work Sites*).

In terms of supplying test results to the client, the base site for the externally supplied testing can directly issue the report covering this testing only or, if the report needs to capture all testing carried out, the other facility can issue the full report provided it contains a note identifying the accredited site which was responsible for the externally supplied testing. In the latter case, the externally supplied testing data does need to be reviewed by an authorised person and there needs to be a mechanism for ensuring that this occurs.

2. Engaging services that are external to the organisation

Subcontracting, to an external organisation, of the delivery of testing is covered by ISO/IEC 17025, however, the situation can become a little less clear where accredited NDT facilities are supplementing internal resources with external resources. Conflicts can arise in regard to allocation of responsibility and two particular instances that occur relatively frequently in NDT are considered below.

2.1 Conflicts in relation to responsibilities can arise in cases where an accredited NDT facility accepts a contract to provide services that form part of the testing process but where the contracting organisation seeks to contractually retain control over aspects of the testing. This is not acceptable if the work falls within the scope of NATA accreditation for the subcontracted facility. However, with the agreement of the subcontracted facility, such situations need not be intractable.

For example, the subcontracted facility must perform testing in accordance with its own systems and procedures but, if the contracting organisation has specified different processes, the subcontracted facility is entitled to review these and, if appropriate, reference these within its own management system. Similarly, the subcontracted facility must have procedures for verifying the performance of any equipment or consumables but, if these are to be supplied by the contracting organisation, the subcontracted facility is entitled to use them provided it can demonstrate that all appropriate requirements are met.

In cases where the contracting organisation seeks to provide their own report covering the testing, such reports may include test results obtained from the subcontracted facility but

must make clear that the subcontracted facility was responsible for generating the test results. Note that NATA endorsement can only be applied in respect of individual test results by the same organisation that carried out the testing.

The overarching principle here is that the testing can only be considered to have been performed within the accreditation criteria if the facility carrying out the testing retains direct responsibility over all aspects of the testing. This applies even where there is a legal relationship between the contracting and subcontracted entities, such as might apply for a joint venture arrangement, which is a reasonably common situation for construction projects involving NDT.

2.2 Conflicts in regard to responsibilities can also arise in cases where external personnel are engaged (either directly or supplied through another company) to carry out testing.

An accredited NDT facility engaging external personnel must ensure that all of the following requirements are met:

- a. There must be a current contract between the facility and contracted personnel (or their employer as the case may be) and this must clearly define the role, responsibilities and authorities of the consultant/contractor when carrying out work for the NDT facility;
- b. The consultant/contractor must be subject to the NDT facility's internal system for authorisation, as applicable, to conduct testing without supervision and/or to release test results to clients;
- c. The competence of the consultant/contractor must be evaluated and authorised in accordance with the NDT facility's system for competency authorisation;
- d. The NDT facility retains responsibility for ensuring that all aspects of NATA criteria are met in respect of the contracted personnel, including maintaining currency of NDT qualifications and visual acuity as well as ensuring that periodic competency assessment and field technical control are carried out as required;
- e. The consultant/contractor must have demonstrated familiarity with all relevant aspects of the NDT facility's management system;
- f. The consultant/contractor must undertake to hold confidential the information relating to the NDT facility's clients;
- g. The authority of the consultant/contractor must be adequate to effectively carry out their responsibilities, including the authority to reject results which he/she considers to be inadequate if the role includes the review of results of testing performed by other personnel.

AMENDMENT TABLE

The table below provides a summary of changes made to the document with this issue.

Section	Amendment
New Document	This document represents a direct adoption of the former Information Paper 6. The technical content is unchanged.