

## Two metals-related labs get sought-after accreditation

A great deal of hard work and attention to detail paid off for the metals and metals processes team at the CSIR when its SANS 17025:2005 accreditation was reaffirmed during November. This certification is the South African National Standard (SANS) for general requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories. It is also identical to the ISO/IEC 17025:2005 accreditation standard, which is used mainly in Europe.

The SANS 17025:2005 accreditation is specifically aimed at the high-temperature materials laboratory and the mechanical testing laboratory, both of which are based at the CSIR. The high-temperature materials laboratory is the only of its kind in South Africa, while the mechanical testing laboratory is one of only a few in the country.

The three assessors from SANS visited the two laboratories on 19 November to assess their on-going compliance to the set standards.

The resulting outcome is a recommendation to the South African National Accreditation System (SANAS) for continued accreditation of the laboratories, provided that six non-conformances are resolved within December still.

According to Dr Willie du Preez, team manager, this certification and accreditation is an important tool in convincing the clients that make use of these laboratories that they will receive the international standard of service that they expect.

"The SANS 17025:2005 accreditation specifically requires standardised laboratory procedures to be developed for the analytical processes that need to be executed to achieve repeatable results. It can be compared with following an intricate cake recipe so that the cake will taste the same no matter who the baker is, as long as the recipe was followed to the letter," explains Du Preez.

He continues: "This means that all the equipment used to test the strength, density, conductivity and other qualities of metals and refractories are calibrated according to national and international standard. It also means that everyone working in these labs has been individually assessed and declared competent to adhere to the procedures and that we have, among others, the correct safety measures in place."

These two laboratories boast clients such as mining giant BHP Billiton and French aircraft engine manufacturer Snecma. The SANS 17025:2005 accreditation will be in effect for up to 12 months before another assessment will be required.

Enquiries: [CSIR Communication](#)



The high-temperature materials laboratory, the only of its kind in South Africa, is one of two CSIR laboratories that successfully reaffirmed their SANS 17025:2005 accreditation