

Guidelines for Outsourcing of Soil Samples Analysis

Under Soil Health Card (SHC) Scheme

Soil analysis of all the 12 parameters (under SHC scheme) is a prerequisite to optimize fertilizer use as also to enhance fertilizer use efficiencies, which in turn will increase the income of the farmers by reducing fertilizers consumption. A large no. of soil samples need to be analyzed with utmost accuracy and precision for an error free soil testing. The soil test results by unrelated, non-technical agencies without having any scientific competence, knowhow and capabilities will definitely be erroneous, inaccurate, fallacious and certainly detrimental in the interest of the farmers, thus defeating the very purpose of SHC scheme. To maintain the sanctity of the soil analysis and to adhere to the time schedule of soil testing, by well experienced, technically competent expert agencies in Soil Analysis some states have desired to outsource the soil analysis as per the provisions laid down in the SHC scheme. States are at liberty to outsource to more than one agencies depending upon the urgency and quantum of soil analysis work.

For this purpose, the following guidelines shall be followed while selecting suitable vendors / companies / agencies / firms for outsourcing soil samples analysis and printing of Soil Health Cards.

A) Accreditation /registration/qualification requirements:

- Companies / agencies selected must be registered under the Companies Act/Indian Partnership Act/Central/State Act.
- While outsourcing as far as possible agencies having National Accreditation Board for testing & calibration Laboratories (NABL) accredited soil testing labs are to be engaged in case Soil Samples are to be analyzed out of state government Soil Testing Labs.
- The official of the outsource agency must have a minimum of 5 years experience for testing of soil parameters required in SHC.

- Laboratory / Technical assistants should possess at least BSC (Agri.) / (Science with Chemistry) with adequate knowledge of computer.
- Laboratory attendants should be at least matric pass.

B) Documentation requirements:

- Full bio-data (including qualification and experience) of all the staff to be engaged for the soil analysis job.
- Full track record of the agencies in respect of the competence and capabilities of the firm for soil testing.
- An undertaking/ certificate towards the full functioning, performance & capacity of each equipments / machines to be used for soil analysis.
- Detailed specifications of the aforementioned equipments / machines vis-a-vis parameters to be analyzed along with the analyzing capacity of each equipments / machines for each of the 12 parameters so as to assess the sensitivity, accuracy & capacity of the machines for ensuring Precision, reliability and timely project execution of the soil test.
- Self attested photo copies of the GST registration certificate and PAN Card along with the tender.
- Undertaking towards **no** Sub-letting / Sub-contracting of soil testing jobs in any form will not be allowed.

C) Contractual requirements:

- States are at liberty to outsource the entire job or part of it (ie collection of soil samples, soil testing, data entry on the SHC portal, printing of soil health cards and distribution of cards) as per their requirement and urgency.
- The agencies shall have to hand over the entire set of soil test data to the department before the expiry of the contract and before the final payment is released.

- At least 1% soil samples would be referred to the standard referral laboratories for cross checking so as to ensure the accuracy and reproducibility of the soil test results.

D) **Criteria for disqualification:**

- Agencies facing any insolvency proceedings in the court of law.
- Agencies found fudging / distorting / manipulating and wrong doing in the test results would be treated as breach of contract there by attracting immediate termination of contract besides black-listing.
- Agencies found sharing, publishing, disclosing or divulging the soil test data generated through the contract to any unauthorized person. Any violation will attract provision of Indian Office Secret Act-1923.

E) **Dispute resolution:** Disputes if any would be resolved by the Agriculture Production Commissioner or Principal Secretary Agriculture or Director of Agriculture (as the case may be) and his decision would be binding on the agencies.
