



Standards Council of Canada
Conseil canadien des normes

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Canada to Help Bring Clean Drinking Water to Latin America and the Caribbean

OTTAWA – Two Canadian organizations will be helping countries in Latin America and the Caribbean to provide clean, safe drinking water for their people. The Standards Council of Canada (SCC) and the Canadian Association for Environmental Analytical Laboratories (CAEAL) have agreed to work with the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) to provide accreditation services to water testing laboratories, in order to ensure the provision of reliable, accurate testing of drinking water.

This voluntary program will be similar to SCC and CAEAL's Canadian laboratory accreditation program, which is based on ISO/IEC 17025, the international standard for technical competence and quality in all areas of testing and calibration. Under the agreement:

- PAHO will apply the program through their Lima, Peru, laboratory, *Centro Panamericano de Ingeniería Sanitaria y Ciencias del Ambiente* (CEPIS), promote it throughout the region, and work with CAEAL to provide site assessment and proficiency testing;
- CAEAL will conduct the site assessments and operate the proficiency testing program in conjunction with CEPIS; and
- SCC will accredit the laboratories, based on CAEAL's recommendations.

“This partnership is further proof of Canada's commitment to leadership in international standardization,” said Peter Clark, executive director of the Standards Council. “Canada's National Standards System serves as a example of an effective standards and conformity assessment network of partners dedicated to the promotion of standardization domestically and abroad.”

“Our program is rigorous and has received international recognition, yet it is inexpensive because it is based on volunteers,” said Dr. Rick Wilson, executive director of CAEAL.

Dr. Peter Toft, Manager, Special Projects for PAHO's Health and Environment Program, noted, “Many countries in the Latin America and Caribbean Region lack a comprehensive program for accrediting drinking water labs. We are very pleased that Canada is willing to help.”

Accreditation is the formal recognition of an organization's competence to carry out certain functions. By verifying that laboratories have the appropriate people, equipment and skills, the accreditation program will help to ensure the reliability of their results.

200-270, rue Albert St.
Ottawa, ON (Canada)
K1P 6N7
Tel.: +1 613 238-3222
Fax: +1 613 589-7908
E-mail/Courriel
info@scs.ca
Internet:
http://www.scc.ca

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The Pan American Health Organization is an international public health agency. It serves as the Regional Office for the Americas of the World Health Organization (WHO), and as the health organization of the Inter-American System. PAHO's mission is to strengthen national and local health systems and improve the health of the peoples of the Americas, in collaboration with ministries of health, other government and international agencies, non-governmental organizations, universities, social security agencies, community groups, and many others.

The Standards Council of Canada is the federal Crown corporation that oversees the National Standards System. Its Program for Accreditation of Laboratories — Canada (PALCAN) has accredited over 250 laboratories in a variety of general testing and specialty areas. PALCAN and its partners (including CAEAL) have jointly obtained international recognition from the Asia Pacific Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (APLAC) and the International Laboratory Accreditation Cooperation (ILAC).

The Canadian Association for Environmental Analytical Laboratories is a not-for-profit association of public and private sector laboratories. A principal objective of the association is to promote and maintain a high level of assurance in analytical test data. To this end, CAEAL manages proficiency testing and site assessment programs that are tailored to meet the specific needs of environmental testing laboratories.

SCC Contact:

Dawn Pickering
Marketing Communications Officer
+1 613 238 3222 ext. 477
E-mail: dpickering@scc.ca
Internet: www.scc.ca

PAHO Contact:

Dr. Peter Toft
Manager, Special Projects
+ 1 202 974 3313
E-mail: toftpete@paho.org
Internet: www.paho.org