

BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS
(CENTRAL MARKS DEPARTMENT - I)

Our Ref: CMD-I/2:12:8

30 April 2021

Subject: Guidelines for utilisation of Cluster Based Test Facility (CBTF) by Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) under conformity assessment Scheme – I of Schedule – II of BIS (Conformity Assessment) Regulations, 2018

This document stipulates the guidelines for utilisation of Common Test Facilities (like CBTF) for the purpose of in-house testing by the MSME manufacturers. These are to be read in conjunction with the BIS Act, 2016 and the Rules, Regulations framed thereunder. In particular, the provisions for utilisation of sub-contracting of test facilities are addressed in paragraph 3(1)(a)(iv) of Scheme - I of Schedule - II of the BIS (Conformity Assessment) Regulations, 2018, as amended from time to time. Any situation, in general, not covered in these guidelines are to be dealt as per the provisions of the Act, Rules and Regulations by the Regional Offices (ROs) and Branch Offices (BOs). All the forms mentioned herein correspond to those given in Scheme - I of Schedule - II of the BIS (Conformity Assessment) Regulations, 2018.

CBTFs

1. (i) A cluster industrial area usually involves multiple enterprises situated in geographical proximity and may also be involved in manufacturing value chain producing same or similar or complementary products linked with common infrastructure facilities. These common infrastructure facilities may also have elements of shared quality control checks, testing etc. so as to ensure conformity of product(s) to relevant Standard(s).
- (ii) Establishment of full or near-full test facilities as per Scheme of Inspection and Testing (SIT) for quality control purposes may pose practical problems for MSMEs in terms of initial capital requirement, recurring costs and resultant time taken in development of ancillary enterprises. Presence of CBTFs and their utilisation by MSME manufacturers may facilitate the ecosystem of adherence to quality assurance and easing compliance procedures towards ensuring the conformity of product(s).
- (iii) CBTFs for their operation shall adhere to the guidelines issued by the Laboratory Policy and Planning Department (LPPD) (Document reference DOC: BIS/CBTF/2020, as revised from time to time', [attached as Annexure-III](#)).

CBTFs as an alternative to in-house testing facility

2. (i) For the purpose of operation of SIT by MSMEs, the CBTFs may be treated as in-house test facility except for the following:
- (a) tolerances of size and geometry (e.g. dimensions, shape in the form of flatness, straightness etc.)
 - (b) visual examination up to 10x magnification level
 - (c) workmanship like absence of burrs, solder flux splatter, sharp edges etc.
 - (d) any requirement which necessitates quality checks during the production process

Illustration of CBTFs

3. (i) The management of CBTFs may or may not be independent of any industry of the cluster. Based on the location of CBTF in the cluster, two general illustrations are given below for guidance purposes:
- (a) Outside the premises of any MSME manufacturer (licensee or applicant) - see figure 1. This CBTF situation includes but is not limited to testing facility of industry association, government institutions, or any laboratory setup by entrepreneur(s) etc.
 - (b) Within the premises of any manufacturer (licensee or applicant) - see figure 2.

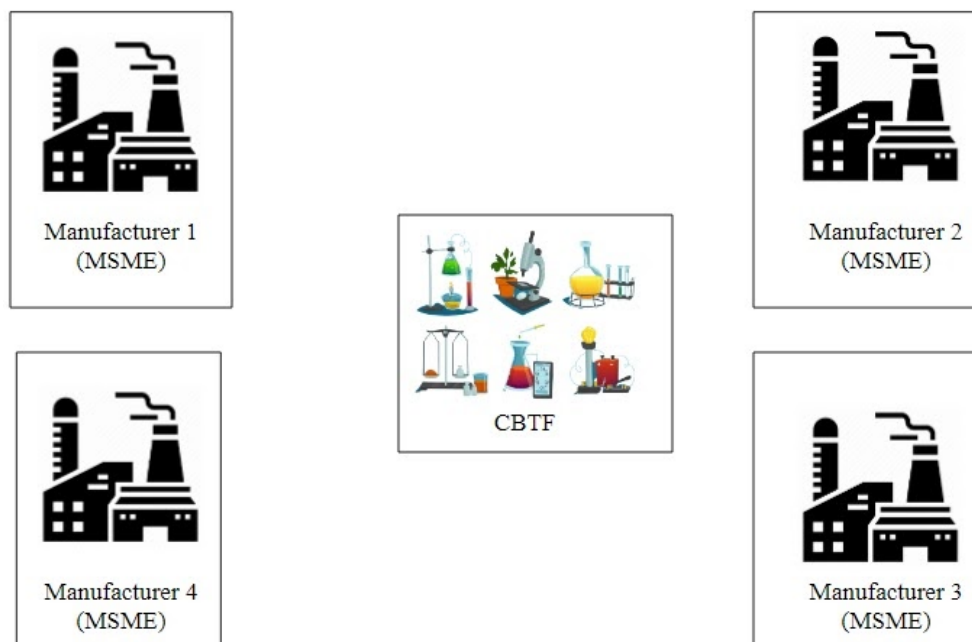


Figure 1 (refer Sr. No. 3(i)(a))

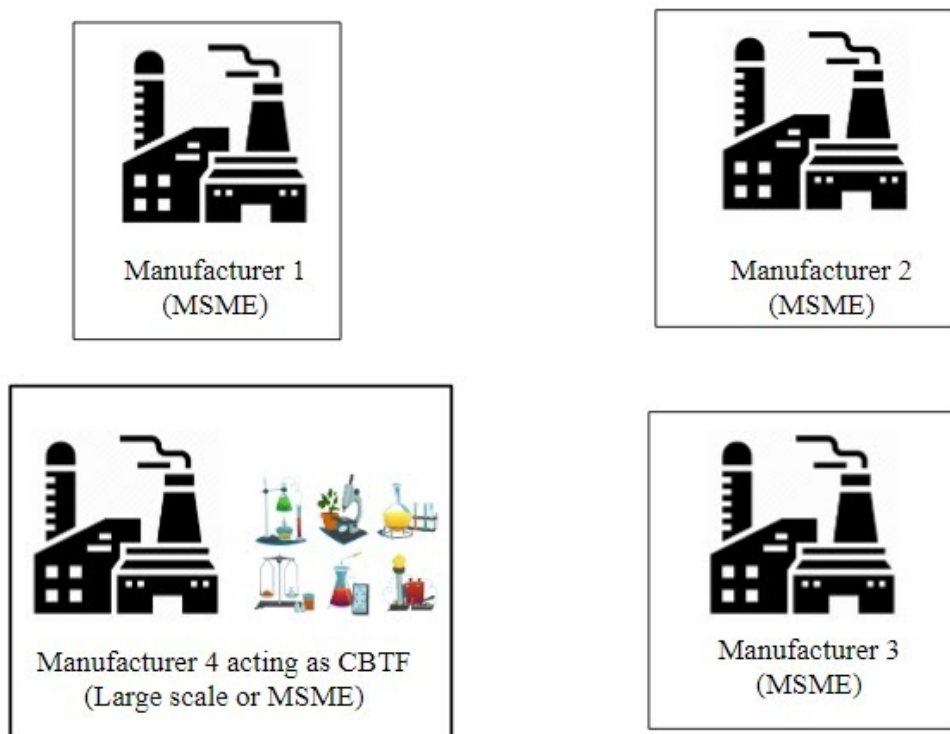


Figure 2 (refer Sr. No. 3(i)(b))

***Undertakings,
responsibilities
of
manufacturer***

4. (i) The manufacturer(s) desirous of utilising CBTFs as in-house test facility shall submit an undertaking as per ***Annexure-I*** (Part A or Part B, as applicable) enclosing separate Form-II for each of the following as per applicable extent:
 - (a) factory facility (duly signed by the manufacturer)
 - (b) CBTF facility (duly signed by the manufacturer and CBTF management)
- (ii) Additionally, services of laboratories other than factory and CBTF facilities are being utilised, then details of such tests shall also be informed by the manufacturer. (refer Annexure-X of guidelines for grant of licence) Workload and degree of utilisation of CBTF shall be such that it would permit enough time for testing of samples brought from all concerned manufacturers.
- (iii) The manufacturer shall also be responsible for maintaining proper records in-house as per SIT and making satisfactory arrangement for handling of samples along with proper identification. The CBTF may also be insisted upon to maintain the manufacturer-wise records for movement of samples, test results etc.

***Information to
be maintained
about CBTFs***

5. (i) The details about testing capability and capacity of any CBTF will be provided by their management in accordance with guidelines issued by the Laboratory Policy and Planning Department (LPPD) (Document reference DOC: BIS/CBTF/2020, as revised from time to time). The letter format and template for collection of this information is given in ***Annexure-II*** for guidance purposes.

Note: Till the time necessary provisions are not available in the online portal, the BOs under whose jurisdiction CBTF is located shall maintain necessary records.

(ii) This information shall be updated, as and when, there is any change (addition or deletion) in testing infrastructure, testing personnel, number of manufacturers attached to the laboratory etc. These details given by CBTFs should be available for the purpose of monitoring and reference of relevant stakeholders.

(iii) The manufacturer shall ensure that any changes made in the CBTF, as given in 5(ii) above, are maintained with change date and verified during the next factory visit. Any actions on the manufacturer arising due to CBTF shall be handled by concerned BO under whose jurisdiction CBTF is located keeping all other BOs informed, wherever required.

***Processing
manufacturer
requests for
acceptance of
CBTFs as their
in-house test
facility***

6. (i) Based on the request received from the manufacturer (applicant or licensee) for considering CBTF as their in-house test facility, the concerned BO shall arrange (through certification officer or agent, as applicable) to verify the testing facilities required for testing of the product. During the visit, the capacity of CBTF w.r.t testing shall also be assessed vis-à-vis the number of manufacturers utilizing this facility so as to ensure that utilization of multiple manufacturers does not hinder the operation of SIT by individual manufacturers.

(ii) The observations about adequacy of CBTF shall be submitted in the inspection report. Based on successful assessment about adequacy, the request for utilisation of CBTF as in-house test facility may be accepted. The adequacy of CBTF shall indicate both the availability of required equipments as well as ability to cater to requirements of other linked manufacturers.

(iii) Any arrangements or expenses resulting due to travel from manufacturing premises to CBTF towards BIS inspection and testing purposes shall be made or borne by the manufacturer. In addition, Special Inspection Charges for any extra day(s) required for this purpose shall also be borne by the manufacturer as per the prevailing rates.

***Effect of CBTF
on processing
of applications
and operation
of licence***

7. (i) At the applicant stage, if it comes to the notice of the manufacturer that there is/are any issues/difficulties in utilisation of CBTF, the same shall be informed to BIS immediately. In such cases, the application for grant of licence may be kept on hold keeping in view timelines for processing of application towards grant of licence.

(ii) During operation of licence, if there is/are any issues/difficulties in utilisation of CBTF, the manufacturer shall communicate the same to BIS immediately. The licensee manufacturer on its own shall suspend the use of Standard Mark immediately under intimation to BIS.

(iii) During the operation of licence, including factory visits like surveillance inspection, the CBTFs shall be treated as in-house test facility of the manufacturer.

(iv) In case CBTF is of illustration type 3(i)(b) of these guidelines and the licence is put under suspension owing to reasons attributable to testing infrastructure (Test facility and / or Quality Control Personnel), then the licence of other manufacturer(s) using the services of that CBTF shall also be put under suspension. However, for suspension due to other reasons, CBTF of illustration type 3(i)(b) may still be allowed to function as type 3(i)(a).

(v) The revocation of suspension in such cases as at Sr. No. 7(ii) and 7(iii) above shall be based on the same lines as for the cases of unsatisfactory performance due to non-availability of test equipment given in guidelines for suspension and revocation of suspension of licence.

Annexure-I

(Part A)

Undertaking by the manufacturer (applicant) for utilisation of CBTF

{On firm's letterhead by Authorized Signatory to concerned Head of the Branch office}


The Head

..... (Branch Office)

Bureau of Indian Standards

Dear Madam/Sir,

Subject: [Application No.] Request for utilisation of Cluster Based Test Facility (CBTF) for the purposes of operation of Scheme of Inspection and Testing (SIT) - reg.

- 1) I/We, (name), (designation) have submitted an application to Bureau of Indian Standards for grant of BIS certification licence to use Standard Mark () on (product) as per IS (Indian Standard No.) being manufactured at our factory at (address).
- 2) I/We are desirous of utilising CBTF situated as (give address) for the purposes of operation of SIT for the specification requirements attached with this letter. (attach separate list as per Form-II)
- 3) I/we fully understand that any arrangements or expenses resulting due to travel from manufacturing premises to CBTF towards BIS inspection and testing purposes shall be made or borne by the me/us. In addition, Special Inspection Charges for any extra day(s) required for this purpose shall also be borne by me/us as per the prevailing rates.
- 4) I/We fully understand that the maintenance of proper records as per SIT is the manufacturer's responsibility while BIS is facilitating us to utilise the testing infrastructure of CBTF.

- 5) I/We fully understand that all the responsibilities related to transport of samples from factory to CBTF, providing access to CBTF in addition to our factory including resultant expenses, lies with me/us.
- 6) I/We undertake that if after the grant of licence there arises any situation which results in non-adherence of SIT, such information shall be shared with BIS immediately. Also, I/We undertake that licence to use Standard Mark shall be put under self-suspension and confirmation of the same shall also be communicated to BIS in this information.
- 7) I/We undertake that if there arises any situation which poses difficulty in adherence to SIT before processing of application for grant of licence, such information shall be shared with BIS immediately and the application may be processed for closure. I/we also understand, BIS may suspend or initiate cancellation of our licence without any prior notice due to any difficulty in adherence to SIT arising out of utilisation of CBTF as in-house test facility.
- 8) I/We fully understand that any failure to comply with our statements, whether knowingly or unknowingly, BIS reserves the right to suspend or cancel our licence and take necessary actions as per the BIS Act, 2016 and Rules and Regulations framed thereunder.

Encl. As stated above

Signature:

Date:

(Name)

(Designation)

(Seal)

Annexure-I

(Part B)

Undertaking by the manufacturer (licensee) for utilisation of CBTF

{On firm's letterhead by Authorized Signatory to concerned Head of the Branch office}


The Head

..... (Branch Office)

Bureau of Indian Standards

Dear Madam/Sir,

Subject: [Licence No.] Request for utilisation of Cluster Based Test Facility (CBTF) for the purposes of operation of Scheme of Inspection and Testing (SIT) - reg.

- 1) I/We, (name), (designation) with my/our factory at (address) are operating a BIS certification licence to use Standard Mark () on (product) as per IS (Indian Standard No.) which is valid upto
- 2) I/We are desirous of utilising CBTF situated as (give address) for the purposes of operation of SIT for the specification requirements attached with this letter. (attach separate list as per Form-II)
- 3) I/we fully understand that any arrangements or expenses resulting due to travel from manufacturing premises to CBTF towards BIS inspection and testing purposes shall be made or borne by the me/us. In addition, Special Inspection Charges for any extra day(s) required for this purpose shall also be borne by me/us as per the prevailing rates.
- 4) I/We fully understand that the maintenance of proper records as per SIT is the manufacturer's responsibility while BIS is facilitating us to utilise the testing infrastructure of CBTF.

- 5) I/We fully understand that all the responsibilities related to transport of samples from factory to CBTF, providing access to CBTF in addition to our factory including resultant expenses, lies with me/us.
- 6) *I/We request BIS to carry out inspection visit at an earlier date without waiting for regular factory surveillance inspection visit towards facilitating utilisation of CBTF testing infrastructure for operation of SIT.
- 7) I/We undertake that if after the grant of licence there arises any situation which results in non-adherence of SIT, such information shall be shared with BIS immediately. Also, I/We undertake that licence to use Standard Mark shall be put under self-suspension and confirmation of the same shall also be communicated to BIS in this information. I/we also understand, BIS may suspend or initiate cancellation of our licence without any prior notice due to any difficulty in adherence to SIT arising out of utilisation of CBTF as in-house test facility.
- 8) I/We fully understand that any failure to comply with our statements, whether knowingly or unknowingly, BIS reserves the right to suspend or cancel our licence and take necessary actions as per the BIS Act, 2016 and Rules and Regulations framed thereunder.

* Strike out if not applicable

Encl. As stated above

Signature:

Date:

(Name)

(Designation)

(Seal)

Annexure-II

Undertaking by the CBTF

{On letterhead by Authorized Signatory to concerned Head of the Branch office}

The Head

..... (Branch Office)

Bureau of Indian Standards

Dear Madam/Sir,

Subject: Intimation about setup of Cluster Based Test Facility (CBTF) for the purposes of operation of Scheme of Inspection and Testing (SIT) - reg.

I/We, (name), (designation) with my/our CBTF
at (address) have test facility for the following products:

- i) (Product name)..... as per IS
- ii) (Product name)..... as per IS
- iii) (Product name)..... as per IS

- 2) The complete details of the equipments and manufacturers associated with us for the BIS certification purposes are enclosed as Annexure.
- 3) I/We duly undertake that any information about change in testing facility, personnel carrying out testing and manufacturers associated with us shall be informed to BIS with the date of change.
- 4) I/We fully understand that we shall facilitate transport of samples from manufacturers factory to CBTF as well as provide access of our facility to BIS officials at all times.

- 5) I/We fully understand that any failure to comply with our statements, whether knowingly or unknowingly, BIS reserves the right to take necessary actions as per the BIS Act, 2016 and Rules and Regulations framed thereunder.

Encl. As stated above

Signature:

Date:

(Name)

(Designation)

(Seal)

Annexure

Declaration about details of test equipment by CBTF

1. Associated manufacturers:

- i)(manufacturer name)....., Application/licence No.
- ii)(manufacturer name)....., Application/licence No.
- iii)(manufacturer name)....., Application/licence No.

2. Name/Address of CBTF:

3. Name of testing personnel(s):

Sr. No.	Test Equipment/Chemicals and Identification Numbers (Where applicable)	Least Count and Range (Where applicable)	Valid Calibration (Where required) Yes/No	Tests Used in with Clause Reference	Remarks (Indicate number of Equipment)

Note: Attach extra sheet, if required

I/We declare that the details of associated manufacturers, testing personnel, testing equipment given above is true to the best of my/our knowledge. Any change in these details shall be informed to BIS with change date. I/We also declare that I will send prior intimation to the Bureau of Indian Standards whenever any testing personnel, testing equipment is not available or functional due to any reason.

Signature:

Date:

(Name)

(Designation)

(Seal)

Annexure-III

DOC : BIS/CBTF / 2020



भारतीय मानक ब्यूरो
BUREAU OF INDIAN STANDARDS

**GUIDELINES FOR CLUSTER FACILITYS
(CLUSTER BASED TESTING FACILITY)**

1. Introduction

1.1 Bureau of Indian Standards (BIS), the National Standards Body of India, was established under The Bureau of Indian Standards Act, 1986 now revised to The Bureau of Indian Standards Act 2016. To protect the interest of consumers, BIS operates a variety of Conformity Assessment Schemes for manufacturers and service providers for a variety of goods and services. Under the Product Certification Scheme, the licensed manufacturers can use the Standard Mark, popularly known as the ISI mark, on their products which conform to the relevant Indian Standards. Confirmation to relevant Indian Standard requires the product to be assured by in-house or in process testing as well as third party assurance. Some of the industries in micro, small and medium scale do not have enough capital to invest in in-house testing capability and also to employ in-house technical personnel for control of in-process parameters by way of testing. Such industries, even after desiring to join BIS Certification Marks Scheme, could not join due to their inability to employ technical personnel and to have in-house testing facilities. Thus, this scheme of cluster based approach for testing testing facility has been created to cater to the need of such industries and bring them to the fold of BIS and help them produce quality product, thus increasing their capability to compete by producing quality goods

2. Objectives of Cluster Based Testing facility (CBTF)

2.1 For micro, small and medium industry in the country, it is sometimes not possible to employ separate testing facilities and technical personnel for quality control and BIS certification purpose for product covered under various conformity assessment schemes of BIS. Accordingly, this concept of Cluster Based Testing Testing facility (CBTF) has been formulated with the objective of supporting the industry clusters in quality control of their product by way of:

- i) having a common testing testing facility for group of industries in the cluster
- ii) helping each industry operate BIS certification marks scheme by allowing testing of product as per Scheme of Testing and Inspection
- iii) relaxing the requirement of keeping in-house technical personnel for in-process /final testing
- iv) help in “Make in India” and “Atmanirbhar Bharat” initiatives

3. Scope of BIS CBLs

3.1 This concept lays down the requirements of operation of Cluster Testing Facilities in the country.

3.2 This in no way restricts the industry in the cluster for utilization of the other facilities recognized by BIS for testing of their products.

4. Guidelines

4.1 General Guidelines

- i) These guidelines shall be applicable for operation of testing facility catering to the need of the cluster of industries (known as cluster testing facility).
- ii) Testing facilities available at the testing facility shall be decided based on the type of industry in the cluster. Testing Testing facility shall test only those products and raw materials which are manufactured by the industry cluster. Testing facility should have

facilities for testing of raw material and finished products, for all tests as per relevant Indian Standard applicable to the products in the cluster. Testing facility shall be shared by two or more number of units.

- iii) The testing facility can also be established by the Industry Association or government or individual representing the industry cluster.
- iv) The testing facility shall be required to provide access to BIS Officers as and when required.
- v) Testing facility may be located in the industry cluster, with management independent of any industry in the cluster.
- vi) Sharing of testing facility shall be permitted only for tests decided by BIS as per SIT.
- vii) Partial Sharing of testing facility may also be allowed for costly test facilities like Ozone Resistance test for rubber Products, etc.
- viii) Testing facility may be situated in the premises of one of the unit sharing the test facilities or at independent location.
- ix) In case testing facility is run by more than one unit on cost sharing basis, proper agreement for sharing of cost and running of the testing facility shall be made and submitted to BIS along with the details of testing facilities and testing personnel.
- x) The testing facility shall inform BIS as and when it plans for shifting of its testing facility premises to an address other than that declared and verified at the stage of grant of recognition. The testing facility shall not accept samples for the testing at the new premises without prior permission of BIS.

4.2 Management Requirements:

- i) Reference may be made to IS/ ISO 17025:2017 for establishing system based approach as a guidance.
- ii) The management structure of the cluster facility shall be decided by the industries / industry cluster who are part of the testing facility. Facility has to submit clearly defined organizational structure to BIS.
- iii) Cluster facility shall maintain impartiality and confidentiality in its operations.
- iv) The financial structure of operation of the cluster testing facility will have to be worked out between the participating industries. BIS will have no role to play in this.
- v) If any of the testing facility is found involved in un-ethical practices like issue of test reports without receipt of sample, issuing pass reports for non-conforming samples etc , action shall be taken against the testing facility like cancellation of permission for sharing of facilities.
- vi) The testing facility shall submit an signed code of ethics in the prescribed format as given in the annexure to BIS Branch Office.

4.3 Accommodation and environmental conditions:

- i) The testing facility shall have enough space for proper working and testing, including space for movement of samples. Space shall also be provided separately for storage of samples/ remnants.
- ii) The testing facility shall be house in *pucca* structure and not in *kuccha* sheds.
- iii) The testing facility shall maintain and control the environmental conditions, if required as per relevant Indian Standard.
- iv) Effective separation shall be provided between the incompatible testing activities or

- testing of hazardous nature (e.g. microbiology shall be separated from chemical; HV testing shall be separated from other electrical testing etc.).
- v) Ensuring good housekeeping is the responsibility of the management of the facility.

4.4 Personnel:

- i) The testing facility shall be suitably staffed. The testing facility shall employ enough personnel so as to cater to the demand of testing of the industry cluster.
- ii) The minimum qualification of the testing personnel shall be diploma/ graduate in science in the relevant field. The minimum qualifications for the technicians, if any shall be ITI or equivalent in the relevant field.
- iii) The management and testing personnel (except top management) shall have no direct link with any of the industry in industry cluster.
- iv) The testing personnel shall have adequate qualification, skill and training as required to perform their functions effectively.
- v) The lab shall define its testing capacity and shall perform its functions accordingly.
- vi) Any change in testing personnel by the cluster facility shall be notified to BIS immediately.

4.5 Equipment:

- i) Cluster facility shall be suitably equipped to carry out testing as per relevant Indian Standard .It has to have equipment for correct performance of the tests, as per Indian Standards.
- ii) The testing facility may have multiple sets of equipment so as to perform test within required time as per the industry's requirements.
- iii) The testing facility shall carry out different tests, for which the permission has been given by BIS to the industry in the cluster, in accordance with the method given in the Indian Standard specification.
- iv) All test apparatus/measuring instruments shall be periodically checked and calibrated (from NABL accredited calibration lab) and records of such checks/calibration shall be maintained. It is advised to keep the frequency of calibration as one year.
- v) Any equipment remaining out of order for a prolonged period may have serious repercussions for industry's quality control. Facility shall take immediate action for repair/ maintenance of the equipment in case the facilities are not in working condition.
- vi) Any change in equipments/ instruments by the cluster facility shall be notified to BIS immediately.

4.6 Samples:

- i) Cluster lab shall test the samples generated from BIS CA schemes on priority.
- ii) Cluster lab shall have its own machine shop for preparation of samples, if required.

4.7 Testing and records:

- i) The testing facility shall have the relevant Indian standards including cross-referred standards(National or International) required for testing of products .
- ii) Test records shall be maintained at the licensee end as well as at the testing facility end. All the industries in industry cluster will have to maintain records as per BIS requirements for their samples tested by the cluster facility. It will not be the responsibility of the testing facility to maintain testing records on behalf of each licensee. Testing facility, however, will have to maintain its own records of testing as per requirements.

- iii) Report to the industry within the cluster and BIS licensee may be issued in the simplified format.
- iv) The testing facility shall issue the test report immediately after completion of testing. Under no circumstances the issuance of test reports shall be withheld by the testing facility for any reason.

Annexure

Code of Ethics

(The code of ethics shall be furnished, signed and sealed by Proprietor or Director or Partner of the testing facility on testing facility's official stationery (letter-head)).

We, M/s _____
Testing facility located at _____,
_____ ,
a cluster testing facility under the Cluster Based Testing facility Scheme of the Bureau of Indian Standards, do, hereby, undertake that:

1. Integrity: We shall have a professional behavior, be straightforward and honest in all professional and business practices.
2. Objectivity: We shall not allow bias, conflict of interest or undue influence of others in our professional testing and reporting activity.
3. Professional competence and due care : It is our continuing duty to maintain professional knowledge, skill and testing facilities at the level required to ensure that the customer receives competent professional services based on current technological advancements, revision/amendment in the standards etc.
4. The following practices shall be strictly discouraged:
 - Reporting the test results without proper/actual testing on the sample
 - Provide any undue favor to BIS or any government official
 - Giving any undue favor to the customer in terms of testing and reporting of results
5. Confidentiality: We shall maintain adequate confidentiality with respect to the sample under test and the test results.
6. Professional behavior: We Shall comply with relevant laws and regulations and should avoid any action that discredits the profession or brings bad name to BIS

Date:

Name:

Place:

Designation:

Signature

Seal: