



Newsletter January 2006

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NIRAS Extends UKAS Accreditation Scope !

The United Kingdom Accreditation Service (UKAS) recently carried out the annual assessment of the NIRAS laboratories to the requirements of BS EN ISO /IEC 17025:2000, the testing/calibration laboratory competency standard. The visit covered NIRAS' current accredited activities and an extension to scope.

No nonconformities were raised and only two minor observations with recommended actions to be implemented in time for the next yearly visit were raised. This represents the fewest actions ever raised during a UKAS assessment of NIRAS.

UKAS recommended that NIRAS should maintain its current accreditation scope and granted an

extension to scope, which includes testing for specified actinides in soil, sediment and concrete.

This year, NIRAS is aiming to extend its accreditation scope to include testing for low-energy gamma-emitters, tritium in combustible materials, and strontium-90. Achieving this will further consolidate NIRAS' position as one of the leading radioanalytical testing laboratories in the UK.



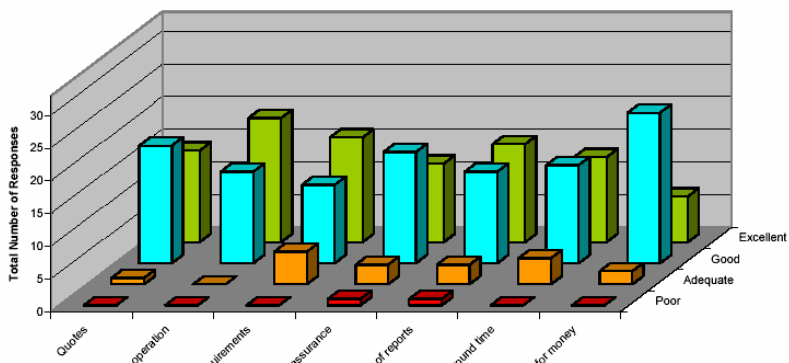
The NIRAS Quality Manager, Dr. John Cobb, said, "The outcome of this recent external assessment demonstrates the commitment of all NIRAS' staff to providing a high quality of service to our customers, which ultimately reflects in the success of the business."

Customer Satisfaction

At NIRAS we are continually striving to improve our service. We aim to provide a quality service tailored to the requirements of our customers.

As such we appreciate your feedback on the quality of our work to enable us to continually improve our services in the future. One way we measure customer service is by sending out Customer Satisfaction Questionnaires. These are reviewed, any comments are investigated and fed into our improvement program.

NIRAS Customer Satisfaction Summary 2003-2005



We pride ourselves on the quality of our service.....

NIRAS Presents Paper at Recent Conference

The NIRAS Business manager Greg Willetts said

“ The NIRAS paper demonstrated how we are already supporting major decommissioning projects across the UK with our wealth of experience in analysing unusual sample matrices.”

Dr Lesley Gray, NIRAS Active Radiochemistry Team Leader recently spoke at a Royal Society of Chemistry conference “ Radiochemistry in Nuclear Clean-Up” held at the Westlakes Research Institute near Whitehaven. The conference was held to explore the role of chemistry and radiochemistry in the clean up and remediation of the UK’s historic nuclear legacy. The conference was well attended with over 70 delegates. The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority presented their vision for research and development in the decommissioning industry UKAEA and British Nuclear Group gave a client’s viewpoint and Nexia Solutions, University of Manchester and Leeds provided an overview of research being carried out in the field.

The NIRAS presentation was entitled “ Responsive Radiochemistry – Real World Solutions for Decommissioning Challenges” was well received. The paper described how the radiochemistry laboratory plays a vital role in ensuring decommissioning contractors meet their project milestones. The themes of close co-operation between contractor and laboratory were explored and the case study of the four year NIRAS support to British Nuclear Group’s continuing Capenhurst decommissioning programme was used to highlight the challenges faced in the “real world” with difficult sample matrices.

The presentations will be available soon on the Royal Society of Chemistry website. If you are interested, contact us and we will send you the link when it becomes available.

New Resources, Facilities and Equipment Investment

“We at NIRAS have a highly innovative professional team developing mass analysis techniques in order to meet our customers needs and reduce costs with out compromise to Quality”.

Yet again NIRAS is expanding its staff resources, facilities and equipment in response to client demand. In early 2006 we plan to grow our facilities:

- Expanding significantly our sample preparation and dissolution capacity for active decommissioning samples.
- Increase our radiochemical separation facilities with the installation of additional fume cupboard capacity
- Increase our gamma, gross alpha/beta and alpha counting capacity.

The majority of the expansion is required to handle the increased number of samples derived from the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority’s

accelerated decommissioning programmes at civil nuclear installations. Analysis on decommissioning samples is NIRAS’ speciality. We are currently carrying out analysis on samples derived from virtually every UK site being decommissioned.

Our continued expansion plans will ensure that NIRAS can continue to deliver to our clients’ requirements on turnaround times, high quality and value for money.



The Growing NIRAS Team

Since our last newsletter we have recruited new staff into the team. Welcome to Russell Moloney, Jane Baldwin and Jun Jiang

We also profile two more of our senior scientists.

The New Team Members

Russell Moloney,

Russell joined NIRAS in November 2005. He was previously an analyst in an environmental air analysis laboratory and graduated in physics from University of Liverpool. Russell is currently working on uranium analysis.



Sarah Smith

Sarah joined NIRAS in Aug 2001 after graduating from university college Chester with a degree in Applied Biology, prior to this she worked at Alcontrol Geochem for 3 years in the environmental chemistry laboratory. Sarah is the senior scientist for sample preparation dissolution & sample management. Sarah's experience with traditional chemistry is also utilised in her project management work.



Jane Baldwin

Jane joined the team in October 2005. Prior to joining NIRAS she worked at Severn Trent Laboratories (STL). Jane works in our sample receipt and sample preparation area and is therefore involved in sample login, preparing soils and waters for analysis, and archiving. She is currently undergoing training for sample dissolution.



Mike Wharton

Mike joined NIRAS in January 2001 after completing his radiochemistry PhD at the University of Manchester. During the past five years Mike has developed a variety of methods for the analysis of radionuclides such as technetium-99, nickel-63 and chlorine-36. Mike also manages the laboratory's ICP-MS instrument which is primarily used for the determination of uranium isotope ratios but can also be used for the analysis of other long-lived radionuclides and stable elements.

Senior Scientists

Jun Jiang

Jun is a Phd radiochemist who joined NIRAS in August from Harwell Scientifics. Since her arrival, Jun has supported our validation exercises, for increasing our UKAS scope of accreditation



Adrian Clacher
Environmental
Radiochemistry
Team Leader said
*“the key to any
successful business
is the quality of the
staff. NIRAS is
fortunate in having
an innovative,
professional and
dedicated team.”*



Happy New Year

All the NIRAS staff would like to thank our clients for your support in 2005 and wish you a happy and successful New Year

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Couriers and bottles!

NIRAS strives to provide a complete service to our clients, helping to make analysis projects run smoothly.

As part of this service NIRAS provides appropriate sample bottles and containers, cool boxes and crates. We also arrange a reliable and cost effective courier delivery/pick up service.

In order to improve this service and make it easily accessible to all our clients we have set up a new email address. This address goes directly to all those staff that are involved in this process, thus reducing the chance of missing your request due to staff absences etc.

If you require this service please

email: couriers@niras.co.uk clearly stating your requirements including address for delivery or collection, contact name with contact number. We will respond to your requests confirming arrangements made.

This is one of a number of our improvement ideas. We are always interested to hear how we could improve our service to clients.

Any suggestions can be sent to info@niras.co.uk



NEW YEAR COMPETITION

Back by popular demand our competition!

Here is your chance to win a CD micro hi-fi system with DAB digital radio.



To Enter

simply send your contact details by email to competition@niras.co.uk
or
Fax / send your business card for the attention of Sonia Jarvis.

The draw will be held on 31st January 2006

NIRAS is a trading name of AMEC NNC limited
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