

Department of Forensic Sciences Achieves Recognition by OSAC-NIST

The Department of Forensic Sciences of the OIJ is the first international implementer of the Registry standards of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Sciences in areas of toxicology, ballistics, and ISO 21043-2 (Forensic Sciences).

The Department of Forensic Sciences of the Judicial Investigation Agency (OIJ) became last Wednesday, August 4, the first forensic agency outside the United States to declare the implementation of standards in Toxicology, Firearms and Tool Marks, as well as ISO 21043-2: Forensic Sciences, standards that are part of the Registry of the Organization of Scientific Area Committees for Forensic Sciences (OSAC).

This organization belongs to the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) of the United States of America, an entity recognized worldwide in promoting innovation in science and technology. The OSAC was created in 2012, in order to solve the lack of specific standards for different areas of Forensic Sciences and as a result of the report "*Strengthening Forensic Science in the United States: A Way Forward*", prepared by the National Academy of Sciences, a document that has become a reference worldwide.

To achieve this recognition, the laboratories had to incorporate in documents of the Quality Management System (Quality Manual and standardized operating procedures) aspects and measures for compliance with them, after performing a gap analysis to determine and plan how to incorporate in these documents the required aspects, a process that took approximately two years.

The adoption of the standards of the OSAC Registry by a forensic laboratory represents the continuation of the commitment to improve the implementation of high quality standards, by incorporating specific scientific requirements that guarantee the application of best practices in the daily work carried out in tests or inspections.

The Department of Forensic Sciences of OIJ was accredited in various scopes in the areas of DNA, toxicology and drug analysis in 2017 by the accrediting body ANAB of the United States of America by ISO / IEC 17025. A year later, accreditation scopes were expanded in the area of forensic ballistics based on ISO/IEC 17020:2012. Since then, and with the collaboration of the International Bureau of Counternarcotics Assistance and Law Enforcement (INL) and the International Criminal Investigation Training and Assistance Program (ICITAP), both of the United States government, actions aimed at strengthening quality and improving processes have been implemented.

The declaration and voluntary implementation of the OSAC standards reaffirms the commitment of the Forensic Laboratory of Costa Rica to guarantee the Administration of Justice scientific evidence protected by good science, strengthening impartiality, reliability and credibility in the expert reports that are required, for the benefit of transparency in the administration of justice and the protection of human rights.