

ACTS SUPPLEMENT

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Act 4 *Forensic and Scientific Analytical Services Act* **2026**

**THE FORENSIC AND SCIENTIFIC ANALYTICAL
SERVICES ACT, 2026**

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**THE FORENSIC AND SCIENTIFIC ANALYTICAL
SERVICES ACT, 2026**

An Act to provide for regulation of forensic and scientific analytical services; to establish the Government Analytical Laboratory; to designate the Government Analytical Laboratory as the national referral centre for forensic and scientific analytical services; to designate the department of inspection and legal services as the regulator for forensic and scientific analytical services; to provide for the collection, taking and use of bodily samples for investigative purposes; to designate the Government Analytical Laboratory as the National Poison Information Centre and for related matters.

DATE OF ASSENT: 29TH APRIL, 2026

Date of Commencement: 8th May, 2026

BE IT ENACTED by Parliament as follows:

PART I—PRELIMINARY

1. Application of Act

(1) This Act shall apply to analytical laboratories registered under this Act.

(2) This Act shall not apply to analytical laboratories registered or regulated under any other law.

2. Interpretation

In this Act, unless the context otherwise requires—

“analytical laboratory” means any facility undertaking testing, analysing samples or matters related to forensic science and does not include a training laboratory;

“authorised officer” means a registered medical practitioner, registered nurse or registered allied health professional;

“bodily sample” means a biological material taken from the body of a person and includes blood, urine, saliva, hair or other bodily fluid or tissue, used for analysis in a laboratory for forensic investigation;

“chemical” means a substance in any form, whether by itself or in a mixture or preparation, whether manufactured, produced or extracted from nature;

“currency point” has the value assigned to it in the Schedule to this Act;

“database” means the forensic and scientific database established under section 26;

“department” means the department of inspection and legal services designated under section 3;

“DNA” means deoxyribonucleic acid;

“forensic and scientific analysis” means the application of analytical tools and techniques in the discovery of evidence or examination of materials relevant to the investigation of a crime or other legal proceedings;

“forensic practitioner” means a professional who uses scientific, technical or other specific expertise to examine and analyse evidence in legal proceedings;

“forensic science” means the systematic application of scientific methods, techniques and principles to the collection, preservation,

investigation, analysis, presentation and interpretation of evidence for the purposes of law enforcement or legal proceedings;

“inspector” means a person designated under section 8;

“laboratory analytical report” means a report showing evaluation results of data from an analysis of a sample conducted, and includes a certificate of analysis issued under this Act;

“Minister” means the Minister responsible for internal affairs;

“Ministry” means the Ministry of Internal Affairs;

“poison” means any substance that is capable of causing harm to or resulting in the death of, an organism;

“requesting authority” means a person or institution initiating the process of sample analysis;

“sample” means a specimen or exhibit submitted to an analytical laboratory for forensic or scientific analysis;

“training laboratory” means a facility designed for hands-on learning, skills development and practical training in forensic science.

PART II — ADMINISTRATION AND INSTITUTIONAL ARRANGEMENTS

3. Regulation of forensic and scientific analytical services

(1) The department of inspection and legal services at the Ministry is designated as the regulator of forensic and scientific analytical services in Uganda.

(2) There is established the Government Analytical Laboratory.

(3) The Government Analytical Laboratory is designated as the national referral centre for forensic and scientific analytical services.

(4) The Government Analytical Laboratory shall be headed by the Chief Government Chemist.

4. Functions of Government Analytical Laboratory

(1) The Government Analytical Laboratory shall, upon request by any court of law, ministry, department or government agency—

- (a) conduct forensic and scientific analysis including—
 - (i) toxicology;
 - (ii) biology;
 - (iii) illicit drugs;
 - (iv) ballistics and tool-marks;
 - (v) questioned documents;
 - (vi) chemistry;
 - (vii) food;
 - (viii) drugs;
 - (ix) computer and cybercrime; and
 - (x) environmental samples for executing health, legal, social well-being and environmental interventions;
- (b) conduct research activities;
- (c) create a forensic and scientific database;
- (d) conduct training and outreach programmes on matters regulated by this Act;
- (e) collect and analyse scientific evidence; and
- (f) perform any other functions as the Minister may assign.

(2) The Government Analytical Laboratory shall advise the Government on matters of forensic and scientific analysis.

(3) The Government Analytical Laboratory may provide consultancy services to a private party on any matter stipulated under this Act.

5. Establishment of regional Government Analytical Laboratories

The Minister shall designate regional Government Analytical Laboratories in other parts of the country as the Minister considers necessary.

6. Functions of department

The department shall—

- (a) regulate analytical laboratories;
- (b) develop and publish a code of practice for forensic practitioners;
- (c) develop protocols of testing and examination methods;
- (d) develop standards to be implemented and maintained in performing forensic and scientific analysis; and
- (e) monitor compliance with the code of practice for forensic practitioners.

7. Department to report to Minister

The department shall submit an annual report to the Minister within three months after the end of the financial year.

8. Designation of inspectors

(1) The Minister may, on the advice of the department and by notice published in the *Gazette*, designate an officer from a relevant institution having the necessary qualifications to be an inspector.

(2) A person shall be qualified to be designated an inspector if he or she holds a bachelor's degree and possess at least one year's experience in a relevant field of science.

9. Inspection of analytical laboratories

The department may, for the purpose of ensuring compliance with the provisions of this Act, conduct or cause to be conducted the inspection of any analytical laboratory licensed under this Act.

10. Powers of inspectors

An inspector shall have power—

- (a) to enter into and search any analytical laboratory licensed under this Act, at any reasonable time;
- (b) to issue directives, after inspection, on areas requiring correction;
- (c) to order temporary closure of premises pending corrections;
- (d) to seize anything or property used in the commission of an offence under this Act;
- (e) in collaboration with any other authority, to supervise the disposal of samples;
- (f) where necessary, and with the assistance of any other authority, to arrest any person who contravenes this Act;
- (g) to adduce evidence before court;
- (h) to inspect analytical laboratories; and
- (i) to perform any other duty as may be directed by the Minister.

11. Inspector to furnish report

An inspector shall furnish the department with a written report and any other information relating to an inspection, as the department may require.

PART III — ANALYTICAL LABORATORIES

12. Forensic and scientific analytical services

(1) An analytical laboratory licensed under this Act may provide the following forensic and scientific analytical services—

- (a) the analysis of forensic biology and DNA;
- (b) the examination of questioned documents;
- (c) the analysis of toxicology;
- (d) the analysis of digital forensics;
- (e) the analysis of illicit drugs;
- (f) the analysis of ballistics and tool marking;
- (g) the analysis of arson and explosives;
- (h) the analysis of chemicals;
- (i) the analysis of food and drugs;
- (j) the analysis of biological samples;
- (k) the analysis of water and environment; or
- (l) any other scientific analytical service approved by the department, on the advice of the Minister responsible for the service required.

(2) A person who intends to access the services referred to in subsection (1) from the Government Analytical Laboratory shall pay fees prescribed by the Minister by regulations.

(3) An analytical laboratory shall, in the performance of the services under subsection (1), act independently and shall not be subject to the direction or control of any person, including the department.

13. Registration of analytical laboratories

(1) A person who intends to operate an analytical laboratory shall—

- (a) apply to the department for a certificate of registration of the analytical laboratory in a form prescribed by the Minister by regulations; and
- (b) pay a fee prescribed by the Minister by regulations.

(2) The Minister shall, in consultation with the department, make regulations for the registration of analytical laboratories.

(3) The department shall register and grant a licence to an analytical laboratory that meets the requirements under this Act and the regulations.

(4) The licence granted in subsection (3) shall be valid for a period of one year from the date of issue.

(5) The department shall keep and maintain a register of registered analytical laboratories.

(6) The department may on an annual basis publish in the *Gazette*, analytical laboratories registered under subsection (3).

(7) Subject to section 1, a person shall not provide forensic services without a licence issued under this Act.

(8) A person who contravenes subsection (7) commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding five hundred currency points or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both.

14. Refusal to grant licence

(1) The department may refuse to grant a licence to an applicant.

(2) Where the department refuses to grant a licence in accordance with subsection (1), the department shall issue notice of its refusal to the applicant, stating the reasons.

15. Display of licence

A holder of a licence shall display a copy of the licence issued under this Act in a conspicuous place at the place of practice.

16. Variation of conditions of licence

(1) A holder of a licence may, at any time during the validity of the licence, if there are any changes to the licensee's business operations, apply to the department for variation of the terms and conditions of the licence.

(2) The department may approve the variation of a licence and indicate the date of the variation on the licence.

17. Surrender of licence

(1) Where a holder of a licence decides to discontinue the provision of forensic services, the holder of a licence shall notify the department in writing, and surrender the licence to the department.

(2) The department shall, where a licence is surrendered under subsection (1), cancel the licence subject to conditions that the department may impose.

18. Transfer of licence

A holder of a licence under this Act may transfer the licence to another person with the prior approval of the department.

19. Renewal of licence

(1) A person who intends to renew a licence shall, on payment of the prescribed fees, apply to the department at least three months before the expiry of the licence.

(2) The department may issue the licence where the applicant complied with the terms and conditions of the expired licence.

(3) Sections 13 and 14 shall apply to renewal of licences.

20. Revocation or suspension of licence

(1) The department may suspend or revoke a licence of an analytical laboratory.

(2) Without prejudice to the general effect of subsection (1), the department may suspend or revoke a licence if satisfied that the holder of the licence—

- (a) gave false or misleading information at the time of applying for the licence;
- (b) is not complying with the terms and conditions of the licence;
- (c) or a principal officer of the holder of a licence has committed an offence under this Act;
- (d) has assigned, ceded or otherwise transferred the licence without the prior approval of the Minister;
- (e) has become insolvent or is under administration;
- (f) has become an unfit and improper person to hold a licence; or
- (g) poses or an activity of the holder of a licence poses a security threat to national security and the surrounding community.

(3) Where a licence is revoked in accordance with this section, the holder of the licence shall surrender the licence to the department and the department shall cancel the licence, subject to conditions that the department may impose with respect to the licensed activity.

21. Cancellation of certificate of registration

The department shall—

- (a) before cancelling the certificate of registration of an analytical laboratory, give the owner of the analytical laboratory an opportunity to show cause why the certificate should not be cancelled; and

- (b) after cancelling the certificate of registration of an analytical laboratory, publish the cancellation in the *Gazette*.

22. Notification of closure or change of ownership

The owner of a registered analytical laboratory who intends to close his or her analytical laboratory or to change ownership of the analytical laboratory shall notify and submit the analytical laboratory closure or change of ownership to the department for approval, supervision or inspection, three months before the closure or change of ownership.

PART IV — FORENSIC AND SCIENTIFIC ANALYSIS

23. Request for analysis

(1) A person may request the analysis of a chemical or substance, upon fulfilment of the procedures prescribed by the Minister in regulations.

(2) A court of law may order that a chemical or substance be analysed in case of any matter before it.

(3) The department may direct a person licensed under this Act to analyse any sample for purposes of implementing this Act.

(4) For the purposes of this section, “substance” means any chemical element and its compounds, whether in their natural state or resulting from a manufacturing process and includes drugs.

24. Taking of samples for analysis

(1) An analytical laboratory shall collect samples for the analysis of forensic biology and DNA as follows—

- (a) from a person, the sample shall be taken voluntarily and with his or her informed consent;
- (b) from a child, the sample shall be taken with the informed consent of a parent, next of kin, guardian or legal representative; and
- (c) from an animal or any other item, the sample shall be taken with the consent of the owner.

(2) Where it is impractical to obtain direct consent under subsection (1) (a), consent may be obtained through a court order, a next of kin, guardian or legal representative.

(3) An authorised officer who takes a sample shall do so in accordance with the regulations prescribed by the Minister.

(4) An authorised officer may take a bodily sample for purposes of supporting an investigation.

(5) Notwithstanding this section, an authorised officer may re-take a sample from a person or an item, where the sample taken is insufficient.

25. Laboratory analytical report

(1) A requesting authority who intends to access a laboratory analytical report may, in writing, apply to an analytical laboratory.

(2) An analytical laboratory under this Act shall issue a laboratory analytical report stating the results of the analysis to the requesting authority.

(3) The laboratory analytical report issued under subsection (2) shall state the methodology of analysis followed in carrying out the analysis.

(4) A laboratory analytical report issued by an analytical laboratory upon any matter or thing duly submitted for analysis may be used as evidence in any inquiry, trial or other proceedings.

(5) A person shall not use a laboratory analytical report issued under this Act for the purposes of advertising a product analysed by an analytical laboratory.

26. Forensic and scientific database

(1) There is established under the Government Analytical Laboratory, a forensic and scientific database.

(2) The Minister shall, by statutory instrument, prescribe the content of the database referred to in subsection (1).

27. Access to forensic and scientific information on database

(1) A person who intends to access forensic and scientific information on the database shall—

- (a) apply to the Government Analytical Laboratory in a form prescribed by regulations; and
- (b) pay a fee prescribed by the Minister by regulations.

(2) A person who intends to access forensic information for purposes of conducting a criminal investigation shall not pay the fee prescribed in subsection (1).

(3) The access to information on the database shall only be for the purposes of—

- (a) forensic comparison with any other DNA profiles or information in the course of an investigation of any offence conducted by any enforcement agency;
- (b) administering the database; or
- (c) making the information available to the person to whom the information relates.

28. Submission of DNA data

(1) An analytical laboratory registered under this Act shall submit human identification DNA data to the Government Analytical Laboratory in a form prescribed by regulations.

(2) This section shall not apply to human identification DNA data generated for criminal investigation.

29. Retention and storage of sample

The Government Analytical Laboratory shall—

- (a) store the sample collected for investigation purposes until the investigation is completed; and

- (b) not store a sample permanently.

30. Rectification of information on database

(1) The Chief Government Chemist may rectify the information on the database if—

- (a) a clerical error is made; and
- (b) sufficient evidence is produced to satisfy him or her that the entry made is incorrect.

(2) On making the rectification under subsection (1), the Chief Government Chemist shall, where necessary, issue to the person entitled to the information derived from the analysis of the sample taken for him or her to have the particulars so rectified.

(3) Any rectification made pursuant to this section shall not be construed as an act of tampering, abetting or attempting to tamper with any information held on the database.

31. Non-disclosure of information

A person who has access to any data, record, book, register, correspondence, document, material or information relating to DNA profiles and any related information in the database which he or she acquired in the performance of his or her functions or the exercise of his or her powers under this Act shall not give, divulge, reveal, publish or otherwise disclose to any person, the data, record, book, register, correspondence, document, material or information without authorisation by the Government Analytical Laboratory.

PART V — THE NATIONAL POISON INFORMATION CENTRE

32. National Poison Information Centre

(1) The Government Analytical Laboratory is designated as the National Poison Information Centre.

(2) The National Poison Information Centre shall coordinate and manage poisoning incidences.

(3) The regional Government Analytical Laboratories shall serve as subcentres to the National Poison Information Centre.

(4) The National Poison Information Centre and the subcentres shall perform the following functions—

- (a) disseminate information on poisoning to the public;
- (b) cause to be conducted laboratory analysis of poison;
- (c) conduct training and research on matters related to poisoning; and
- (d) keep a record of poisoning cases and incidences.

PART VI — MISCELLANEOUS

33. Power of Minister to make regulations

The Minister may, in consultation with the department, make regulations to prescribe—

- (a) procedures for sampling and submission of samples to analytical laboratories;
- (b) procedures for the management, retention and disposal of samples;
- (c) standards of forensic science and analytical laboratory and qualifications of staff;
- (d) procedures for registration and certification of forensic science and analytical laboratories;
- (e) procedures for forensic science and analytical laboratories inspection;
- (f) additional grounds for suspension or revocation of a licence and the procedure for suspending or revoking a licence;
- (g) fees and other charges;

- (h) the process for application for certificates to operate analytical laboratories;
- (i) qualifications, training and standards expected of the inspectors; and
- (j) any other matter for the better carrying out of the provisions of this Act.

34. Record keeping

An owner or operator of a registered analytical laboratory shall keep a record of services offered, recommendations from the previous inspection and mitigation measures, if any, for a period of at least ten years.

35. Reporting

(1) An owner or operator of a registered analytical laboratory shall, annually, submit to the Ministry a report of its activities in a manner to be prescribed by regulations.

(2) The department may suspend or cancel the certificate of registration of an analytical laboratory where the owner or operator fails to submit a report under this section.

36. Unauthorised use of information

A person shall not disclose information which he or she obtains in the exercise of his or her powers or the performance of his or her duties under this Act, except—

- (a) to a person who requires the information for the performance of his or her functions under this Act or any other relevant law;
- (b) in respect of information which is required in terms of any law or as evidence in any court of law;
- (c) to a competent authority which requires the information for the institution, or for an investigation with a view to institute criminal proceedings, including a preliminary investigation or an inquest;

- (d) for purposes of carrying out a criminal investigation; or
- (e) where the accused is a child, to his or her parent, guardian or legal representative.

37. Appeals

(1) A person aggrieved by the decision of the department may appeal the decision to the Minister.

(2) The Minister may allow the appeal, confirm, alter or vary the decision of the department and may make any other order as the Minister considers appropriate.

38. Offences and penalties

(1) A person who takes, uses or allows the taking and use of a sample contrary to section 24 commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding one thousand five hundred currency points or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both.

(2) A person who—

- (a) gives, divulges, reveals, publishes or otherwise discloses to any person, data, records, book, register, correspondence, documents, material or information without authorisation by the Government Analytical Laboratory;
- (b) accesses, disseminates or publishes information contained in the database without written authorisation by the Government Analytical Laboratory, commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding one thousand five hundred currency points or imprisonment for a term not exceeding five years, or both.

(3) A person who uses a laboratory analytical report issued under this Act for the purposes of advertisement without the written consent of the department commits an offence and is liable, on conviction—

- (a) where the offender is a natural person, to a fine not exceeding one hundred currency points or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or both; or
- (b) where the offender is a body corporate, to a fine not exceeding two thousand currency points and in addition the court may order cancellation of the certificate of registration.

(4) A person who operates an analytical laboratory without a licence commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding five hundred currency points or imprisonment for a term not exceeding three years, or both.

(5) In addition to the penalty in subsection (4), all the equipment used by the analytical laboratory shall be forfeited to the State.

(6) A person who—

- (a) does not notify and submit the change of ownership of the analytical laboratory to the department within three months after the change of ownership;
- (b) upon request by an inspector, fails to give or denies an inspector access to the analytical laboratory or any information relating to the operation of the analytical laboratory;
- (c) obstructs or hinders an inspector in the execution of his or her duties under the Act;
- (d) falsifies the results of an analysis;
- (e) includes false information in a certificate of analysis or report;
- (f) gives false information in an application;
- (g) gives an inspector false or misleading information knowing it to be false or misleading; or
- (h) uses a DNA profile without authorisation or accesses a DNA profile and information without the authorisation of the

Government Analytical Laboratory, commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding one hundred currency points or imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or both.

(7) A person who breaches any of the provisions of this Act for which no penalty is specifically provided commits an offence and is liable, on conviction, to a fine not exceeding—

- (a) two hundred currency points for a natural person or to imprisonment for a term not exceeding one year, or both; and
- (b) one thousand currency points, for a body corporate.

39. Power of Minister to amend Schedule

The Minister may, with approval of Cabinet, by statutory instrument, amend the Schedule to this Act.

40. Saving provision

Any examination, analysis, report, certificate, opinion or other work undertaken or issued by the Government Analytical Laboratory prior to the commencement of this Act shall remain valid and admissible for all legal and other purposes as if the examination, analysis, report, certificate, opinion or other work had been undertaken or issued under this Act.

SCHEDULE

Section 2

Currency Point

A currency point is equivalent to twenty thousand shillings.