

 Institut IMS Bulevar vojvode Mišića 43 Beograd	RULES FOR PARTICIPATING IN PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAMME	Document code: PIMSU 01
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1. SCOPE

These rules specify the information for the participants in the proficiency testing programme (scheme) for perceiving the requirements that have to be satisfied and activities for their realisation. This Document includes the obligations of the participant, as well as the obligations of the Provider IMS Institute (hereafter PIMS).

2. NORMATIVE REFERENCES

Rules are based on the requirements prescribed in the following documents:

- ISO/IEC 17043:2010, Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing;
- ILAC-G13:07/2007, ILAC Guidelines for the Requirements for the Competence of Providers of Proficiency Testing Schemes;
- IUPAC Technical Report:2006, The International Harmonized Protocol for the Proficiency Testing of Analytical Chemistry Laboratories;
- ISO/IEC 17025:2005, General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories.

3. TERMS, DEFINITIONS AND SHORTCUTS

Definitions of terms and shortcuts used in these rules are:

- **proficiency testing** – evaluation of the participant performance against pre-established criteria by means of an interlaboratory comparison;
- **interlaboratory comparison (ILC)** – organisation, performance and evaluation of measurements or tests of the same or similar items by two or more laboratories in accordance with the predetermined conditions;
- **proficiency testing programme (scheme)** – proficiency testing system referred to the specified products to which the same demands, rules and procedures are applied;
- **PIO** – Proficiency testing programme (scheme);
- **proficiency testing round** – single complete sequence of distribution of proficiency test items, and the evaluation and reporting of results to the participants;
- **proficiency test item** – sample, product, artefact, reference material, or measurement standard used for the proficiency testing;
- **coordinator** – person with responsibility for organizing and managing all activities involved in the operation of a proficiency testing scheme;
- **evaluation of participant performance** – determination of the participant's capacity for conducting a particular kind of testing;
- **assigned value** – value attributed to a particular property of a proficiency test item;
- **appeal** – expressing a dissatisfaction regarding the provider's work;
- **complaint** – demand of the participant for reviewing the provider's negative decision.

The relevant publicly available documents, as well as the documents for delivering to the participants, in hereafter text will be marked **bold**.

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4. DOCUMENT CONTENT

4.1 Opening remarks for the participants

4.1.1 What proficiency testing provide to the participant?

The interlaboratory comparison is an important instrument for the external verification of the quality of laboratorie's work, by means of comparing with the results of other laboratories that work in the same field. Successful participation in the proficiency testing proves the participant's competence to the users of his services.

Besides, the results of participating in the proficiency testing offer the possibility of discovering potential faults in laboratory work, as well as deterring or reducing the measurement uncertainty of the results for particular properties of test items.

4.1.2 Which proficiency testing techniques PIMS carries out?

Tehniques (types of schemes) that PIMS carries out are qualitative and quantitative shemes with simultaneous and sequential participation. The proficiency testing items are building products (materials, elements and structures), noise and sound insulation, with known properties, or properties that will be determined during the implementation of proficiency testing (by means of an interlaboratory comparison).

In the process of setting scheme, PIMS utilises three techniques:

- technique of testing split sample (simultaneous), where an item or similar items are devided in parts, so each participant is testing a part of the same or similar proficiency testing item (assigned value of a particular property of an item will be determined by consensus of the participants after decision of test/measure);
- technique of comparing measurements (sequential), where an item is successively submitted from one participant to another, or where participants successively (in a short term) conduct testing/measuring of particular properties of the same proficiency testing item on the selected and agreed location (assigned value of a particular property of an item will be determined by consensus of the participants after decision of test/measure);
- technique of known values (simultaneous or sequential), where an item, with known value of testing properties and measuring uncertainty, is submitted to the participants (assigned value of testing properties, as well as the acceptable range of test results are known before delivering). This technique gives the possibility to evaluate the proficiency of one or several testing laboratories.

4.1.3 Who can participate in a proficiency testing programme?

In a round of proficency testing programme, by means of an inerlaboratory comparison, accredited or non-accredited testing laboratory from Serbia and abroad can submit an application.

Official languages for comunication are Serbian and English (depending on participants). Official alpphabet are Latin and Cyrillic.

Publicly avaiable documents of PIMS are avaiable at the IMS Institute Web site (www.institutims.rs) in both official languages.

4.1.4 How are candidates informed about the planned Proficiency testing Programme?

By the document **Provider IMS Institute Programme** (placed on IMS Institute site), PIMS provides public avaiable information about planned activities for the current year.

Alternatively, PIMS submits this document to the potential participants, polling if they

are interested.

4.1.5 How can the candidate apply for participation?

The candidate applies for participation by submitting publicly available **Application form for participation in Proficiency Testing** fulfilled in accordance with publicly available document **Application for participation in Proficiency Testing Guideline**. Deadline for submitting the Application is 30 days before test item shipment defined in the **Provider IMS Institute Programme**.

The application is a subject to review in terms of completeness of contents and competence of the candidate, before accepting.

4.1.6 What are the conditions for participation?

By submitting the **Application form for participation in Proficiency Testing**, the participant laboratory accepts following conditions:

1. Availability of equipment, trained staff and environmental conditions for the test execution, as well as experience (for internal or external use) for testing in accordance with the test methods contained in the **Provider IMS Institute Programme**,
2. Acceptance for arranging mutual obligations by the Agreement for the participation in an interlaboratory comparison,
3. The appropriate participation fee is obligatory,
4. Execution of test/measure of a specified test item properties in accordance with the terms from the **Provider IMS Institute Programme**, without subcontracting them, as well as forwarding results in time and in manner scheduled on an appropriate form,
5. Execution of test/measure of specified test item properties as a "routine analysis" (by using usual laboratory procedures for testing and handling test items, unless it is otherwise ordered by the **Guideline for handling test item**, submitted with test item),
6. Agreement that the Provider IMS Institute is not responsible for any damage caused by item handling, as well as for a defect or loss of the item after confirmation of receipt,
7. Acceptance of embargo on the exchanging information with the other participants of the proficiency testing, until the round decision,
8. Acceptance of realization of an unannounced inspection of the Provider IMS Institute representative in order to verify the fulfillment of overall implementation of tests/measures, as well as for the occurrence of suspicion that an arrangement between participants undermines proficiency testing objectivity,
9. Acceptance of the right of the Provider IMS Institute, if deemed necessary because a violation of articles 1. to 8. undermines proficiency testing objectivity and quality of the proficiency testing round, to suspend participation and/or dispose the **Competence confirmation** issued on the basis of the results achieved in the previous proficiency testing round.

4.1.7 What is the goal of the proficiency testing?

The goals of the PIO participants can differ, or may be more than one, as they declare through the **Application form for participation in Proficiency Testing**. The perceived goals of the participants are recorded in the **Protocol of Proficiency Testing Programme (scheme)**, submitted to each of them.

4.1.8 How can candidate/participant protect his interests?

The candidate/participant disposes with a right to make an appeal on the Provider's decision not to accept his participation in a round of proficiency testing. The participant has the same right if he is not satisfied with the manner of the Provider's work. The participant has the right to complain on the Provider's evaluation of his performance for conducting tests and for established unconformities in his work.

4.2 Obligations of the participant

The responsible person of the participant is obliged to inform the Provider about a date and a state of the proficiency testing item within 2 days from receiving.

In a period of time from submitting the **Protocol of Proficiency Testing Programme (scheme)** to returning fulfilled **Results Data entry Form**, participant is obliged to communicate with the Provider strictly through the coordinator of objective proficiency testing round. The participant submits the fulfilled **Results Data entry Form** to the coordinator's e-mail.

The guidelines participants have to consider during the implementation of the proficiency testing round are found in the following documents:

1. **Provider IMS Institute Programme** – publicly available document;
2. **Rules for participating Proficiency Testing Programme** – publicly available document;
3. **Application for participation in Proficiency Testing Guideline** – publicly available document;
4. **Application form for participation in Proficiency Testing** – publicly available form;
5. **Protocol of Proficiency Testing Programme (scheme)** – document for each participant;
6. **Agreement on participation in Interlaboratory Comparison** – document for each participant;
7. **Proficiency Testing Programme participation fee** – document for each participant;
8. **Guideline for handling test item** – document for all participants;
9. **Results Data entry Form** – form for all participants;
10. **Equipment and test performers Data entry Form** – form for all participants.

The participants are obliged to return fulfilled forms within the set deadline. It is expected from the participant (if he has the available data and possibilities) to declare type B standard measurement uncertainty of the results in provided cell of **Results Data entry Form**.

The participants with established unconformities are obliged to submit the proposal of corrective actions for removing unconformities before the next proficiency testing round, within 15 days from receiving the Proficiency Testing Report.

The responsible person of the participant is obliged to inform the coordinator of objective proficiency testing round about any event that may affect the results of the proficiency testing, and to comply with his orders.

The participant who applied for proficiency testing by sequential measurements, as well as simultaneous measuring of noise level, but don't appear, is charged 50% of the cost for applied property, if he don't notify the Provider about the inability to access 3 working days prior to term of measurement. ☒1

4.3 Obligations of the Provider

For each proficiency testing round, the appointed coordinator prepares and submits to the participants the **Protocol of Proficiency Testing Programme (scheme)**, at

least 3 weeks before the proficiency testing item shipment. The Protocol contains certain rules for conducting PIO, from where the participants are introduced before starting the objective proficiency testing round. Along with the Protocol, the **Agreement on participation in Interlaboratory Comparison** is submitted to participants on the acceptance. PIMS immediately informs all participants in the case of any change of the Protocol setting or other activities.

The shipment of the proficiency testing item, or return of them (in case of some sequential schemes) is the responsibility of the Provider, or his contracted distributor.

Along with the proficiency testing item, the **Guideline for handling test item** is submitted to the participants. The Guideline specifies the procedures for sampling and preparing items (homogenization, packaging, marking, requests and conditions of storing and keeping, producing and attendance of a test specimen, as well as environmental conditions during testing). The Provider uses the stated Guideline in the scope of activities of his responsibility.

Equipment and test performers Data entry Form (as well as environmental conditions during testing, with observations and notes), and the **Results Data entry Form** are also submitted to the participants. The **Results Data entry Form** contains the unique laboratory identification code for the objective round, known only to the coordinator, enabling the participant recognize his results in the Proficiency Testing Report. The **Results Data entry Form** contains a calculation of type A standard measurement uncertainty of results.

Upon a written request of the participant whose goal is the validation of an internal method or introduction of effective and a comparable method, the Provider permits the usage of testing methods by choice of the participant. The results of that participant will not be taken into account for assessing the performance of other participants if they cast doubt on their performance.

Concluding the proficiency testing round, the Provider submits the Proficiency Testing Report to the participants, including the established nonconformities, suggestions and advices, and constitutes a publicly available review in the **PT Provider IMS Institute Register of Issued Reports**. With confirmation by all participants of the proficiency testing round, the Proficiency Testing Report can be a publicly available document accessible at the IMS Institute Web site. The Provider also sends a request to the participants for holding a meeting, in order to analyze the results and to improve a quality of work of the participants, as well as the Provider.

On the participant's request, the Provider issues document titled **Competence Confirmation**, for a fee. The Provider keeps records of issued Confirmations by a publicly available document titled **PT Provider IMS Institute Register of Competence Confirmations**.

Impartiality and confidentiality during the course of the proficiency testing round is provided in a way that after the acceptance of the **Application form for participation in Proficiency Testing**, all participants get a unique laboratory identification code, known only to the coordinator. The Provider's involved staff conduct all further activities not knowing the identity of participants, and have no basis for partiality, as well as a possibility to present confidential data about the identity or efficiency of the participants.

In the case of queries of the interested parties, the court, or the state agency for the identity of participants, the Provider will, in written form, inform the participant(s) prior to submission of data. The Provider will not confide the participant performance to the interested parties, but only their identity, so they can request a proof of the competence confirmation from the relevant participant.

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