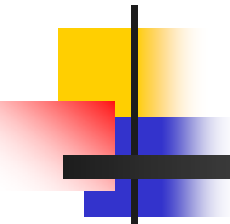




6<sup>th</sup> PT/EQA Workshop – Rome 2008

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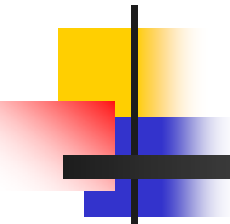
Report from WG8



## What are the issues that affect the quality of proficiency test items?

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- Convenors:
  - Antonio Menditto (ISS, IT)
  - Maria Belli (ISPRA, IT)
  
- Objectives:
  - Consider the key factors that influence the quality of proficiency test items and how they can be addressed



## Q1: What is meant by quality of proficiency test items?

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- Degree to which the inherent characteristics of a PT item fulfils the requirements, i.e. the need(s) or expectation(s) that is (are) stated, generally implied or obligatory



## Q1: What is meant by quality of proficiency test items?

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- Requirements for PT items:
  - Stable over time
  - Homogeneous
  - Commutable
  - Traceable
  - Safe
  - Affordable
  - Easily handlable
  - Meaningful



## Q2: What are the critical factors that affect the quality of proficiency test items?

- Management system (Quality System + technical requirements)
- Procedure for preparation
- Technology/instruments
- Personnel (education, training, skills)
- Facilities/premises/environment
- Packaging/storage/transport/distribution
- Raw material availability
- Organisation (QS)
- Procedure for Testing
- Quality assurance procedures (IQC, PTS)

Q3: What mechanisms do PT/EQA providers use to control the quality of proficiency test items? Can the quality always be fully controlled?

- First Question:
  - Quality system and/or subcontractor quality system
  - Results of participants
  - Control of the quality of Lab/Results from expert laboratories
  - Customer satisfaction on PT items (provided there is enough competence and knowledge)
  - Control of Transport/Distribution (availability of registration)

Q3: What mechanisms do PT/EQA providers use to control the quality of proficiency test items? Can the quality always be fully controlled?

- Second Question:
- Most participant in the group would suggest to change the question to:
  - “Can the quality always be under control?”
- and then the answer will be:
  - “Yes if a quality system is in place and is working”



## Q4: Are the current control mechanisms sufficient?

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- In general, even if control mechanisms are defined in guidelines the implementation of requirements is not always assured
- The implementation of the ISO/IEC 17043 will hopefully improve the situation addressing issues which at the moment are not completely covered (e.g., homogeneity, stability, uncertainty of the assigned value)





## Q5: Are the new emerging areas of PT/EQA presenting new challenges?

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- Yes, in particular:
  - Microbiology
  - Sensory PTS
  - Organoleptic PTS
  - Genetic field (rare disease) PTS
  - Parasitology
  - Marine environment
  - Sampling PTS
  - Post analytical PTS



## Q6: What criteria do accreditation bodies use to assess quality of proficiency test items?

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- Accreditation bodies assess the conformity of the PT provider and the fitness of purpose of the PT items they provide
  - At present according to ISO/IEC 17025 and ISO Guide 43
  - In the future according to the ISO/IEC 17043