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A focus for analytical chemistry in Europe

6th PT/EQA Workshop – Rome 2008

Report from WG3

What issues do developing countries face with regards to PT/EQA?

- Convenors:
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- Objectives:
  - Consider how the needs of developing countries with regards to PT/EQA are being addressed and review the specific issues and challenges for these countries

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Q1: What PT/EQA is currently being undertaken in developing countries? How does this vary between different testing fields and from region to region?

- PT provider for geochemistry, water, wheat flour, microbiology in water, milk, edible oil were represented
- Critical analytes to be covered:
- Organic contaminants, heavy metals, hydrocarbons, pesticides, mycotoxins, dioxines
- Important areas: food, water, cotton, raw materials – for export and for own consumption
- Lack of political support in the countries
- Some PT‘s have started (mostly with support from outside donors) and have to develop

Q2: Do developing countries have to rely on PT/EQA from developed countries?

(a) Is it appropriate for their needs?
(b) Is it easily and realistically available?
(c) Is it affordable?
(d) Is it sustainable over time?

- Yes, in certain cases they have to rely on these PTs, especially when the number of labs is low
- Necessary to be accepted in developed countries
- Appropriateness: Usually no, because of different analytes and different type of products
- Availability/affordability: Usually no – too expensive
- Sustainability: Depending much on the number of involved laboratories
- Local PT systems can be used for training, to successfully participate in PT schemes in developed countries

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Q3: Are developing countries establishing their own PT/EQA?

(a) What initiatives are available?
(b) What assistance is available?
(c) What future assistance do they require?
(d) How could sponsored PT/EQA schemes turn into sustainable systems?
(e) Do the PT/EQA schemes fulfil the requirements of international standards?

- International support provided by IAEA, UNIDO, PTB, WHO and others
- Initiatives start at the technical level (based on economy, health and safety) and have to go through the political one to international organizations
- Need for wider accessibility to PT schemes and training
- Controversal discussion on the need to accredit PT provider
- Sometimes increased credibility – more participants
- Increased costs – less participants

Q4: Are there specific problems for the distribution/storage of PT/EQA samples?

- Transport sometimes very difficult, especially related to shipment of samples
- Customs problems – one customs code for PT samples would helpful
- Storage problems when items have to be kept in certain conditions (e.g. cooling)

Q5: How can awareness be raised of PT/EQA schemes in the laboratories?

- NMIs
- NABs
- Academia
- Regional associations
- Workshops
- Websites
- EURACHEM (Development of leaflet on importance of PT?)