



Inter-Laboratory Comparison Services

Introduction

Inter-laboratory comparisons (ILCs) are important topics for laboratories seeking to secure their measurement claims as defined in section 5.9 of ISO 17025. In March 2009, BMTA organised an event for its members to be able to examine several services on offer across Europe. On October 22 2009, we are holding an event in Bury, Lancashire, which will concentrate on the proficiency testing services available from LGC Standards. Below, we present a summary of the services known to BMTA. We also list, without specific recommendation, two organisations which specialise respectively in insurance and courier services for laboratory-based organisations.

CFI – Centre for Intercomparisons

CFI is an umbrella organisation for a number of reference laboratories in the Nordic and Baltic countries. Most of the laboratories involved are the national metrology laboratories of these countries and this gives the Intercomparisons low measurement uncertainty and a short traceability chain. The CFI areas of expertise are electricity, flow and volume, power and torque, length, mass optics, temperature and pressure and vacuum.

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E-mail: info@intercomparison.org

EC Joint Research Centre, Institute for Reference Materials and Measurement

The IRMM runs three groups which run ILCs: the International Measurement Evaluation Programme dealing with non-nuclear analytes; the Food Safety and Quality Unit dealing with food and beverages; and the Reference Materials Unit. The latter works with Certified Reference Materials (CRM) in areas such as food, environment, biotechnology, clinical and industrial. IRMM is interested in identifying suitable partners for its ILC exercises and does not charge for participation. IRMM has a listing of all BMTA members and their areas of expertise.

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LGC Standards

Proficiency Testing (PT) is a form of ILC designed to allow regular monitoring of laboratory performance in order to allow trending of results over time. LGC Standards offers 28 PT schemes in the three main areas of food, beverages and environmental monitoring with other topics including analysis of pharmaceuticals, microbial identification, blood toxicology, toy safety and particles analysis. LGC Standards has over 5,000 participating laboratories in over 150 countries.

Liz Jordain, Tel: 0161 762 2500; Website: www.lgcpt.com; E-mail: customerservices@lgcpt.com

National Physical Laboratory

NPL is the UK's national standards laboratory and is involved in over 300 comparison programmes. NPL's main measurement science development sectors include environment, communications and space studies, low carbon energy (including nuclear), defence and security and healthcare.

John Greenwood, Tel: 0208 977 3222; Website: www.npl.co.uk; E-mail: john.greenwood@npl.co.uk

VSL – the Dutch Metrology Institute

VSL has been organising ILC and PT services for over fifteen years and is accredited for working in the fields of gas analysis, pressure, temperature and humidity. The ILC services on offer include food and drink, air quality, dimensional quantities, mass, non-automatic weighing instruments and electrical quantities. VSL is offering a discount of 12.5% on its standard prices for a minimum of 10 laboratories put forward by BMTA.

Peter van Otterloo, Tel: +31 (0) 15 269 1500; Website: www.ilc.vsl.nl; E-mail: ComPass@vsl.nl

CitySprint Courier Service

CitySprint operates a specialised courier service for laboratory-based organisations with expertise in shipping dangerous goods and laboratory and clinical samples taking into account temperature sensitivity and other key parameters. Clients include the Environment Agency, leading pharmaceutical and petrochemical companies and the Ministry of Defence.

Justin Hayday, Tel: 02380 696060; Website: www.citysprint.co.uk; E-mail: jhayday@citysprint.co.uk

LABsure Laboratory Insurance Services

In 2003, Howden introduced the first professional indemnity scheme for testing laboratories and has now developed LABsure as a tailored package to meet all the requirements of laboratories and UKAS accredited companies.

Jamie Eaton, Tel: 020 7645 9385; Website: www.howdengroup.com; E-mail: jeaton@howdengroup.com

Note:

The above information has been prepared for the interest and convenience of BMTA members but the listings do not necessarily imply any specific recommendations by BMTA.

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