



ITAK

PROFICIENCY TEST PLAN FOR IRON ORE ANALYSIS

2025

Ensaios de Proficiência
ABNT NBR
ISO/IEC 17043

N



PEP 0021

ACCREDITATION

ITAK – Instituto de Tecnologia August Kekulé is an ABNT NBR ISO / IEC 17043 Proficiency Testing provider accredited by “Coordenação Geral de Acreditação do Inmetro (Cgcre)”, for the following PTs: Iron Ore, Gold Ore, Copper Ore and Concentrates, Nickel Ore, Silver, Ferroniobium, Phosphate Rock and Phosphate Concentrate and Bauxite.

We aim to provide continuous improvement practices in performing chemical analyses worldwide to our customers.

This project is going to continue in 2025 with five (5) rounds and invites the laboratories of such market to join the group of participants.

BENEFITS

Besides being an impartial tool for assessing laboratory performance, participation in proficiency tests has several benefits, such as:

- ✓ Adherence to one of the requirements of **ISO / IEC 17025** for companies already Accredited, or searching for accreditation on this ISO standard or other quality systems.
- ✓ Increased metrological reliability of the results obtained by the laboratory from their levels of precision and accuracy.
- ✓ Comparison with other industry laboratories and find improvement opportunities to increase performance level (benchmarking);
- ✓ The opportunity for evaluation and comparison of methodologies seeking one that best suits the level of accuracy required for specific parameters and levels.
- ✓ Awareness of the type of deviations that may be made by the laboratory (systematic or random) guiding actions to eliminate/minimize them;
- ✓ Identify staff training needs; and/or normalization or improvement of analytical methods.

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information regarding Proficiency Test participants is treated as confidential and proprietary to the client.

The only public information available in each round's report is the names of the participants. A confidentiality agreement with ITAK binds individuals who have access to this information.

When required by law or authorised by contractual commitments, ITAK will disclose confidential information and the affected participant will be notified of such disclosures, except if prohibited by law.

If we receive information about the participant from sources other than the participant, such as a complainant or regulatory authority, ITAK will ensure that this information remains confidential. The identity of these sources will also be kept confidential and not disclosed to the participant unless the source agrees to share that information.

According to a confidentiality protocol adopted by ITAK, the labs are identified by specific numerical codes, and the participants have knowledge and access only to their code, avoiding collusion among participants, which in case of occurrence or suspicion, will be properly investigated and handled by the program coordination team.

The experimental results obtained by the Participant Laboratory or even their performance in the Proficiency Testing may be disclosed to third parties with the consent of the Participant Laboratory.

All participating laboratories must be aware that their reported results may be used by ITAK to the characterisation of reference materials used in the PT as test items, preserving data confidentiality.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

If this Proficiency Test uses a Statistical model with designated values and Standard deviation from Certified Reference Materials, a minimum number of participants is not required.

If the Proficiency Test uses a Statistical model with Consensus values, a minimum of six participants is required.

If the Proficiency Test uses a Statistical model that involves Consensus values from expert participants after removing outliers, a minimum number of three participants is required for evaluation.

According to the results of accurate assessments, the performance of the participants can be classified as satisfactory, unsatisfactory, or questionable for each evaluated parameter.

If the participant does not provide complete data for evaluation for some specific analyses, the report will be issued as “insufficient data”.

Each statistical technique has its use limited and is conditioned to the number of participants who report numerically valid results and are approved in the Evaluation and Treatment Outliers.

SAMPLES AND ANALYSES

Each round will consist of 10 samples referring to two reference materials of different concentrations (05 sachets containing 8 g each), totalling 10 sachets per round.

The samples used in the Proficiency Testing Program are Reference Materials (RMs) with proven homogeneity and stability. RM's are produced by ITAK following the ISO 9001 Quality Management System and ISO quality protocols (ISO Series Guide 30 to 35) and ISO 17034 - General requirements for the competence of reference materials producers.

It is the participant's responsibility to follow up and clarify the shipment through customs or carrier when it is required. If samples come back to ITAK because of incorrect address information or because the laboratory has not clarified the shipment through customs, ITAK can charge reshipping expenses.

Test items can be shipped by using customer accounts on FedEx, DHL, and UPS carriers.

Along with the samples, it will also send instructions directing the Participating Laboratory on how to treat the samples, carry out the analyses, and report the analytical results.

Any communication about this Proficiency Testing, such as questions, submission of results, technical reports, and certificates of participation, is by software available at www.itak.com.br/app for participating laboratories.

In addition to their test results and methodologies, ITAK PT participants should also report the measurement uncertainties of each analyzed parameter (if available). It must be sent as the Standard Uncertainty Combined, without application of any coverage factor, which would make it Expanded Uncertainty. Such data should be reported in specific fields in the ITAK PT Management System.

Invalid analytical results such as "less than" or "zero" are not amenable to statistical evaluation. Therefore, in these situations, ITAK will not do the participant performance evaluation.

The participating laboratory is required to undertake one (1) independent determination in each sample, preferably in five (05) different days, analyzing a couple a day, employing one or more validated analytical methods. The methods used should be reported with the results. The samples must be analyzed as ordinary routine samples of the laboratory, without any special treatment.

The parameters to be determined in each sample are listed below:

Total Fe, FeO, Al₂O₃, SiO₂, Mn, TiO₂, P, CaO, MgO, K₂O, Na₂O and LOI (Loss On Ignition)

The samples will be sent by the ITAK from João Monlevade / MG, under the guidance of the Participant Laboratory, using an appropriate way to transport them. In case of loss or damage to any test item, ITAK will evaluate the possibility of replacement, which will depend on how it can be transported and the delivery deadline so as not to compromise the schedule.

ANALYTICAL METHODS

The Participant should use its routine procedure in Iron Ore Analyses. ITAK suggests the following analytical methods for this Proficiency Test:

- ✓ **Total Fe:** Fusion and determination by XRF or Acid digestion and Titrimetric Method;
- ✓ **FeO:** Titrimetric Method;
- ✓ **Al₂O₃, Mn, TiO₂, P, CaO, MgO, K₂O, Na₂O:** Fusion and determination by AAS or ICP-OES or XRF;
- ✓ **SiO₂:** Digestion followed by gravimetric method or Fusion and determination by XRF;
- ✓ **LOI (Loss on Ignition):** Gravimetric Method.

The methods used should be informed following, whenever possible, the standard "Digestion Technique / Instrument Finish" using simplified codes as examples below:

- ✓ Fusion and X-Ray Fluorescence finish: **FUS-XRF**;
- ✓ Pressed Pellet and X-Ray Fluorescence finish: **POP-XRF**;
- ✓ Fusion and ICP-OES finish: **FUS-ICP**;
- ✓ Four acid digestion (HF,HNO₃,HClO₄,HCl) and ICP-OES finish: **DIG4AC-ICP**;
- ✓ Acid digestion (HCl) and Titrimetric finish: **DIGAC-TIT**;
- ✓ Four acid digestion (HF,HNO₃,HClO₄,HCl) and Atomic Absorption Spectrometry: **DIG4AC-AAS**;
- ✓ Four acid digestion (HF,HNO₃,HClO₄,HCl) and Gravimetric finish: **DIG4AC-GRA**;
- ✓ Four acid digestion (HF,HNO₃,HClO₄,HCl) and Colorimetric finish: **DIG4AC-COL**;
- ✓ Gravimetric Method: **GRA**;
- ✓ Thermogravimetric Analyse: **TGA**.

SCHEDULE

The proposed schedule is presented in the table below but can be adjusted as required. The official schedule should be checked through the PTP Management System.

Steps of the Program	1st Round (63 rd round)	2nd Round (64 th round)	3rd Round (65 th round)	4th Round (66 th round)	5th Round (67 th round)
1- Sending invitations	28/Oct/2024	--	--	--	--
2-Confirmation of participants	07/Feb				
3- Sending samples to the participants	14/Feb	04/Apr	13/Jun	25/Aug	01/Oct
4- Receiving samples by the participant	06/Mar	22/Apr	30/Jun	10/Sep	17/Oct
5- Completion of the Analyses and report the results by the participants	04/Apr	23/May	31/Jul	10/Oct	14/Nov
6- Preparation and delivery of Performance Report to the participants.	02/May	10/Jun	26/Ago	24/Oct	05/Dez

Note: the dates in bold (item 5) must be met to avoid delays in issuing the results, which can compromise the subsequent rounds of the program.

If delays occur, the Program Coordinator must be contacted to assess the possibility of extending the deadline without compromising the schedule or loss to the other participants.

If there are unjustified delays, ITAK may close the rounds without the missing results.

For each round, the instructions will be sent along with the samples, containing guidelines on how the laboratory should proceed, and specific information about the samples such as expected levels of the analyte (s).

REQUIREMENTS FOR PARTICIPATION

The Laboratory interested in participating in this Proficiency Test should be a legally responsible organization with the technical capacity and equipment to carry out the chemical analysis of its scope; complete the registration form on the ITAK website at pep.itak.com.br, confirm its participation by the deadline set in the schedule.

PERFORMANCE REPORT

For each round of this Proficiency Test, ITAK will issue a personalized digital Interlaboratory Performance Evaluation Report under confidentiality identification for the internal evaluation of the Participant Laboratory and identifying improvement opportunities.

The Performance Report is structured following the ISO / IEC 17043 requirements.

If the participant wants to receive the report of another facility of the same business group, it must be requested directly to the person in charge, or through a formal authorization from the person in charge. Preliminary reports will not be issued.

If required, ITAK may rectify or ratify reports provided that such corrections do not require further statistical processing of data. All rectification generates a new version and new report number that will replace the previous version when published and communicated.

If required, by law, the performance report can be delivered or presented to the Regulatory Entity or Public Prosecutor's Office without the participant's permission and will be formally and previously communicated.

If it is not possible to deliver the performance report on the date planned in the schedule, the participants will be promptly notified about the possible delay and the new date delivery.

ITAK Interlaboratory Performance Report is accepted as an ISO/IEC 17025 requirement.

APPEAL

The participant of ITAK's Proficiency Test has the right to appeal against its performance evaluation on the Technical Report.

The participants who have doubts or disagree with the performance evaluation must register their appeal in the "Appeals" field in the Proficiency Test Management System.

Meeting a requirement of ABNT NBR ISO/IEC 17043 - Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing, ITAK has a procedure that manages this process.

INVESTMENT

Request a proposal by email: interlab@itak.com.br

ITAK has an attractive discount policy such as participation of several units of companies belonging to the same economic group, discounts for laboratories' participation in more than one PT, discounts for purchase of ITAK's CRM, etc.

Find out more by contacting us at: interlab@itak.com.br

All customs duties are participants' responsibility.

ITAK must receive the total amount without any deductions such as bank fees or taxes applied. It is necessary to take them into account before sending us the payment.

SUBCONTRACT ACTIVITIES

For this PT, homogeneity test analyses of Reference Materials used as samples (test items) can be subcontracted from competent laboratories.

All laboratories are evaluated and qualified in the ITAK's Quality Management System for these analyses providing results with which, after appropriate statistical treatment, the designated values, standard deviations, and uncertainties are obtained for the Proficiency Test.

COORDINATION TEAM

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