

	Code PR-21-OP	Revision Number 0	Date of entry into force 2005-12-01	Page 1	Of pages 3
Quality Management System – Policy and Programme Support Section					
SELECTION OF METHODS					

1. PURPOSE

Regulating the selection of methods, the planning and development of new methods and the controlled introduction of these new methods.

2. SCOPE

This procedure applies to all methods for sampling, handling, transport, storage, preparation of items to be tested and measurement newly introduced into the accreditation context or to the improvement of methods already used.

3. RESPONSIBILITIES

Service Group Leader

- To select or approve the method according to the specifications of the customer needs.
- To plan a procedure for developing a new or adapting an existing method to the capabilities of the service
- To plan the controlled introduction of new methods into the service
- To inform the Quality Manager about new methods

Unit Head / Section Head

- To assist the Service Group Leader in selecting appropriate methods, when required.

Quality Manager

- To incorporate the relayed information into the list of applied methods

	Function	Name	Signature and Date
Authorized	Section Head	K. Mrabit	12/10/2005
Approved	Unit Head	Pascal Deboodt	12.10.2005
Approved	Service Group Leader	R. Cruz-Suarez	7.10.2005
Approved	Service Group Leader	John Hunt	11 th Oct. 2005
Registered	Quality Manager	J. Zeger	5 October 2005

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s:\quality management\quality management documentation\general technical procedures\ PR-21-
OP_Selection_of_Methods_V0.doc

Code	Revision Number	Date of entering into force	Page	Of pages
PR-21-OP	0	2005-12-01	2	3
SELECTION OF METHODS				

4. DESCRIPTION

Methods to be applied in the testing laboratory have to be carefully selected by the respective Service Group Leader, preferably in cooperation with the acting technicians. If necessary he/she can ask for support from the Unit Head or the Section Head.

If the customer specifies a specific method to be used by the testing laboratory, this method has to be checked for its appropriateness to solve the analysis problem. The customer has to be informed in writing by the Service Group Leader if the specified method is found to be inappropriate by the testing laboratory.

Selection of an appropriate method shall start with carefully studying the necessities of the customer, even if they are not defined by the customer, and an assessment of methods already published in international standards or methods accepted by the respective international scientific community, but not yet formulated within an international standard or methods specified by the manufacturer of an analysis instrument.

If no applicable method can be found within this context, the Service Group Leader has to create a plan for either modifying an already accepted method to the needs of the testing laboratory or to develop a completely new method. In both of these cases this plan will also have to include the validation of the method (see [PR-13-OP](#), [PR-14-OP](#)).

Every method used within the testing laboratory shall be described fully in procedures or working instructions provided according to PR-18-OP. Measurement method descriptions shall contain:

- a) appropriate identification;
- b) scope;
- c) description of the type of item to be tested or calibrated;
- d) parameters or quantities and ranges to be determined;
- e) apparatus and equipment, including technical performance requirements;
- f) reference standards and reference materials required;
- g) environmental conditions required and any stabilization period needed;
- h) description of the procedure, including
 - affixing of identification marks, handling, transporting, storing and preparation of items,
 - checks to be made before the work is started,
 - checks that the equipment is working properly and, where required, calibration and adjustment of the equipment before each use,
 - the method of recording the observations and results, - any safety measures to be observed;
- i) criteria and/or requirements for approval/rejection;
- j) data to be recorded and method of analysis and presentation;

Code	Revision Number	Date of entering into force	Page	Of pages
PR-21-OP	0	2005-12-01	3	3
SELECTION OF METHODS				

k) the uncertainty or the procedure for estimating uncertainty.

For any method selected to be applied within the framework of services supplied by the testing laboratory, a confirmation program has to be run by the Service Group Leader to make certain that the testing laboratory can operate the selected method properly.

The customer shall be informed by the Service Group Leader about the method selected to provide the specified service.

5. RECORDS

Records coming out of this procedure are the documentation of the selection process, the demonstration of the ability to operate selected methods properly, any plans to adapt existing or develop new methods and any necessary planned validation actions including the estimation of uncertainties for measurement methods. These records have to be kept by the acting Service Group Leader.

The Quality Manager has to keep a list of methods, applied in the testing laboratory, which he has to update with information provided by the Service Group Leaders.