

Planning Proficiency Test RV-2019-01 for Refractories

FLX-139, FLX-140



Bedburg-Hau, 05.07.2019

Coordinator of PT
Charlotte Winkels-Herding

Statistics and Report
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Important Information

Costs for the participants

The participants will be billed a total of **400 Euro** (EXW Bedburg-Hau, Germany) for all 2 samples for this proficiency test (PT).

Analysis

Sample pretreatment

The samples must be annealed at 1025 °C to a constant mass before being analyzed (1 hour is usually sufficient). All analyses must refer to the annealed sample.

Parameters to determine

FLX-139 (about 95% Al ₂ O ₃):	Al ₂ O ₃ , CaO, Cr ₂ O ₃ , Fe ₂ O ₃ , HfO ₂ , K ₂ O, La ₂ O ₃ , MgO, Na ₂ O, SiO ₂ , SrO, TiO ₂ , Y ₂ O ₃ , ZrO ₂ , LOI
FLX-140 (about 90% ZrO ₂):	Al ₂ O ₃ , CaO, Cr ₂ O ₃ , Fe ₂ O ₃ , HfO ₂ , K ₂ O, La ₂ O ₃ , MgO, Na ₂ O, SiO ₂ , SrO, TiO ₂ , Y ₂ O ₃ , ZrO ₂ , LOI

- Participation is also permitted even when not all of the parameters can be determined.
- Each sample must be analyzed two times, and every value must be reported to three decimal places (0.000).

Preferred method of analysis

- **XRF with fusion as the sample preparation method**
- **Every other *traceable* method, such as ICP, wet chemistry, etc.**

Other methods, e.g., XRF using “pressed pellets” as the sample preparation method or XRF with the “standardless analysis” method, which are not traceable can also be used. These values will not be included in the evaluation. They will, however, be shown as informational values in the report and laboratory comparison.

Application

To receive the samples, they must be ordered as **RV-2019-01** by July 31, 2019.

Shipment

The samples will be shipped in August 2019.

Sending in the results

The results must be submitted by September 30, 2019, at the latest. You will receive a link, with which you can download a pre-prepared Excel Table and later upload it (completed) for the submission of your data. We assume that you will use one method for one parameter. Thus, you will receive one lab code. However, if you want to use, e.g., two methods for the same parameter, you must request an additional lab code (at no charge).

Report

We intend to complete the report by the end of November 2019.

Introduction

X-ray fluorescence analysis is a frequently used technique for the analysis of oxidic materials.

However, for the calibration of XRF instruments, dedicated standard material is needed. As a worldwide supplier for XRF laboratories, FLUXANA has developed a number of services to support XRF users. One of these services is the production of new reference materials and the organization of proficiency tests (PT).

In 2011, FLUXANA introduced its own quality management.

In February 2014, FLUXANA received accreditation from the German DAKKS according to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17025:2005 for the test laboratory in Bedburg-Hau.

The production of reference materials and the performance of proficiency tests is not yet accredited. However, the proficiency tests are conducted following the corresponding norms.

All evaluations are performed in agreement with DIN EN ISO/IEC 17043:2010, DIN EN ISO 17034:2017 and ISO Guide 35:2017.

Proficiency test provider / Address for ordering the samples

FLUXANA GmbH & CO.KG
Borschelstrasse 3
47551 Bedburg-Hau, Germany
pt@fluxana.de

Coordinator: Charlotte Winkels-Herding, QM
Responsible for evaluation and data processing: Susan Aschenbrenner, PT

Subcontractor

Analysis performed by PT Participants.

Proficiency test items

The materials are intended for use in methods according to ISO 12677:2013
About 12 kg of each material were delivered and homogeneously distributed into 50 ml bottles by FLUXANA. The bottles were then vacuum packed for storage.

Test item	Description
FLX-139	Al ₂ O ₃
FLX-140	ZrO ₂

Homogeneity and stability

The material was used as delivered. A homogeneity study of the materials was performed based on ISO Guide 35:2006 and DIN ISO 13528:2009-01.

The stability of the materials for the time-period of the proficiency test is considered as uncritical, because the material is pre-treated accordingly before use.

Metrological traceability

In agreement with internationally valid standards, the analytical procedures (e.g., ICP or any other wet chemical procedure) used by the participants to determine the certified values in the previous proficiency test had to be traceable. Other methods were not permitted.

In this proficiency test, only XRF results will be used to determine the statistical data. Concentration values determined with other methods can also be submitted; they will be shown in the evaluation and, as with all other values, the z-scores calculated.

Participant accreditation

It is important to know whether the participant laboratory works under DIN EN ISO/IEC 17025 accreditation. Therefore, we will ask this information for each parameter.

Number of participants

The minimum number of participants is 10.

Potential major sources of errors

- Care must be taken to ensure that the material is annealed before the analysis.

Recommended rules for the analysis

FLX-139:

1 g of sample that has been annealed to a constant mass (typically 1 hour at 1025 °C) and 8 g flux should be weighed into a platinum crucible (with 5% gold) and mixed. Then a normal fusion should be performed manually or with an automatic machine.

When using the electrical fusion machine from FLUXANA, the program A0 is recommended. When using the gas fusion machine from FLUXANA, the program P0 is recommended.

FLX-140:

0,5 g of sample that has been annealed to a constant mass (typically 1 hour at 1025 °C) and 8,5 g flux should be weighed into a platinum crucible (with 5% gold) and mixed. Then a normal fusion should be performed manually or with an automatic machine.

When using the electrical fusion machine from FLUXANA, the program A0 is recommended. When using the gas fusion machine from FLUXANA, the program P0 is recommended.

Evaluation

According to DIN EN ISO/IEC 17043:2010-05, we will use robust statistical methods in agreement with DIN ISO 13528:2015, ISO/TS 20612:2007 and DIN 38402-45:2014.

Advantages of using robust statistics

Statistical methods are robust in the sense that any outliers have only a limited effect on the overall result. Steps were taken to ensure that the results are still meaningful, even if the proportion of outliers is 1/3. Robust statistics are also preferable for small populations.

Outliers

Outliers in the statistical sense are typically not detected when using robust statistical methods because the robust A+S algorithms were found to work better than the classical approach (which is outlier detection plus arithmetic mean and classical s.d. formula). Outliers shown in the evaluation are only based on z-scores and marked with yellow or red colors.

Number of measurements

All participants are requested to perform two measurements, for some methods up to six measurements are recommended. This is necessary to perform the repeatability standard deviation for the laboratories. Participants who send only one or more than two values must first ask for permission. Otherwise, they will be excluded.

Publication of the results

All participants will be informed about the results of the PT with a report. Which results were delivered by which laboratory will be kept confidential. All laboratories are encoded, and the code is only known to the organizer and the individual laboratory. The final report will be published on the FLUXANA website. First, a preliminary report will be sent out for verification by the participants. Within one month, the final report will be published.

Laboratory performance

Each participant will receive a performance evaluation report based on z-scores. The diagram shows the relative difference to the assigned values

Further Information

For this proficiency test, the participants' results must be submitted to the organizer using only the "Result Sheet" Excel table, which must not be altered. Paper sheets or other Excel tables will only be accepted in special cases in prior agreement with the organizer. In this way, we want to improve the data quality and avoid any transmission errors.

Statistical Evaluation used for this PT

Calculation of Mean m

The mean m for all laboratories is calculated using the Hampel estimator (ISO/TS 20612:2007 9.2.3) based on the laboratory means μ using traceable methods only.

Calculation of reproducibility standard deviation s_R

The reproducibility standard deviation s_R is calculated using the Q-method (ISO/TS 20612:2007 9.2.3).

Calculation of repeatability standard deviation s_r

The repeatability standard deviation s_r is also calculated using the Q-method.

Calculation of robust standard deviation s^*

The robust standard deviation s^* is calculated from the laboratory means μ using the Q-method.

Calculation of uncertainty U_{s_R} (according to Nordtest TR 537 ed 3.1.)

The **uncertainty** U_{s_R} for a confidence interval of P=95% (k=2) can be calculated from the **reproducibility standard deviation** s_R (factor 1.25 for average median, robust statistics) and the number of participating laboratories p :

$$U_{s_R} = 2 * 1.25 * \frac{s_R}{\sqrt{p}}$$

Calculation of uncertainty U_{s^*} (according to ISO 13528:2015)

The **uncertainty** U_{s^*} for a confidence interval of P=95% (k=2) can be calculated from the **robust standard deviation** s^* (factor 1.25 for average median, robust statistics)) and the number of participating laboratories p :

$$U_{s^*} = 2 * 1.25 * \frac{s^*}{\sqrt{p}}$$

The **uncertainty** U_{s^*} only takes the between laboratories uncertainty into account while the **uncertainty** U_{s_R} also includes the within laboratories uncertainty. Therefore U_{s_R} is recommended for use in accredited laboratories.

Laboratory performance

Laboratory proficiency assessment is based on z-scores.

The **z-score** z is calculated from all laboratory means μ :

$$z = \frac{m - \mu}{S_R}$$

m	Mean value for all laboratories (assigned value)
μ	Mean value of individual laboratory
S_R	Reproducibility standard deviation

Assessment on z-scores:

$ z \leq 2.0$	indicates "satisfactory" performance = generates no signal
$2.0 < z < 3.0$	indicates "questionable" performance = generates a warning signal
$ z \geq 3.0$	indicates "unsatisfactory" performance = generates an action signal

Z-scores with $3 \geq |z| \geq 2$ are highlighted with a yellow color, z-scores with $|z| \geq 3$ are highlighted with a red color.