



The purpose of this document is to clarify the terms of reference for the EQALM working group (WG) for the Central Database.

Preamble

In 2019 the board of EQALM decided to establish a central database to support both EQA organisations and other interested parties. See for more details purpose and tasks below. EQALM is the owner of the central database and all activities using the central database are directed by the Working Group for the Central Database.

Purpose and Tasks

The aim of the central database is to explore content from different EQA organisers whenever exploration of content from a single EQA organisation is not sufficient. This facility is intended to promote the development of knowledge in the broadest sense of the word.

Examples of the application of the central database are:

❖ **Service to EQA providers.**

EQA providers should be able to benefit as the result of contributing data. Potential services are:

- **Benchmarking of local performance (both EQA and laboratories) with respect to others:**
It may be interesting for an EQA provider to compare the performance of its laboratories, for example, on the basis of the variability of reported results, with the performance of similar schemes in other countries.
- **Comparing their own data-processing techniques with others:**
If an EQA provider wants to assess the effects of a new data-processing or evaluation technique on historical data, this database could give each organiser much more data and hence, power, than if everyone were to use his/her own database.
- **Estimation of EQA variability:**
Data evaluation is difficult for small peer groups. An EQA organiser may obtain data from other providers in order to have a better idea of the variability that can be expected from the data.
- **Evaluation of data quality:**
This can be a direct service to the contributing EQA providers, where data is checked for bimodality or exceeding variability.
- **Evaluation of state-of-the-art:**
Aggregated data from different EQA providers can be used to determine in a larger data set performance specifications based on the state of the art.

❖ **Evaluation of harmonisation between measurement methods.**

Evaluation of the current status of the harmonisation of measurement methods supports initiatives to improve harmonisation and monitor the effect of harmonisation.

For this purpose EQALM has set up a joint Task Force with ICHCLR (International Consortium for Harmonization of Clinical Laboratory Results) to assess harmonization of the IVD industry through aggregated EQA data for different measurands on an international basis.

❖ **Post-market vigilance.**

If a change in batch or reagent lot causes a shift of mean values, this deviation can be more quickly detected by a common database than by an individual EQA provider. Observations made by an individual EQA provider can also be confirmed by data from the common database

WG Steering Committee

P. Meijer – ECAT Foundation, The Netherlands (Chair)

W. Coucke – Sciensano, Belgium

G.M. Henriksen – DEKS, Denmark

S. Albarede – CTCB, France

R.Popa - Calilab, Romania

Current ongoing projects

A list of ongoing projects is available at the EQALM website. See Working Groups, EQALM Central Database

Financial aspects

EQALM does not finance working group chairs or members. For specific and approved projects, the Executive Board can allocate financial support.

Publication list

A list of publications is available at the EQALM website. See Working Groups, EQALM Central Database

Data Transfer

For the transfer of content from an EQA provider to the EQALM Central Database a Content Transfer Agreement is signed. An example of a Content Transfer Agreement is accessible at the EQALM website (see Working Groups, EQALM Central Database)