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PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM

No CCB/PT-4.4/DG.1

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Concrete in structures

PROFICIENCY TESTING ORGANIZER ACCREDITED BY PCA

No PT 014

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1. Proficiency Testing Organizer

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In the scope of these proficiency tests, the PT Organizer undertakes to maintain confidentiality of all information provided by Participants, including, among others, test results and the identities of individual Participants, and to ensure impartiality in evaluating their actions. The Organizer also commits to securing documentation related to the tests against unauthorized access.

This proficiency testing program is conducted in accordance with the requirements of the PN-EN ISO/IEC 17043:2011^w (EN ISO/IEC 17043:2010) standard. The PT Organizer is accredited by the Polish Accreditation Center for the objects and properties covered by this PT program – Accreditation Scope No. PT 014, available on the PT Organizer's website www.ccbarg.pl and on the PCA website www.pca.gov.pl.

2. Individuals involved in the design and operation of the proficiency testing program

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3. Purpose of the program

The aim of the proficiency testing program is:

- evaluation of the Participant's performance in conducting specific tests / sampling
- providing evidence to confirm the validity of results and technical competence of the Participant
- enabling the Participant to identify areas for improvement through proficiency testing
- providing customers with additional information to enhance trust

^w standard with withdrawn status

4. Subcontracting

During the implementation of this proficiency testing program, the PT Organizer will use subcontracting for:

- taking samples to perform tests to assess homogeneity;
- performing tests to assess homogeneity;
- storing the samples taken and prepared by the Participants for evaluating the results of the Participants' sampling activity, after the samples are transferred to the PT Organizer until they are tested,
- performing tests to evaluate the results of the Participants' sampling activities.

Taking samples and performance of tests for homogeneity assessment will be carried out by the accredited laboratory BETOTEST POLSKA Sp. z o.o., based in Szczecin, Accreditation Scope No. AB 1641. Other activities will be carried out by the accredited laboratory BARG CENTRUM Sp. z o.o., based in Ożarów Mazowiecki, Accreditation Scope No. AB 1354.

If the need for subcontracting in other areas arises during the program, the PT Organizer will immediately inform the Participants in writing of the services it intends to subcontract in addition.

The proficiency testing organizer does not subcontract the planning of the proficiency testing program, the evaluation of the results of the activity, or the development and authorization of the final report.

5. Criteria for participation in Proficiency Testing

Participation in proficiency testing is possible after acceptance of the participation conditions specified in this program, which occurs upon submission of the dedicated Registration Form for a particular round, within the deadline indicated in the Schedule of the PT program, to the email address badania.bieglosci@barg.pl.

The form of proficiency testing is open and is carried out cyclically. Participation is open to accredited and non-accredited laboratories, as well as other interested parties conducting conformity assessment activities. The minimum number of Participants for each method is 12, while the maximum is 20. In the case of insufficient number of applications, the PT Organizer may extend the time for receiving applications (which may affect the deadlines indicated in the Program Schedule for the round) or cancel the proficiency testing for a given property, of which Participants will be immediately informed. In case of exceeding the number of Participants, the order of applications is decisive. If the number of applicants is too large, the PT Organizer may announce the implementation of additional rounds according to this program. The Participant may take part in proficiency testing for selected properties. The tests should be performed by the Participant according to the test methods specified by the PT Organizer.

For a specific testing method, no more than 3 Participants from the same entity can participate.

A Participant without accreditation for a specific test is also required to conduct the test using supervised equipment, ensuring measurement consistency, in accordance with DA-06 (ILAC-P10).

Details of the proficiency testing program implementation are described in the Instruction developed for each program round. Participants should follow the requirements of the Instruction.

Results from Participants should be provided with expanded measurement uncertainty, with the same accuracy and in the same unit as the test result, at a specified expansion factor k and expansion

probability p , following ILAC-G17. The uncertainty of the result should take into account the uncertainty due to sampling (taking samples).

Results from Participants that do not meet program requirements and/or instructions for Participants, including results obtained using a different testing method, failure to meet requirements for measurement consistency, or reported without measurement uncertainty, will not be used to determine the values of x_{pt} and σ_{pt} .

Participation in proficiency testing is paid. The costs of participation are shown in the Registration Form. They do not include the cost of delivery of proficiency testing objects to the PT Organizer (applies to samples taken and prepared by the Participant, and then transferred to the PT Organizer for evaluation of the results of the Participant's sampling activity). Samples are delivered to the PT Organizer by the Participant (personally or through a shipping company), at the Participant's expense. After registration of participation, the PT Organizer sends the Participant a VAT invoice with a payment term of 14 days. The proficiency test report may be delivered to the Participant after payment for participation in the test has been made. Failure to provide the Participant with the results of the proficiency test does not relieve the Participant from the obligation to pay according to the scope of the registered participation.

The participant has the right to cancel participation in the proficiency testing at no cost, which requires sending a written cancellation to the e-mail address badania.bieglosci@barg.pl within 14 days of the scheduled closing date for submission of registration forms.

6. Scope of Organized Proficiency Testing

Ord.	Measured quantity/property	Reference document
1.	Taking cores (Evaluated by testing the compressive strength performed by the PT Organizer according to PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2019) on samples taken and prepared by the Participant)	PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2019)
2.	Compressive strength	PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2019)
3.	Bond strength Pull-off method	PN-EN 1542:2000 (EN 1542:1999)

The scope of measured quantities/properties is specified in the Registration Form and defined within successive rounds of the program in accordance with the Schedule of the PT program for a given calendar year.

Detailed information on what needs to be identified, measured, or tested is provided in the Instruction and Test Result Cards. Instructions and Test Results Cards are made available to Participants prior to arrival at the taking samples site. The range of expected values and/or properties for proficiency testing objects is indicated in the Registration Form and/or Instruction for a specific round.

7. Potential sources of errors

- Incorrect handling of test objects
- Occurrence of collusion among Participants
- Equipment that does not meet the requirements of the reference document
- Malfunctioning equipment during sampling / test
- Influence of environmental conditions during sampling / test
- Small number of Participants
- Use of a different method by the Participant than required in the proficiency testing program
- Non-compliance with the PT Organizer's guidelines
- Non-compliance with the guidelines included in the testing methods

8. Preventive Measures to Prevent Collusion Among Participants

Each Participant, by signing the registration form, commits to maintaining confidentiality of obtained test results in relation to other Participants and securing proficiency testing documentation from unauthorized access.

Participants are obligated to sampling / conduct tests and submit the results to the Proficiency Testing Department (DBB) of the PT Organizer, without consulting with other Participants, whose participation in each program is known to them from other sources. In the event of collusion detection, Participants will be disqualified from participating in the specific round and will bear the total costs of participation in the proficiency testing program. It should be noted, however, that avoiding collusion and falsifying results is the responsibility of each Participant.

9. Production, storage and distribution of research objects and instructions for Participants

The PT test organizer, after gathering the required number of Participants, shall organize the sampling / test execution site and provide all Participants with information related to the rules of sampling / test execution.

The objects of proficiency testing shall be produced in such a way as to ensure that they are highly homogeneous by taking samples / performing tests on samples taken from one element (made from one batch of concrete mixture), at the same time.

Storage proficiency test objects is carried out under conditions that meet the requirements of the test methods, in such a way as to maintain adequate stability.

The transportation of samples to the location where the Participant will prepare and/or test the specimens, as well as to the PT Organizer (in the case of specimens provided to the PT Organizer for evaluation of the results of the Participant's specimen collection activities) is the responsibility of the Participant. The Participant shall then ensure that the manner of securing the research objects, as well as the type and time of their transportation, meets the requirements of this program and does not adversely affect their condition.

In the event that the test objects are lost or damaged to such an extent that it is impossible to perform the test in accordance with the test method, the Participant shall not participate in the given round of the proficiency testing program. Failure to deliver specimens or delivery of damaged specimens to the PT Organizer (for evaluation of the results of the Participant's specimen collection activities), does not

relieve the Participant from the obligation to pay in accordance with the scope of participation reported.

All information related to the implementation of the proficiency testing program is described in this program, the PT Program Schedule, or is provided to the Participant in the form of the Participant Instructions.

The Instructions to Participants contain detailed information related to the implementation of the tests, such as the type, size and/or quantity of specimens to be taken and tested, methods of preparing the and storage of objects, deadlines for the execution of the various stages of the test, properties of the object necessary to perform the test, accuracy of reporting the test result and measurement uncertainties, etc.

10. Checking the homogeneity and stability of proficiency test objects

10.1. Homogeneity

Homogeneity will be assessed in accordance with the algorithm presented in Figure 1. Samples for testing will be taken at random from the prepared, for a given round of the proficiency testing program, in series according to Table 1. From each series, 2 portions/samples (m) will be prepared. The tests will be performed under repeatability conditions.

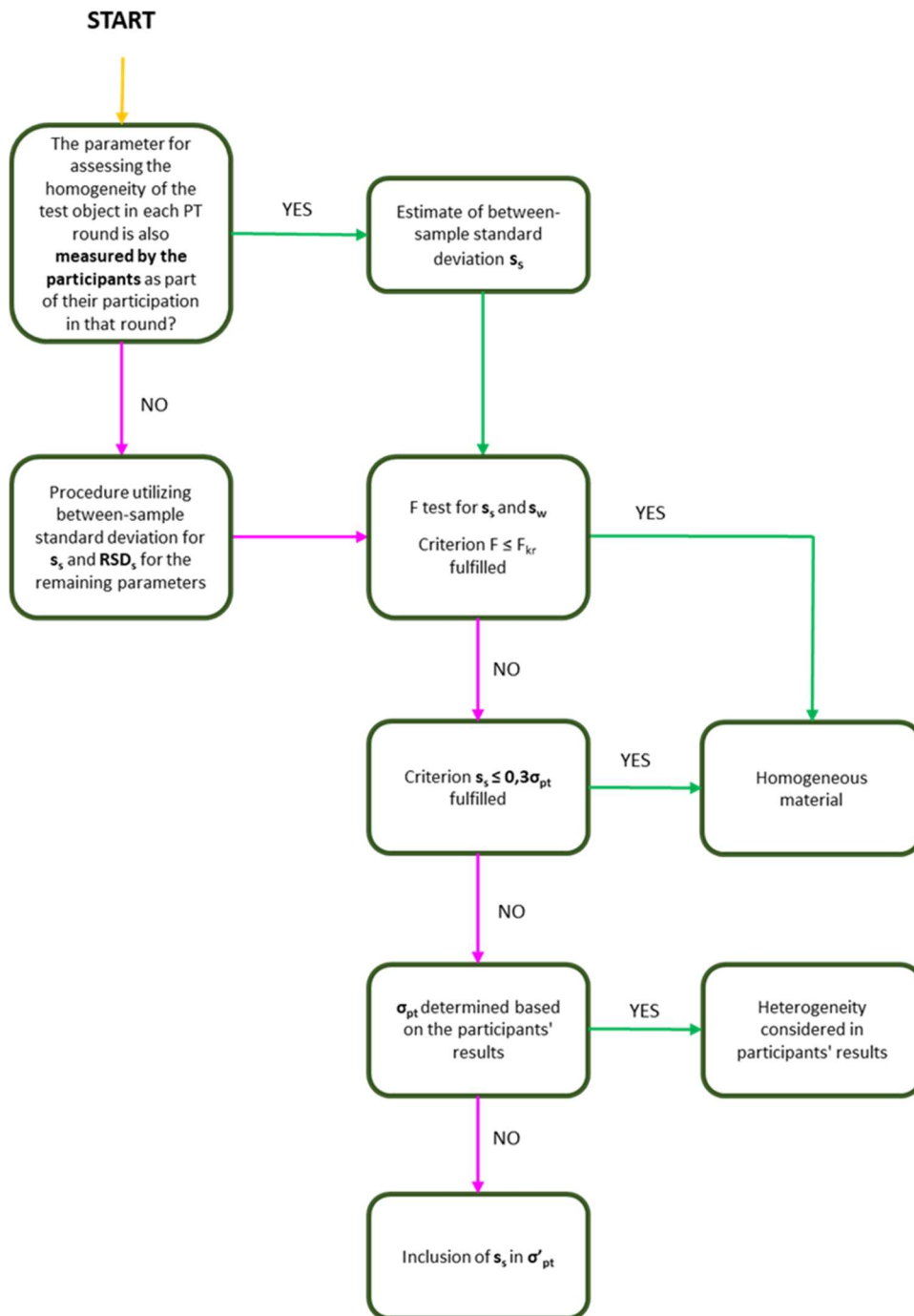


Fig. 1. Homogeneity assessment algorithm in proficiency testing

Table 1. List of quantity verifying homogeneity for individual values measured as part of proficiency tests

Measured quantity/property	Number of series	A quantity verifying homogeneity
Taking cores PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2009)	10	Compressive strength PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2009)
Compressive strength PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2009)	10	Compressive strength PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2009)
Bond strength, Pull-off method PN-EN 1542:2000 (EN 1542:1999)	10	Bond strength, Pull-off method PN-EN 1542:2000 (EN 1542:1999)

Using analysis of variance, homogeneity is verified by calculating the standard deviation between specimens:

If $m=2$

$$s_s = \sqrt{\max(0, s_{\bar{x}}^2 - s_w^2 / 2)}$$

$$s_{\bar{x}} = \sqrt{\sum_{t=1}^g (\bar{x}_t - \bar{\bar{x}})^2 / (g - 1)}$$

$$s_w = \sqrt{\sum_{t=1}^g w_t^2 / (2g)}$$

If $m \neq 2$

$$s_s^2 = s_{s,w}^2 - s_w^2 = \frac{1}{(g-1)} \sum_{t=1}^g (\bar{x}_t - \bar{\bar{x}})^2 - \frac{1}{m} s_w^2$$

$$s_{\bar{x}}^2 = \frac{1}{(g-1)} \sum_{t=1}^g (\bar{x}_t - \bar{\bar{x}})^2$$

$$s_w^2 = \frac{1}{g} \sum_{t=1}^g s_t^2$$

$$s_{s,w}^2 = \frac{1}{(g-1)} \sum_{t=1}^g (\bar{x}_t - \bar{\bar{x}})^2 + \left(1 - \frac{1}{m}\right) s_w^2 = s_s^2 + s_w^2$$

where:

s_s – estimate of between-sample standard deviation

$s_{\bar{x}}$ – standard deviation of specimen averages

s_w – within-sample standard deviation

$s_{s,w}$ – combined variance value of s_s and s_w

\bar{x}_t – mean for the t-th specimen ($t=1, \dots, g$)

$\bar{\bar{x}}$ – overall mean

w_t – between-test-portion range

g – number of proficiency test items tested in a homogeneity check

m – number of portions

The test specimens will be considered homogeneous if, according to the algorithm shown in Figure 1, the condition is met:

$$F \leq F_{kr}$$

or

$$s_s \leq 0,3 \sigma_{pt}$$

10.2. Stability

Assessing the stability of concrete in structures due to the variability of the material and its properties over time is not possible. In order to minimize the impact of material variability on the results obtained by the Participants, the PT Organizer for each round of the test, in the Instructions for Participants, will provide detailed guidelines for the various stages of performing the test, including the exact timing of the determination.

10.3. Procedure in case of inhomogeneity (according to ISO 13528:2022-08 Annex B.2.5)

If the criterion of sufficient homogeneity is not met, and σ_{pt} is not determined from the participants' results, one of the following options is considered:

a. Option I

Include the inter-sample variation s_s or standard deviation of the studied series of results in the data analysis by using:

- σ'_{pt} determined by the formula

$$\sigma'_{pt} = \sqrt{\sigma_{pt}^2 + s_s^2}$$

- or z' specified by the formula

$$z'_i = \frac{x_i - x_{pt}}{\sqrt{\sigma_{pt}^2 + s_s^2}}$$

b. Option II

Not to evaluate the results of the Participants.

11. Method and Evaluation Criteria

After receiving proficiency testing results from all participants, a preliminary data analysis will be conducted to verify whether the provided results meet the requirements set by the PT Organizer as specified in the program and instructions for participants. This data analysis may involve verification of measurement consistency, application of the appropriate research method, or presentation of the test result (correct unit, required precision, result with expanded measurement uncertainty), etc. Participants' results obtained in a given round of the program will be verified for distribution before statistical analysis of the data.

Results from participants that do not meet the program and/or instruction requirements, including results obtained using a different research method, failure to meet consistency requirements, or presented without measurement uncertainty, will not be used to determine the values x_{pt} and σ_{pt} .

In cases where analyses other than robust ones are applied to determine the values x_{pt} or σ_{pt} , a Grubbs' test will be conducted (according to PN-ISO 5725-2:2002 (ISO 5725-2:1994)) to detect outlier values.

The Grubbs' test will be used to check whether the dataset contains data affected by gross errors. For this purpose, the obtained values are ranked in ascending order, and then the parameters G_1 and G_p are determined according to the formulas:

$$G_1 = \frac{\bar{x} - x_1}{s}$$

$$G_p = \frac{x_p - \bar{x}}{s}$$

$$\bar{x} = \frac{1}{p} \sum_{i=1}^p x_i$$

$$s = \sqrt{\frac{1}{p-1} \sum_{i=1}^p (x_i - \bar{x})^2}$$

where:

\bar{x} – mean value

x_1 – smallest value in the result set

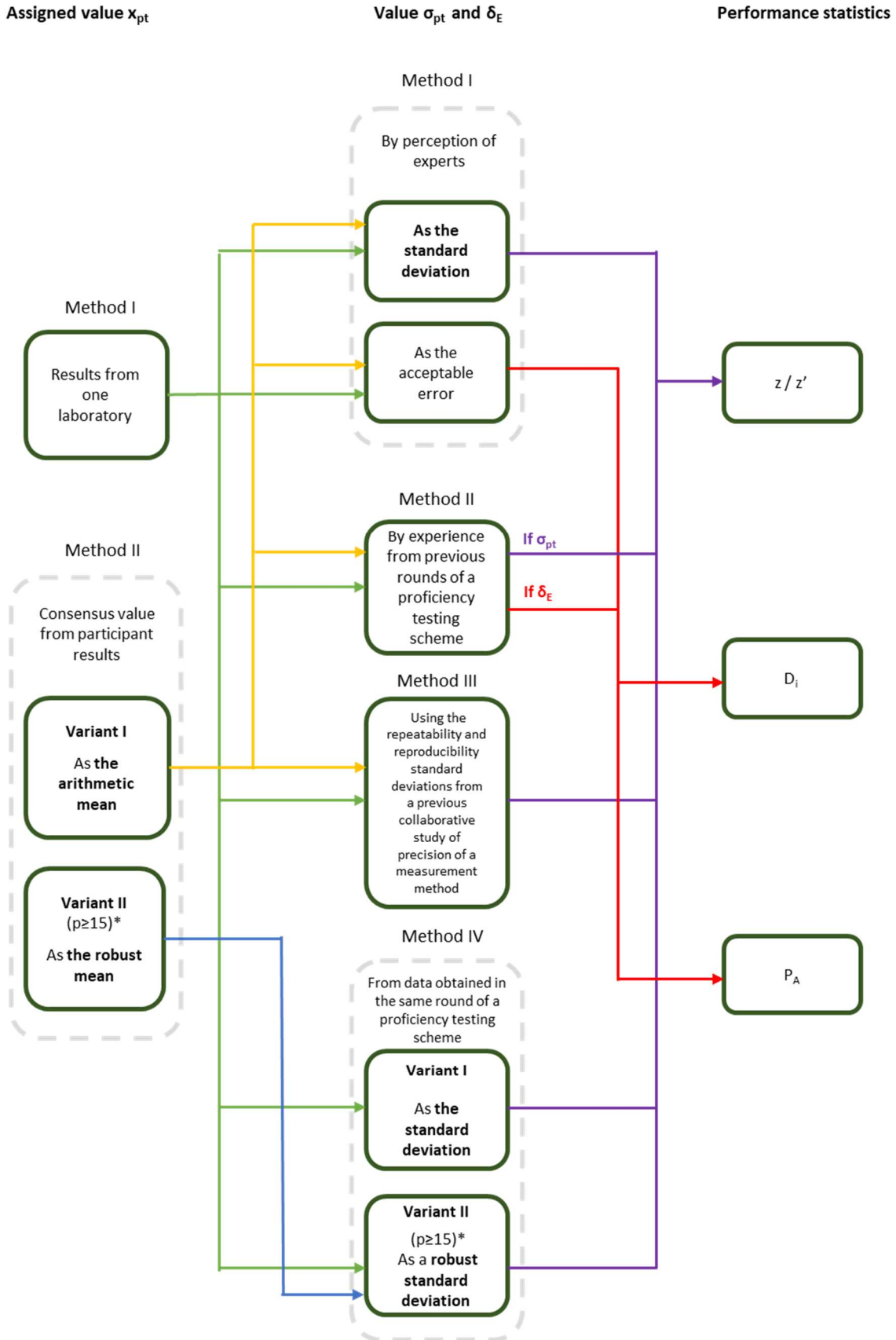
x_p – largest value in the result set

s – standard deviation

The obtained values will be compared with the critical value at a confidence level of 95%. If G_1 or G_p exceeds the critical value, the corresponding result will be considered as an outlier and will be excluded from the dataset used for further calculations.

The general statistical model used in proficiency testing at Centrum Certyfikacji BARG Sp. z o.o. is presented in Figure No. 2 - Algorithm of the PT Statistical Model. Methods for determining the assigned value, σ_{pt} value, δ_E value, and the indicators used for the purposes of this proficiency testing program are described in the following subpoints.

After receiving the result cards, the PT Organizer, due to the justification for applying a different approach, reserves the right to choose a different statistical path than presented in the following subpoints.



* in justified cases, it is allowed to use: $p \geq 12$

Fig. 2. Statistical model algorithm in proficiency testing

11.1. Determination of the assigned value

The assigned value x_{pt} will be determined according to Method II of the statistical model algorithm (Fig. 2) based on the results obtained in the current round using the arithmetic mean or Algorithm A described in Annex C of ISO 13528:2022-08, Variant I or II below.

11.1.1. Method II Consensus value from participant results (according to ISO 13528:2022-08, point 7.7)

Variant I

The assigned value x_{pt} as the arithmetic mean:

$$x_{pt} = \bar{x}$$

where:

\bar{x} – arithmetic mean of results provided by participants in each round after excluding outliers

The uncertainty $u(x_{pt})$ is estimated using the formula:

$$u(x_{pt}) = \frac{s}{\sqrt{p}}$$

where:

s – standard deviation after excluding outliers

p – number of results after excluding outliers

Variant II (according to ISO 13528:2022 Annex C.3.1)

The assigned value x_{pt} as the robust mean when the number of Participants is 15 or more ($p \geq 15$):

$$x_{pt} = x^*$$

where:

x^* - the robust mean calculated using algorithm A

The uncertainty $u(x_{pt})$ is estimated using the formula:

$$u(x_{pt}) = \frac{1,25}{\sqrt{p}} \cdot s^*$$

where:

s^* - the robust standard deviation determined using algorithm A

p – the number of provided results

Limitation of the uncertainty of the assigned value

If the condition is met:

$$u(x_{pt}) \leq 0,3\sigma_{pt}$$

where:

σ_{pt} – standard deviation for assessing proficiency testing

in that case, the uncertainty of the assigned value is considered insignificant and will not be taken into account in the interpretation of proficiency testing round results.

Otherwise, the uncertainty of the assigned value will be included in the calculations.

11.2. Determination of the σ_{pt} Value

The σ_{pt} value will be determined according to Method I or IV of the statistical model algorithm (Fig. 2) as the standard deviation, which is the required value or based on the data obtained in the specific round.

11.2.1. Method I By perception of experts (according to ISO 13528:2022-08 point 8.2)

The standard deviation for assessing proficiency testing will be established by the expert panel based on experience derived from the application of the method.

11.2.2. Method IV From data obtained in the same round of a proficiency testing scheme (according to ISO 13528:2022 point 8.6)

Variant II (according to ISO 13528:2022 Annex C.3.1)

Standard deviation for assessing proficiency testing as a **robust deviation** when the number of Participants is 15 or more ($p \geq 15$):

$$\sigma_{pt} = s^*$$

where:

s^* – Robust estimate of the participant standard deviation using algorithm A (without rejecting outliers)

11.3. Value determined for evaluation of sampling proficiency test

The standard deviation for evaluation of sampling proficiency testing is determined according to the formula:

$$\sigma_{pt,pob} = \sqrt{\sigma_{pt}^2 - \frac{\sigma_{powl}^2}{n}}$$

σ_{pt} – standard deviation for evaluation of proficiency testing

σ_{powl} – standard deviation of repeatability

n – number of repetitions of the measurement for the sample taken by the Participant

11.4. Criteria used for proficiency assessment

The z score or z' score will be used to assess the results of participants' performance.

The z score (according to ISO 13528:2022-08 pkt 9.4)

The z score is applicable when the condition is met $u(x_{pt}) \leq 0,3\sigma_{pt}$

$$z_i = \frac{(x_i - x_{pt})}{\sigma_{pt}}$$

where:

x_i – the result obtained by the Participant

x_{pt} – assigned value

σ_{pt} – standard deviation for proficiency testing evaluation

Criterion:

$ z \leq 2,0$	acceptable result
$2,0 < z < 3,0$	warning signal result
$ z \geq 3,0$	unacceptable result

The z' score (according to ISO 13528:2022-08 point 9.5)

The z' indicator is applicable when the condition is not met $u(x_{pt}) \leq 0,3\sigma_{pt}$

$$z'_i = \frac{x_i - x_{pt}}{\sqrt{\sigma_{pt}^2 + u^2(x_{pt})}}$$

where:

x_i – the result obtained by the Participant

x_{pt} – assigned value

σ_{pt} – standard deviation for proficiency testing

$u(x_{pt})$ – uncertainty of the assigned value

Criterion:

$ z' \leq 2,0$	acceptable result
$2,0 < z' < 3,0$	warning signal result
$ z' \geq 3,0$	unacceptable result

12. Report

The PT organizer, upon receiving all results and conducting statistical analyses, will prepare a report that includes:

- Name and contact details of the Proficiency Testing (PT) Organizer
- Name and contact details of the PT Coordinator
- Name, position, and signature of the person authorizing the report
- Date of issuance and status of the report (e.g., preliminary, intermediate, or final)
- Report number and unambiguous identification of the proficiency testing program
- Indication of activities subcontracted by the PT Organizer
- Number of pages and clear identification of the end of the report
- Detailed description of the objects used in the proficiency testing, including necessary details regarding the preparation of proficiency testing objects and the assessment of homogeneity and stability
- Results of Participants
- Statistical data and summary, including assigned values and the range of acceptable results, along with graphical presentation
- Procedures used to determine each assigned value
- Details regarding measurement consistency and uncertainty for each assigned value
- Procedures used to determine the standard deviation for proficiency assessment or other evaluation criteria
- Assigned values and statistical summaries for the testing methods/procedures used by each participant group (if different participant groups used different methods)
- Procedures used for statistical data analysis
- Comments from the PT Organizer regarding the Participants' results
- Guidance on interpreting the statistical analysis, along with comments and recommendations resulting from the proficiency testing round's outcomes
- Statement regarding the confidentiality of proficiency testing results.

Information regarding the results obtained by specific Participants will be encoded and known only to the PT Organizer. Each Participant will receive information about the assigned code along with the Report.

All results, tabular summaries, Participants' performance analyses presented in the proficiency testing report will be displayed according to the Participant's code.

Reports will be sent to Participants via email in PDF format within the specified schedule.

Participants are required to inform the PT Organizer of any comments on the report affecting the Participant's final assessment or any other errors found in the proficiency testing report within 14 days

of receiving it. The PT Organizer is obligated to promptly correct any errors in the report and inform all Participants about it. Comments on the PT report, if expressed dissatisfaction by a Participant, may be treated by the PT Organizer as a complaint and handled in accordance with point 13 of this program.

13. Complaints and Appeals

Participants have the right to submit complaints and/or appeals within 14 days of receiving the report to the email address: badania.bieglosci@barg.pl. The PT Organizer will review them within 30 days of receiving the complaint/appeal and provide feedback to the designated contact person. The DBB policy is to fairly address all complaints and appeals received from Participants, customers, or other parties. The procedure for conducting explanations and maintaining records regarding complaints and appeals is described in DSZ – section PT-5.8.

14. Contact with the Participant

DBB provides Participants with all information regarding the implementation of the program, including each individual round. All documents and necessary forms are communicated to participants electronically, through courier services, or collected in person with confirmation of sample receipt.

The coordinator publishes the current schedule of the PT program with planned proficiency testing rounds and participation criteria on the website.

DBB provides participants in the proficiency testing program with:

- PT Program Schedule (4/PT-4.4)
- Registration Form (6/PT-4.4)
- Participant Instructions (5/PT-4.4) – provided before the start of each program round
- Test Result Cards (8/PT-4.4)
- Proficiency Testing Report – provided to participants after the completion of each program round
- Customer Evaluation Survey about the level of services provided by the PT Organizer (1/PT-5.10)

Participants in proficiency testing can contact the PT Organizer regarding any uncertainties, matters requiring clarification or justification, and any other issues contributing to the improvement of the proficiency testing organization.

15. Reference Documents

- PN-EN 12504-1:2019-08 (EN 12504-1:2019) Testing concrete in structures – Part 1: Cored specimens – Taking, examining and testing in compression
- PN-EN 1542:2000 (EN 1542:1999) Products and systems for the protection and repair of concrete structures- Test methods-Measurement of bond strength by pull-off
- PN-EN ISO/IEC 17025:2018-02 (EN ISO/IEC 17025:2017) General requirements for the competence of testing and calibration laboratories

- PN-EN ISO/IEC 17043:2011 (EN ISO/IEC 17043:2010) Conformity assessment – General requirements for proficiency testing^w
- PN-ISO 2854:1994 (ISO 2854:1976) Statistical interpretation of data — Techniques of estimation and tests relating to means and variances
- PN-ISO 5725-1:2002 (ISO 5725-1:1994) Accuracy (trueness and precision) of measurement methods and results — Part 1: General principles and definitions
- PN-ISO 5725-2:2002 (ISO 5725-2:1994) Accuracy (trueness and precision) of measurement methods and results — Part 2: Basic method for the determination of repeatability and reproducibility of a standard measurement method
- ISO 13528:2022-08 Statistical methods for use in proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparisons
- DA-05 Proficiency Testing Participation Policy (ILAC-P9)
- DA-06 Measurement Consistency Policy (ILAC-P10)
- ILAC-G17 ILAC Guidelines for Measurements Uncertainty in Testing

^w standard with withdrawn status