

17 December 2007

## **New Collaboration Agreement Signed:**

### **Between the European Commission's Joint Research Centre Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements and the Chemical Science and Technology Laboratory (CSTL) of the National Institute of Standards and Technology (USA)**

*A Collaboration Agreement signed today at the Joint Research Centre's Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (IRMM) in Geel, Belgium will advance the development and availability of international measurement standards in the fields of chemistry, life sciences, and emerging technologies.*

Dr. Alejandro Herrero, Director of the JRC Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (IRMM), said: "Few people truly appreciate the contribution made by reliable reference materials to our daily lives, to scientific progress and to our global economy. Knowing a scientific area does not necessarily mean that you can also measure and calculate its key parameters; and if this is the case your knowledge may still vague and unsatisfactory." He added that: "Greater international understanding and acceptance of the science of measurements is imperative. That is precisely why we are here today with our trans-Atlantic partners".

"This new agreement will enhance trade between the U.S. and Europe, while helping to ensure the safety and quality of products sold to the public," said Dr. Willie E. May, Director of the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology's Chemical Science and Technology Laboratory (NIST/CSTL). "We are pleased to be joining with the JRC-IRMM in this very important effort to develop reference materials critically needed to underpin innovation and industrial competitiveness, enhance economic security and improve quality of life.

#### **What does this agreement mean in practice?**

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre and the U.S. National Institute of Standards and Technology will work to better coordinate their research and development programmes in metrology. This will include co-operative research on modern measurements and their quality assurance, and technical co-operation in the preparation and characterisation of reference materials. The JRC and NIST will also be able to share resources and to harmonise views within international metrology bodies where both organisations carry responsibilities in relation to chemical metrology, bio-metrology, and international measurement standards.

#### **Next steps**

CSTL/NIST and JRC-IRMM intend to establish a work plan detailing specific joint project co-operation and other activities, such as organisation of workshops or conferences. Specific topics already identified are:

- certification of reference materials for the analysis of hazardous substances in electrical and electronic equipment (the EU's Restriction of Hazardous Substances Directive, i.e. RoHS),
- exchange of measurement data on reference materials for the analysis of potentially dangerous polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs) and polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) and
- coordination of efforts for the development of certified reference materials for multiplex bio measurements and nanotechnology.

### **What are measurement standards?**

Comparability of measurement and testing results from around the world depends on a framework of international measurement standards. Reference materials are needed for calibrating instruments or validating methods and procedures. Today, reference materials are increasingly needed to fulfil the criteria of laboratory accreditation schemes.

### **Background information**

The Joint Research Centre is a Directorate-General of the European Commission providing independent scientific and technical support to European policy-making. Its Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements promotes a common and reliable European measurement system in support of EU policies. The prime objective of the JRC-IRMM is to build confidence in the comparability of measurements by the production and dissemination of internationally accepted quality assurance tools, including reference materials, validated methods, reference measurements, inter-laboratory comparisons, and training.

The National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) is part of the U.S. Department of Commerce and promotes U.S. innovation and industrial competitiveness by advancing measurement science, standards, and technology in ways that enhance economic security and improve the quality of life. NIST's Chemical Science and Technology Laboratory conducts research in measurement science and develops the chemical, biochemical, and chemical engineering measurements, data, models, and reference standards that are required to enhance U.S. industrial competitiveness in the world market and to improve public health, safety, and environmental quality

### **Further information:**

JRC activities <http://www.jrc.ec.europa.eu>

IRMM activities: <http://www.irmm.jrc.be>

NIST activities: <http://www.nist.gov>

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