

## MEETING FOR THE DISCUSSION OF THE ARAB PROFICIENCY TESTING PROGRAM - UPDATES

### Record of Discussions

8 August 2024 - 3PM GMT+1

The meeting to discuss the update on the PT program took place on Thursday, August 8, 2024. It was conducted virtually via Zoom and included representatives from AOAC INTERNATIONAL and the Arab Section of AOAC INTERNATIONAL.

#### Meeting Participants

<b>AOAC INTERNATIONAL</b>	David B. Schmidt
	Shane Flynn
	Chad Stephan
<b>GFORSS/Arab Section of AOAC INTERNATIONAL</b>	Samuel Godefroy
	Hajar Tiglifet
	Amine Kassouf

- The meeting began with introductory notes by Mr. Shane Flynn, Senior Director of Laboratory Proficiency Testing (PT) program at AOAC INTERNATIONAL. Mr. Flynn started by highlighting the important feedback that was gathered from the Arab region through the survey that was launched on the regional needs for PT programs.
- Survey responses indicated strong support for launching a pilot program in the Arab region under the AOAC INT Proficiency Testing (PT) program focused on infant formula. This matrix offers great advantages to launch the pilot as it remains stable during shipping, unlike other food samples that might be impacted by temperature fluctuations. He also highlighted the range of analytes (vitamins and nutrients) that can be available through this program.
- **It was recommended** that an advisory task force (a steering committee) be set-up to provide oversight and guidance for this pilot program. This task force would be made of a team of experts in various relevant disciplines, including statistics, analytical chemistry, experts in infant food formula, and other pertinent areas, to contribute to the task force's efforts.
- Another program was also discussed in relation with the **Gluten Free Methods** and the need for **PT samples and PT program**. This could lead to a new PT program for AOAC INT developed from the regional pilot, leveraging current efforts and interest to drive related to gluten testing in gluten free foods in the Arab Region

## Next Steps

- Preparation of a project proposal for funding of the two Pilot Initiatives for the Arab Region to be presented at the annual meeting of AOAC INT to various stakeholders who may be interested in supporting or collaborating.
- Establishment of PT Program advisory committee for the project and start by forming a specialized task force of infant formula experts for the first pilot program in the Arab region.
- Identify a test material provider (infant formula samples for PT program) and a centre of operations, preferably an official government laboratory. Ensure that the laboratory holds at least one the following accreditation: ISO 17043, ISO 17025, or ISO 17034.
- Potential candidate laboratories: Saudi Food and Drug Administration (SFDA), Oman Food Safety and Quality Center (OFSQC) and Qatar Ministry of Public Health Central Laboratory.
- Seek financial support from local infant formula manufacturers, as this product is essential for the Middle East, especially the GCC countries.
- Seek interest for support and funding for the pilot Gluten in Gluten Free Foods PT program

