



EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Meeting ArExec/10/2024

Record of Discussions and Decisions

Wednesday 23 October 2024

In-person/ Virtually

11 AM Dubai Time

RECORD OF DISCUSSIONS AND DECISIONS – HIGHLIGHTS

On Wednesday, October 23, 2024, an informal meeting of the Executive Committee of the Arab AOAC International took place on the margin of the DIFSC in Dubai, with the following participants:

- Dr. Amine Kassouf
- Eng. Ahmed A. Al-Bashah
- Prof. Samuel Godefroy
- Dr. Elie Bou Yazbeck
- Dr. Gouda Abdalla Ramadan Gouda
- Eng. Hajar Tiglifet
- Eng. Mohammed Al Mutairi
- Eng. Ali Shibr Jawad Hassan

Dr. Amine Kassouf opened the meeting by extending a warm welcome to all executive committee members, including the joining guests: Eng. Mohammed Al Mutairi representative of KSA & Eng. Ali Shibr Jawad Hassan representative of Bahrain, and thanking them for accepting the invitation to join this informal meeting.

Dr. Kassouf then proposed the following items for the agenda:

- A. Roll Call introduction
- B. Updates about the section's activities
- C. Arab PT Program
- D. Harmonization of analytical methods
- E. Future activities

Summary Report:

During the meeting, discussions focused on several key areas aimed at advancing the objectives of the Arab Section of AOAC INTERNATIONAL. The following is the primary points discussed:

1. **Voluntary Participation and Personal/Institutional Representation:** There was emphasis on clarifying whether participation in initiatives should be voluntary, or if it should involve formal representation. The idea was proposed that the Arab Section could coordinate with relevant organizations to send formal invitations to research institutions, universities (both public and private), ministries, and laboratories in various countries. This would help ensure wider participation in technical committees and increase engagement across different sectors.
2. **Increasing Membership:** The success of the Arab Section in growing from 40 members to 150 members was noted, with contributions from founding members who promoted the Section's role within their regions. The meeting highlighted the importance of executing activities in different countries to further raise awareness about the Section and encourage membership. The concept of free student membership was also introduced as a way to attract academic institutions and students, which could significantly expand the Section's reach.
3. **Developing a Membership Strategy:** There was a suggestion to create a formal membership strategy that outlines the different types of memberships (individual, institutional, and student) and ways to attract and engage with various sectors. This strategy would aim to activate the research and laboratory communities, especially in Arab countries, and encourage their participation in initiatives like proficiency testing (PT) programs.
4. **The Arab Journal of Official Analytical Methods:** The meeting also discussed the establishment of the "Arab Journal of Official Analytical Methods," which will serve as a counterpart to AOAC INTERNATIONAL's established publications. The goal is to promote and publish analytical methods that meet international standards, and eventually have these methods adopted by official bodies in Arab countries.
5. **Analytical Methodologies and Future Training Programs:** The meeting addressed the importance of organizing training sessions and workshops on analytical methods, particularly in collaboration with organizations like Neogen. Neogen had expressed willingness to support microbiological testing for pathogens. It was proposed that the Section send an introductory email to members about these methods and initiate a training program.
6. **Upcoming Events and Collaborations:** Several future events were mentioned, including a major food safety conference in Oman in April 2025. Additionally, collaborations with institutions like the Arab Army in Jordan were highlighted as important partnerships that could further the Section's objectives.
7. **Steering Committee for PT Programs:** It was proposed to establish a steering committee to oversee the implementation of PT programs, starting with an infant formula PT program. The committee would be responsible for coordinating with accredited Arab laboratories and ensuring the smooth execution of the program. Collaboration with AOAC INTERNATIONAL was deemed essential, and financial support from industry stakeholders was being explored.
8. **Harmonization of Analytical Methods:** There was a call for the alignment and harmonization of analytical methods within the Arab region, with a particular focus on gluten testing methodologies. The goal is to develop standardized methods that can be adopted by reference laboratories and official bodies across the region. A network of laboratories had already been approached to share their methodologies, and training programs have been conducted in Jordan and Oman on ELISA methodologies for gluten testing.

9. Action Points and Next Steps:

- Develop a formal membership strategy.
- Establish a steering committee for PT programs.
- Execute the first PT program focused on infant formula in collaboration with AOAC INTERNATIONAL.
- Continue efforts to harmonize analytical methods within the Arab region, with a focus on gluten testing.
- Engage in training programs on emerging analytical techniques.
- Invitation of new members to join the Executive Committee aiming to relaunch nominations to fill vacant positions and re-create the Executive committee for a new term 2025/2026.

