

Guide to BIPEA

Author :

Jean-Max ROUYER
BIPEA Manager

Validation :

Michel BLANC
Chairman of the Technical Management Board

Charles BRETTE
Chairman of the Board of Directors

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Member of Board of Directors
Member of Technical Management Board (C.D.T.)
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INDEX

1 – Overview

2 – Internal Structure

3 – Services

4 – Internal Rules

5 – The Commitments of BIPEA

1 – Overview

PREAMBLE: BIPEA is:

- ↳ 5,000 Sample preparations per month with more than 100 raw materials,
- ↳ 3,000 Samples dispatched per month to 40 countries all over the world,
- ↳ 60,000 data points processed monthly,

and a dynamic team of 16 staff....

HISTORY

Created in 1970, The Bureau Inter Professionnel d'Etudes Analytiques (BIPEA) is a non-profit making organization, operating under the French law of 1901, whose members include mainly laboratories in the agricultural, food-processing and environmental sectors.

THE MISSIONS OF BIPEA

The missions of BIPEA are:

- ↳ Organisation of Proficiency Testing Schemes.
- ↳ Assistance for laboratories to manage, maintain and improve their performances.

ACTIVITIES

To carry out these missions, BIPEA develops its products and services as follows:

- ↳ Organisation of Proficiency Testing Schemes from the preparation of homogeneous samples to the statistical treatment of results.
- ↳ Management of technical assessments on behalf of accreditation bodies responsible for certification or accreditation.
- ↳ Providing E.R.M. (External Reference Materials) from the Proficiency Testing Schemes.
- ↳ Custom Work to set up, partially or totally, specific Interlaboratory Comparisons.
- ↳ Organisation of training courses for the different sectors covered by the activities of BIPEA, to help laboratory staff to optimize their technical skills.

BIPEA is also working to develop new activities, for instance to provide tracking of a laboratory's results by means of internal control charts.

2 – Internal Structure

PREAMBLE: *more information concerning the different aspects of a non profit making association can be found in the following documents:*

- ↳ *Statutes of the association (January 7th 1989)*
- ↳ *Role of Specialised Commission Chairman (October 30th 2003)*
- ↳ *Statutes of the Technical Management Board (July 23rd 2003)*

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

All the members of BIPEA are summoned to the Ordinary Annual General Meeting by mail with the agenda.

If unable to attend, the BIPEA member may be represented by proxy.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This is made up of at least 20 members elected during the Annual General Meeting. They represent the sectors of the professional activities of BIPEA, and decide on the strategic and financial orientations, as submitted by the manager of BIPEA during meetings of the Board of Directors.

COUNCIL OF THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

This represents the Board of Directors and can be consulted regularly by the Manager of BIPEA to resolve current issues.

It is elected by the Board of Directors and is composed of:

- ↳ Chairman
- ↳ Vice Chairman (1 to 3)
- ↳ Treasurer
- ↳ Secretary

CHAIRMAN OF SPECIALISED COMMISSIONS

Each P.T. Scheme has a Specialised Commission, with a Chairman who is elected by its members, and whose mission is clearly defined in the document "Role of the Commission Chairman"

The Commission Chairman coordinates the choices and decisions which are necessary to optimise the functioning of the Proficiency Testing Schemes.

TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT BOARD (C.D.T.)

This guarantees the professionalism of BIPEA, given that it regularly participates in the technical validation and the choices made during the provision of the results.

Its mission is clearly defined in the "Statutes of the Technical Management Board".

It is composed of:

- ↳ The Chairmen of the Specialised Committees
- ↳ Scientific Advisors
- ↳ Nominated members

COUNCIL OF THE TECHNICAL MANAGEMENT BOARD

This represents the Technical Committee and can be consulted regularly by the Manager of BIPEA for solving current issues

It is elected by the Technical Management Board itself and is composed of:

- ↳ Chairman
- ↳ Vice Chairman
- ↳ Members (6)

3 – Services

PREAMBLE: For all information concerning the services and products that BIPEA provides, refer to our website : www.bipea.org

PROFICIENCY TESTING (P.T.) SCHEMES

Organisation and management of P.T. Schemes is the principal activity of BIPEA.

The P.T. schemes comply with the guide ISO 43-1 "Proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparisons".

Interlaboratory comparisons give a laboratory the possibility to situate itself by measuring the gap between its results and the reference value obtained for each parameter proposed for the sample analyses.

The P.T. schemes are independent of each other.

There are four principal steps:

- ↳ Preparation of homogeneous samples.
- ↳ Laboratory analyses.
- ↳ Data Treatment.
- ↳ Estimation of the laboratories' performance.

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS

This concerns the annual assessment of a laboratory's performance on behalf of a third party.

Under certain conditions the participants of the P.T. scheme may request accreditation or certification from an official organisation (Ministry of Agriculture or Industry, etc.) or private organisations. The conditions of the assessment by BIPEA are defined in an official contract with each organisation, and also in a Technical Guide (document sent to each candidate laboratory)

EXTERNAL REFERENCE MATERIALS (E.R.M.)

The samples prepared for the P.T. schemes can subsequently be used as "external reference materials" in accordance with the AFNOR FD V 03-115 standard which defines them as materials whose (consensus) reference values have been determined subsequent to inter-laboratory studies.

BIPEA can propose annual contracts to provide E.R.M.

No total or partial re-sale of BIPEA E.R.M.s is authorized.

CUSTOM WORK

BIPEA can provide custom work such as specialized sample preparations or statistical treatments.

TRAINING COURSES

These are organized on request from members and correspond to training or advanced-training needed in the fields of analyses, statistical processing, and techniques.

4 – Internal Rules

PREAMBLE: *Respect of all these rules by BIPEA members is essential for the continuing efficient functioning of the organisation.*

BIPEA reserves the right to suspend or exclude a member for the non respect of these rules.

THE ANNUAL SERIES

The financial period begins on July 1st and ends on June 30th of the following year.

In practice, most of the annual test series begin in September and end in June, over ten months.

MEMBERSHIP

All new members are subject to the following:

- ↳ Joining procedure.
- ↳ A joining fee and annual fee.
- ↳ Costs of relevant P.T. schemes subscribed to with the "FIREV03" form.

Those conditions pertain without exception (mergers, group membership, etc.)

The only exception is for Experimental P.T. schemes, for which there is a free subscription fee (annual and joining fee) for all the new participants. This particularity remains valid during the initial test period, and is strictly reserved for experimental schemes.

Active members are considered to be those members who participate in at least one P.T. scheme.

Only active members can make use of all the services of BIPEA.

Inactive members are considered to be those who do not participate in at least one P.T. scheme, because of exclusion or cessation of their participation. Such members cannot make use of all the services of BIPEA.

BIPEA does not accept a subscription without participation. The subscription form "FIREV 03" must be sent to BIPEA by e-mail using the original form, no other format is accepted, neither are incomplete subscription forms.

In general the effective participation in P.T. schemes should start at the latest 15 days after registration of the subscription.

TECHNICAL ASSESSMENTS

Reserved for active members only

Subscription to Technical Assessments requires the same conditions as for the P.T. scheme subscriptions, using the following documents:

- ↳ « FIREV04 » form, duly completed.
- ↳ « FIREV03 » form, duly completed, together with the required Technical Assessments.

BIPEA does not accept a technical assessment within the annual series unless the official accreditation/certification body has accepted it.

SUBSCRIPTION RENEWALS

From May 1st to June 30th, BIPEA registers all members into the data handling system.

The new series of P.T. schemes starts on July 1st.

BIPEA sends by e-mail the subscription forms "FIREV03" and "FIREV 04" to all the active members and also to all participants in Technical Assessments, together with all the fees.

The registration form has to be returned by e-mail, before the deadline of June 30th. No other form of communication can be accepted.

Incomplete forms will be returned to the sender, with consequent delays in effective subscription.

All subscription forms received after August 15th will not be taken into account for the first sample dispatch of September.

TARIFICATION

All new subscriptions will entail the following costs:

- ↳ Joining Fee (tax free).
- ↳ Annual Fee (administration costs).
- ↳ Participation in P.T. schemes
- ↳ Participation in Technical Assessments (if any).

For subscriptions made in the course of the annual series, the participation in the P.T. schemes is calculated on a pro rata basis.

No member can claim a discount because of mergers, introduction of new members etc.

Also the members of the Board of Directors or the Technical Management Board of BIPEA cannot claim any advantages.

Prices are updated each year of the annual series, and shipment costs are included.

All prices are classified by area, with regard to the member's country.

PAYMENT CONDITIONS

Invoices are sent during the annual series, principally from September to June.

For better financial management, it is indispensable and necessary for members to pay within the time given on the invoice.

If this condition is not respected, BIPEA will initiate a reminder procedure. In excess of 60 days of non payment BIPEA may stop sending samples and engage the necessary procedures by registered letter. Sample dispatches and services can be re-activated if the member pays all the invoices due.

Finally, BIPEA may ask for anticipated payment to validate a (new) subscription without any explanation.

DATA EXCHANGES

Each member must have a personal e-mail, and also an access to internet.

The data exchanges need to be as follows:

- ↳ Updating the member information into the data handling system.
- ↳ Transmission of the P.T. scheme results by laboratories via BIPEA's website. Exchanging data is secure due to the different codes which are communicated to all the members before the start of the annual series.
- ↳ Transmission of all the bulletin results to the personal e-mail address by BIPEA.

To perform all these actions, laboratories have to communicate to BIPEA their personal e-mail address.

SPECIALISED COMMISSIONS

These are made up of all the members of each P.T. scheme concerned. They meet once a year to discuss the results and conclusions of the latest annual series.

They can also submit their requests concerning the organisation of the P.T. scheme.

The Commission's Chairman collects all the requests, validates them technically and submits them to BIPEA, which may refuse or postpone them for a variety of reasons (organisation, financial, technical etc.), which will be communicated to the Chairman.

TECHNICAL GROUPS

Each Commission Chairman is assisted by a Technical Group to ensure the management and good organisation of the P.T. scheme in partnership with BIPEA.

The Technical Group is a means of consultation, studies, and propositions for the Specialised Commission.

Each P.T. scheme member can elect to join the Technical Group.

The candidates are examined by BIPEA and the Chairman, concerning their technical knowledge, ability and availability.

The technical group members are nominated by BIPEA after they are selected and proposed to the Committee's Chairman.

5 – The Commitments of BIPEA

PREAMBLE: BIPEA honours the confidentiality of the identity, the results and all information concerning the members.

SUBSCRIPTIONS

BIPEA sends the "FIREV08" form for acknowledgement of the subscription to confirm all the information below:

- All the administrative information (addresses, VAT number, etc).
- Confidential codes to access the Members' Area on our website.
- Edition codes necessary to identify the results within the results bulletin.
- Choice of P.T. schemes.
- Details of costs.
- List of BIPEA contacts.

For more confidentiality, all the "codes" will be renewed at the beginning of each annual series.

BIPEA also provides:

- The Guide to BIPEA.
- Minutes of the last meeting of the Specialised Commission of the P.T. scheme concerned.
- The Statutes of the organization.

RENEWALS

BIPEA sends the "FIREV08" form for acknowledgement of the subscription to confirm all the information below:

- All the administrative information (addresses, VAT number, etc.).
- Confidential codes to access the Members' Area on our website.
- Edition codes necessary to identify the results within the results bulletin.
- Choices of P.T. schemes.
- Details of costs.
- List of BIPEA contacts.

For more confidentiality, all the "codes" will be renewed at the beginning of each annual series.

SPECIALISED COMMISSION

BIPEA plans to organize at least one meeting of the Specialised Commission per annual series, with the collaboration of the Chairman. The invitations are sent one month before the meeting date. BIPEA is responsible for the minutes and incorporating all the decisions taken, and dispatches these to all the participants within 1 to 2 months.

PROFICIENCY TESTING SCHEMES

BIPEA dispatches all the samples, by express shipment, five days before the estimated date of the beginning of analyses, and downloads the relevant form onto the BIPEA website. After data treatment, BIPEA sends the entire results bulletin by e-mail within two to three weeks from the deadline of the reception of results. All technical requests concerning the P.T. schemes are treated within one month.

TRAINING

BIPEA carries out a survey to find out members' wishes concerning training courses. It analyses each request and examines the feasibility. BIPEA communicates the program of training courses on its website. Participation dossiers are sent to people who are interested, one month before the estimated starting date. BIPEA also sends to the trainees a copy of the attendance list and training certificate within 15 days after the beginning of the training courses.

EXTERNAL REFERENCE MATERIALS (E.R.M.)

BIPEA preserves, under good conditions (cold room, freezer), the samples from the Proficiency Testing Schemes for between 1 to 2 years. BIPEA honours each request for E.R.M. within eight days from reception of the purchase order.

Approved by the Technical
Management Board
on April 9th 2004,

Approved by the Board of Directors
on April 23rd 2004,

The Chairman of the Technical
Management Board

The President of the Board of Directors