



December 21, 2016

## **Office of Water-Quality Information Note 2017.02**

**Subject:       Announcing the availability of USGS Standard Reference Sample (SRS)  
Performance Testing Samples for Spring 2017, and the FY2017 Round Robin  
Schedule**

The Branch of Quality Systems (BQS) announces the opening of the Spring 2017 Standard Reference Sample (SRS) inter-laboratory performance testing round-robin and the overall FY2017 schedule. Notice went out to USGS Water Science Center (WSC) Directors and Water-Quality Specialists, National Research Program (NRP) Regional Chiefs, and previously participating external laboratories on December 12, 2016.

As part of a comprehensive quality-assessment evaluation, laboratories that provide results from water-sample analyses to WMA-funded projects or programs must participate in the BQS semi-annual SRS round-robin throughout the sample collection and analysis phase of project activities (Office of Water Quality Technical Memorandum 2016.06). This requirement applies to WMA laboratories, other USGS laboratories, contract laboratories and their subcontractors, cooperator, academic, and commercial laboratories that provide water-quality sample results to the WMA. Other laboratories may participate on a volunteer basis to demonstrate periodic analytical performance through these single-blind studies.

The requirement is relevant to those analytes that are available in SRS samples when the concentration range and sample matrix are comparable to project samples. Participation by laboratories in the SRS partially fulfills the requirements established by the Office of Water Quality for laboratory evaluation through external performance testing and assessment.

External performance testing samples are disseminated twice each year with six standard reference sample types available: Trace Element, Major Ion, Low-Ionic Strength Precipitation, Mercury, Low-Level Nutrient, and Regular-Level Nutrient. All except Low-Level Nutrient are natural-matrix water samples. All samples are filtered.

FY 2017 Schedule: Specific dates for the FY2017 Spring study are listed below. Dates specific for the FY2017 Fall study will be posted in May, 2017 at (<https://bqs.usgs.gov/srs/#events>).

Invitation to order samples – December 12, 2016 (Spring Study) and mid-June 2017 (Fall Study)

Deadline to order samples - January 20, 2017 (Spring Study) and mid-July 2017 (Fall Study)

Sample shipping - January 25 to February 3, 2017 (Spring Study) and late July 2017 (Fall Study)

Data-entry deadline - March 24, 2017 (Spring Study) and late September 2017 (Fall Study)

Study results available - early April 2017 (Spring Study) and early October 2017 (Fall Study)

**To sign up a laboratory:** Laboratories should contact Mark Woodworth ([woodwort@usgs.gov](mailto:woodwort@usgs.gov), 303-236-1875) at the BQS with the following information:

- Laboratory Name
- Laboratory Contact
- Lab Contact Phone and Email
- Laboratory Address

**Other details:** BQS will assign each participating laboratory a unique and anonymous Lab ID number, Username, and Password, and will initiate the FY2017 round-robin assessment periods following the general event schedule listed above. The FY2017 cost is \$48 per sample including cost for shipment. Sample volumes are as follows: Trace, Major, and Precipitation samples (500 mL); Mercury (220 mL); Low-Level Nutrients (60 mL (requires 1:10 dilution)); and Regular-Level Nutrients (250 mL). Laboratory users can view the performance of participating laboratories (via the unique Lab ID number) along with other SRS project information on the BQS SRS Project website <https://bqs.usgs.gov/srs/> (see “Results” tab for performance; see “Participating Laboratories in the SRS Project” link on the “SRS Home” tab for round-robin participants).

## References:

Office of Water Quality Technical Memorandum 2016.06 “Required participation in the Branch of Quality Systems Standard Reference Sample Semi-Annual Proficiency Testing Project” dated May 24, 2016 and accessed October 17, 2016 at <http://water.usgs.gov/admin/memo/QW/qw2016.06.pdf>.

Office of Water Quality Technical Memorandum 2014.01 “Updated Policy for the Evaluation and Approval of Analytical Laboratory Performance for Water Mission Area Projects and Programs” dated June 25, 2014 and accessed October 17, 2016 at <http://water.usgs.gov/admin/memo/QW/qw2014.01.pdf>.

WaQI Notes are archived on the Office of Water Quality web site, <http://water.usgs.gov/usgs/owq/WaQI/index.html>

Signed,

The Office of Water Quality

Distribution: All WMA Employees