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New Collaboration Agreement Signed

Between the Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (IRMM) of the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) and the Korea Research Institute of Standards and Science (KRISS)

A Collaboration Agreement signed today between the Joint Research Centre's Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements (JRC-IRMM) and the Korea Research Institute of Standards and Science (KRISS) aims to advance measurement science and foster confidence in the comparability of measurements.

Dr. Alejandro Herrero, Director of the JRC's Institute for Reference Materials and Measurements, commented: "From structural tests of building materials to patient's blood tests in the hospital, accurate measurements are the foundation for global trade and a better quality of life. This agreement will enable European and Korean measurement scientists to coordinate their research into new and difficult areas, such as bioanalysis and food control."

Dr. Myungsoo Kim, President of KRISS, added, "Metrology has become the essential key to underpin the global agenda such as facilitation of trade, safe food, health, environment, and green growth. I am confident that collaborations between IRMM and KRISS under the Agreement will make significant contributions to securing well-being of the people in a sustainable manner by providing valuable measurement infrastructure to those problems we are facing today globally."

Why this agreement?

Most people are familiar with measurement standards for physical units, like the kilogram or the second. However, complex measurements, such as determining what fraction of human proteins function properly, do not have such a global standard. In these cases, reference materials containing a precise level of a certain substance or property are developed and produced by specialised institutions and distributed to laboratories around the world.

There are only a limited number of research centres around the globe that have the expertise and resources to develop such reference materials, hence it is advantageous that these institutes cooperate and coordinate their efforts.

What will the agreement mean in practice?

The metrology institutes of the European Commission and Korea will establish a biennial work programme which sets out joint activities such as measurement campaigns and workshops. The areas already identified in the agreement are:

- bioanalysis, such as DNA measurements for new candidate reference materials

- radionuclide metrology, specifically for new candidate reference materials for environmental measurements
- mechanical testing, specifically measurements of impact toughness of steel
- reference materials for food control

The two institutes have vowed to work jointly to facilitate further the international understanding and acceptance of metrology and standardisation in various fields of measurements.

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 Korea Research Institute of Standards and Science (KRISS) is the national metrology institute (NMI) of the Republic of Korea. KRISS has been commissioned to establish the national measurement standards for Korea at a level enough to be recognized with global confidence. KRISS carries out a wide range of in-depth R&D activities in measurement standards. KRISS is focussing on research projects to support industries, to secure and improve quality of life, and to contribute to green growth with low carbon emission which is one of the priority global agenda. KRISS has been taking the leading role in the metrology community by promoting partnership with NMIs of developing economies, and by chairing Asia-Pacific Metrology Programme.

Related links:

- JRC-IRMM: <http://irmm.jrc.ec.europa.eu>
- KRISS: <http://english.kriss.re.kr/>

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