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**Molecular in vitro diagnostic  
examinations — Specifications for pre-  
examination processes for formalin-  
fixed and paraffin-embedded (FFPE)  
tissue —**

**Part 3:  
Isolated DNA**

*Analyses de diagnostic moléculaire in vitro — Spécifications relatives  
aux processus préanalytiques pour les tissus fixés au formol et inclus  
en paraffine (FFPE) —*

*Partie 3: ADN extrait*



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## Foreword

ISO (the International Organization for Standardization) is a worldwide federation of national standards bodies (ISO member bodies). The work of preparing International Standards is normally carried out through ISO technical committees. Each member body interested in a subject for which a technical committee has been established has the right to be represented on that committee. International organizations, governmental and non-governmental, in liaison with ISO, also take part in the work. ISO collaborates closely with the International Electrotechnical Commission (IEC) on all matters of electrotechnical standardization.

The procedures used to develop this document and those intended for its further maintenance are described in the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 1. In particular, the different approval criteria needed for the different types of ISO documents should be noted. This document was drafted in accordance with the editorial rules of the ISO/IEC Directives, Part 2 (see [www.iso.org/directives](http://www.iso.org/directives)).

Attention is drawn to the possibility that some of the elements of this document may be the subject of patent rights. ISO shall not be held responsible for identifying any or all such patent rights. Details of any patent rights identified during the development of the document will be in the Introduction and/or on the ISO list of patent declarations received (see [www.iso.org/patents](http://www.iso.org/patents)).

Any trade name used in this document is information given for the convenience of users and does not constitute an endorsement.

For an explanation of the voluntary nature of standards, the meaning of ISO specific terms and expressions related to conformity assessment, as well as information about ISO's adherence to the World Trade Organization (WTO) principles in the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) see [www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html](http://www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html).

This document was prepared by Technical ISO/TC 212, *Clinical laboratory testing and in vitro diagnostic test systems*.

A list of all parts in the ISO 20166 series can be found on the ISO website.

Any feedback or questions on this document should be directed to the user's national standards body. A complete listing of these bodies can be found at [www.iso.org/members.html](http://www.iso.org/members.html).

## Introduction

Molecular in vitro diagnostics, including molecular pathology, has enabled significant progress in medicine. Further progress is expected with new technologies analysing nucleic acids, proteins, and metabolites in human tissues and body fluids. However, the profiles and/or integrity of these molecules can change drastically during specimen collection, transport, storage and processing, thus making the outcome from diagnostics or research unreliable or even impossible because the subsequent examination assay will not determine the situation in the patient but an artificial molecular pattern generated during the pre-examination process. Studies have been undertaken to determine the influencing factors for the DNA examination from formalin-fixed and paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissue. These studies demonstrated that a standardization of the entire process from specimen collection to the DNA examination is needed. This document draws upon such work to codify and standardize the steps for FFPE tissue with regard to DNA examination in what is referred to as the pre-examination phase.

DNA integrity in tissues can change before, during and after formalin fixation, processing and storage. Chemical modifications introduced into DNA during tissue fixation might lead to fragmentation and sequence alterations, changes in the methylation status or even structural changes which can lead to, for instance, spurious copy number changes in array-CGH profiles. These modifications of the DNA molecules can impact the validity and reliability of the examination test results. Therefore, it is essential to take special measures to minimize the described DNA changes and modifications for subsequent examination.

In this document, the following verbal forms are used:

- "shall" indicates a requirement;
- "should" indicates a recommendation;
- "may" indicates a permission;
- "can" indicates a possibility or a capability.



# Molecular in vitro diagnostic examinations — Specifications for pre-examination processes for formalin- fixed and paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissue —

## Part 3: Isolated DNA

### 1 Scope

This document gives guidelines on the handling, documentation, storage and processing of formalin-fixed and paraffin-embedded (FFPE) tissue specimens intended for DNA examination during the pre-examination phase before a molecular assay is performed.

This document is applicable to molecular in vitro diagnostic examinations including laboratory developed tests performed by medical laboratories and molecular pathology laboratories. It is also intended to be used by laboratory customers, in vitro diagnostics developers and manufacturers, biobanks, institutions and commercial organizations performing biomedical research, and regulatory authorities.

NOTE International, national or regional regulations or requirements can also apply to specific topics covered in this document.

### 2 Normative references

The following documents are referred to in the text in such a way that some or all of their content constitutes requirements of this document. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 15189:2012, *Medical laboratories — Requirements for quality and competence*

ISO 15190, *Medical laboratories — Requirements for safety*

### 3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 15189 and the following apply.

ISO and IEC maintain terminological databases for use in standardization at the following addresses:

- ISO Online browsing platform: available at <https://www.iso.org/obp>
- IEC Electropedia: available at <http://www.electropedia.org/>

#### 3.1

##### **aliquot**

portion of a larger amount of homogeneous material, assumed to be taken with negligible sampling error

Note 1 to entry: The term is usually applied to fluids. Tissues are heterogeneous and therefore cannot be aliquoted.

Note 2 to entry: The definition is derived from References [25], [26], and [27].