
**Water quality — Application of
inductively coupled plasma mass
spectrometry (ICP-MS) —**

**Part 2:
Determination of selected elements
including uranium isotopes**

*Qualité de l'eau — Application de la spectrométrie de masse avec
plasma à couplage inductif (ICP-MS) —*

*Partie 2: Dosage des éléments sélectionnés y compris les isotopes
d'uranium*



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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).

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).

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

For an explanation on 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 the following URL: www.iso.org/iso/foreword.html

The committee responsible for this document is ISO/TC 147, *Water quality*, Subcommittee SC 2, *Physical, chemical and biochemical methods*.

This second edition cancels and replaces the first edition (ISO 17294-2:2003), which has been technically revised.

ISO 17294 consists of the following parts, under the general title *Water quality — Application of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS)*:

- *Part 1: General guidelines*
- *Part 2: Determination of selected elements including uranium isotopes*

Introduction

When applying this part of ISO 17294, it is necessary in each case, depending on the range to be tested, to determine if and to what extent additional conditions are to be established.

Water quality — Application of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) —

Part 2:

Determination of selected elements including uranium isotopes

WARNING — Persons using this part of ISO 17294 should be familiar with normal laboratory practice. This part of ISO 17294 does not purport to address all of the safety problems, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user to establish appropriate safety and health practices and to ensure compliance with any national regulatory conditions.

IMPORTANT — It is absolutely essential that tests, conducted in accordance with this part of ISO 17294, be carried out by suitably qualified staff.

1 Scope

This part of ISO 17294 specifies a method for the determination of the elements aluminium, antimony, arsenic, barium, beryllium, bismuth, boron, cadmium, caesium, calcium, cerium, chromium, cobalt, copper, dysprosium, erbium, gadolinium, gallium, germanium, gold, hafnium, holmium, indium, iridium, iron, lanthanum, lead, lithium, lutetium, magnesium, manganese, mercury, molybdenum, neodymium, nickel, palladium, phosphorus, platinum, potassium, praseodymium, rubidium, rhenium, rhodium, ruthenium, samarium, scandium, selenium, silver, sodium, strontium, terbium, tellurium, thorium, thallium, thulium, tin, tungsten, uranium and its isotopes, vanadium, yttrium, ytterbium, zinc and zirconium in water (for example, drinking water, surface water, ground water, waste water and eluates).

Taking into account the specific and additionally occurring interferences, these elements can also be determined in digests of water, sludges and sediments (for example, digests of water as described in ISO 15587-1 or ISO 15587-2).

The working range depends on the matrix and the interferences encountered. In drinking water and relatively unpolluted waters, the limit of quantification (xLQ) lies between 0,002 µg/l and 1,0 µg/l for most elements (see [Table 1](#)). The working range typically covers concentrations between several pg/l and mg/l depending on the element and pre-defined requirements.

The quantification limits of most elements are affected by blank contamination and depend predominantly on the laboratory air-handling facilities available on the purity of reagents and the cleanliness of glassware.

The lower limit of quantification is higher in cases where the determination suffers from interferences (see [Clause 5](#)) or memory effects (see ISO 17294-1:2004, 8.2).

Table 1 — Lower limits of quantification (xLQ) for unpolluted water

Element	Isotope often used	Limit of quantification ^a µg/l	Element	Isotope often used	Limit of quantification ^a µg/l	Element	Isotope often used	Limit of quantification ^a µg/l
Ag	¹⁰⁷ Ag	0,5	Hf	¹⁷⁸ Hf	0,1	Ru	¹⁰² Ru	0,1
	¹⁰⁹ Ag	0,5	Hg	²⁰² Hg	0,05	Sb	¹²¹ Sb	0,2
Al	²⁷ Al	1	Ho	¹⁶⁵ Ho	0,1		¹²³ Sb	0,2
As	⁷⁵ As ^c	0,1	In	¹¹⁵ In	0,1	Sc	⁴⁵ Sc	5
Au	¹⁹⁷ Au	0,5	Ir	¹⁹³ Ir	0,1	Se	⁷⁷ Se ^c	1
B	¹⁰ B	1	K	³⁹ K ^c	5		⁷⁸ Se ^c	0,1
	¹¹ B	1	La	¹³⁹ La	0,1		⁸² Se	1
Ba	¹³⁷ Ba	3	Li	⁶ Li	10	Sm	¹⁴⁷ Sm	0,1
	¹³⁸ Ba	0,5		⁷ Li	1	Sn	¹¹⁸ Sn	1
Be	⁹ Be	0,1	Lu	¹⁷⁵ Lu	0,1		¹²⁰ Sn	1
Bi	²⁰⁹ Bi	0,5	Mg	²⁴ Mg	1	Sr	⁸⁶ Sr	0,5
Ca	⁴³ Ca	100		²⁵ Mg	10		⁸⁸ Sr	0,3
	⁴⁴ Ca	50	Mn	⁵⁵ Mn	0,1	Tb	¹⁵⁹ Tb	0,1
	⁴⁰ Ca	10	Mo	⁹⁵ Mo	0,5	Te	¹²⁶ Te	2
Cd	¹¹¹ Cd	0,1		⁹⁸ Mo	0,3	Th	²³² Th	0,1
	¹¹⁴ Cd	0,5	Na	²³ Na	10	Tl	²⁰³ Tl	0,2
Ce	¹⁴⁰ Ce	0,1	Nd	¹⁴⁶ Nd	0,1		²⁰⁵ Tl	0,1
Co	⁵⁹ Co	0,2	Ni	⁵⁸ Ni ^c	0,1	Tm	¹⁶⁹ Tm	0,1
Cr	⁵² Cr ^c	0,1		⁶⁰ Ni ^c	0,1	U	²³⁸ U	0,1
	⁵³ Cr	5	P	³¹ P	5		²³⁵ U	10 ⁻⁴
Cs	¹³³ Cs	0,1	Pb	²⁰⁶ Pb ^b	0,2		²³⁴ U	10 ⁻⁵
Cu	⁶³ Cu	0,1		²⁰⁷ Pb ^b	0,2	V	⁵¹ V ^c	0,1
	⁶⁵ Cu	0,1		²⁰⁸ Pb ^b	0,1	W	¹⁸² W	0,3
Dy	¹⁶³ Dy	0,1	Pd	¹⁰⁸ Pd	0,5		¹⁸⁴ W	0,3
Er	¹⁶⁶ Er	0,1	Pr	¹⁴¹ Pr	0,1	Y	⁸⁹ Y	0,1
Fe	⁵⁶ Fe ^c	5	Pt	¹⁹⁵ Pt	0,5	Yb	¹⁷² Yb	0,2
Ga	⁶⁹ Ga	0,3	Rb	⁸⁵ Rb	0,1		¹⁷⁴ Yb	0,2
	⁷¹ Ga	0,3	Re	¹⁸⁵ Re	0,1	Zn	⁶⁴ Zn	1
Gd	¹⁵⁷ Gd	0,1		¹⁸⁷ Re	0,1		⁶⁶ Zn	1
	¹⁵⁸ Gd	0,1	Rh	¹⁰³ Rh	0,1		⁶⁸ Zn	1
Ge	⁷⁴ Ge	0,3	Ru	¹⁰¹ Ru	0,2	Zr	⁹⁰ Zr	0,2

^a Depending on the instrumentation, significantly lower limits can be achieved.

^b In order to avoid incorrect results due to the varying isotop ratios in the environment, the signal intensities of ²⁰⁶Pb, ²⁰⁷Pb and ²⁰⁸Pb shall be added.

^c In order to reach these limits, depending on interferences, the use of a collision/reaction cell is recommended

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

ISO 3696, *Water for analytical laboratory use — Specification and test methods*

ISO 5667-1, *Water quality — Sampling — Part 1: Guidance on the design of sampling programmes and sampling techniques*

ISO 5667-3, *Water quality — Sampling — Part 3: Preservation and handling of water samples*

ISO 8466-1, *Water quality — Calibration and evaluation of analytical methods and estimation of performance characteristics — Part 1: Statistical evaluation of the linear calibration function*

ISO 15587-1, *Water quality — Digestion for the determination of selected elements in water — Part 1: Aqua regia digestion*

ISO 15587-2, *Water quality — Digestion for the determination of selected elements in water — Part 2: Nitric acid digestion*

ISO 17294-1:2004, *Water quality — Application of inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) — Part 1: General guidelines*

3 Terms and definitions

For the purposes of this document, the terms and definitions given in ISO 17294-1 and the following apply.

3.1

limit of application

lowest concentration of an analyte that can be determined with a defined level of accuracy and precision

4 Principle

Multi-element determination of selected elements, including uranium isotopes, by inductively coupled plasma mass spectrometry (ICP-MS) consists of the following steps:

- introduction of a measuring solution into a radiofrequency plasma (for example, by pneumatic nebulization) where energy transfer processes from the plasma cause desolvation, decomposition, atomization and ionization of elements;
- as an additional option, collision and reaction cell technology may be to overcome several interferences (see [5.1](#));
- extraction of the ions from plasma through a differentially pumped vacuum interface with integrated ion optics and separation on the basis of their mass-to-charge ratio by a mass spectrometer (for instance a quadrupole MS);
- transmission of the ions through the mass separation unit (for instance, a quadrupole) and detection, usually by a continuous dynode electron multiplier assembly, and ion information processing by a data handling system;
- quantitative determination after calibration with suitable calibration solutions.

The relationship between signal intensity and mass concentration is usually a linear one over a broad range (usually over more than several orders of magnitude).

The method to be used for determination of uranium isotopes is described in [Annex A](#). With instruments equipped with a magnetic sector field, higher mass resolution spectra can be obtained. This can help to separate isotopes of interest from interfering species.

5 Interferences

5.1 General

In certain cases, isobaric and non-isobaric interferences can occur. The most important interferences in this respect are coinciding masses and physical interferences from the sample matrix. For more detailed information, see ISO 17294-1.

Common isobaric interferences are given in [Table 2](#) (for additional information, see ISO 17294-1). It is recommended that different isotopes of an element be determined in order to select an isotope