2007 Quality Assurance Workshop, Cologne

A major focus of the IAG is the dissemination of knowledge about best practice in analytical geochemistry, thereby encouraging individual laboratories to test for and assure high data quality. In order to help keep analysts up-to-date about the latest trends in chemical metrology, the IAG organised a one-day workshop devoted to quality assurance in geochemical analyses. This was held at the University of Cologne immediately before the Goldschmidt Conference there in August.

Led by Thomas Meisel, chairman of the IAG's Reference Material Certification Committee, the workshop addressed eight major themes: measurement uncertainty, data traceability, sample preparation, sampling, method validation, production of reference materials, proper use of reference materials and proficiency testing. Thomas was assisted by Michael Wiedenbeck, president of the IAG, and Rainer Schramm of Fluxana Corporation. The workshop was attended by 25 participants from 15 countries.

The format was kept informal, thereby encouraging interaction between participants and organisers and exchanges of experience among the many participants. An interesting aspect of the workshop was the spontaneous discussions that developed among analysts from across a very wide spectrum of geochemical disciplines, including environmental dust characterisation, isotope analysis, waste disposal, classical igneous petrology, and energy resource assessment. Lunch at the nearby student cafeteria, sponsored by Fluxana, gave everyone a chance to exchange ideas in a more relaxed and informal setting. In view of the high level of interest in metrology and the positive feedback received from participants, this workshop will become a regular event in future years. The IAG is already looking forward to sponsoring another successful workshop on metrology at Goldschmidt 2008 in Vancouver where all will be welcome.

Participants at the IAG Workshop on Quality Assurance held before the 2007 Goldschmidt conference in Cologne