

2008 Quality Assurance Workshop, Vancouver

The Goldschmidt Conference provides a great forum to present, discuss and review the latest advances in analytical geochemistry. The International Association of Geoanalysts took this opportunity to hold its second Quality Assurance in Analytical Geochemistry workshop, immediately before the 2008 Goldschmidt Conference in Vancouver. The goal of this year's one-day workshop was to foster discussion and highlight important aspects of good data quality, e.g. measurement uncertainty, metrological traceability, proficiency tests, etc.

The workshop was characterised by lively discussion and the expression of many concerns about the lack of appreciation of how to report data properly. The 19 participants from governmental, academic and corporate backgrounds contributed much input from their own experiences, and all agreed that more needs to be done in the field of geochemistry to shift from the current notion of accuracy and precision to the more universal concept of measurement uncertainty. Such a change in paradigm will greatly facilitate comparison of data produced in different labs or between independent analytical methods or procedures.

At the Vancouver workshop the IAG emphasised its commitment to support analytical geochemists by organising collaborative trials, including the highly successful *GeoPT* proficiency test programme (www.geoanalyst.org), and by producing and distributing certified reference materials (www.iageo.com) in accordance with ISO/REMCO guidelines. The success of these workshops encouraged the IAG to hold further such events at important regional meetings (DMG Conference, September 2008 in Berlin; MAPT meeting, September 2009 in Edinburgh), and of course at the 2009 Geoanalysis (South Africa) and Goldschmidt (Switzerland) conferences.