

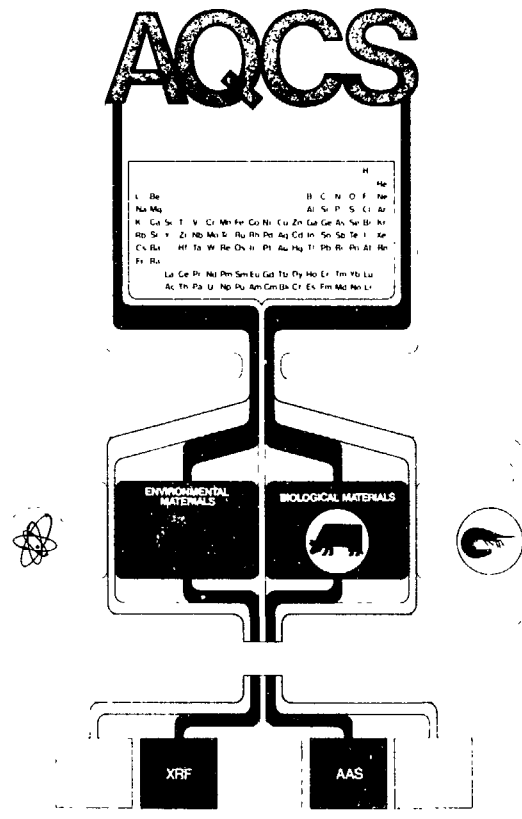
REPORT ON THE
INTERCOMPARISON RUN

IAEA-313

Ra-226, Th and U

IN

STREAM SEDIMENT



ANALYTICAL QUALITY CONTROL SERVICES

INTERNATIONAL ATOMIC ENERGY AGENCY P.O. BOX 100 A 1400 VIENNA AUSTRIA



Intercomparison Study IAEA-313
on the Determination of U, Th and Ra-226 in Stream Sediment

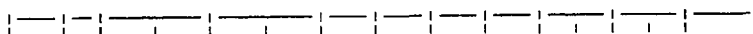
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International Atomic Energy Agency
Agency's Laboratories
Analytical Quality Control Services

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Summary

This report contains the results of the intercomparison IAEA - 313 on the determination of uranium, thorium and Ra-226 in stream sediment.

The participants included 36 laboratories located in 18 countries, and statistical evaluation of their data yield recommended values for these elements.

The elements, their recommended values and confidence intervals are listed below:

Ra - 226	343 Bq/kg (307-379)
Th	77.1 microg/g (74.8-79.4)
U	18.2 microg/g (17.0-19.3)

Reference date: 30 January, 1988

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1. Introduction

The determination of element and radionuclide concentrations in the environment particularly in geological samples is of interest to the specialist in different fields of research. Knowledge of the concentrations of these specific analytes have proved essential for the understanding of the development of geological stratum and sediment from water bodies, also, sediment similar as soil, is a major component of the environment in which the movement of same analytes to the human food chain is possible. In 1988, the Seibersdorf Laboratory (IAEA) distributed 2 new stream sediment samples, for intercomparison studies with different quantities of some artificial and natural radionuclides. One was a sediment from the Sibolga area on the west coast of north Sumatra, Indonesia. The another sample was collected from the Kalan area of west Kalimantan (Borneo), Indonesia. The relust of the latter will be published before March 1991.

2. Scope of Study

Participating laboratories were requested to determine Radium-226, Uranium and Thorium. The analysts were requested to make at least three, but preferably six independent measurements for each element.

3. Description of the material

The bulk stream sediment sample donated by the Indonesian Atomic Energy Commission (IAEC) was collected from the Sibolga area on the West coast of north Sumatra, Indonesia.

The sun dried batch of the stream sediment passing a 180 μm sieve was further ground and homogenized.

Aliquots of 50g were distributed in plastic bottles and all bottles were sealed and sterilized by gamma ray irradiation to a total dose of $2.5 \cdot 10^4$ Gy using a ^{60}Co source.

The homogeneity of the material (after bottling) was checked by determining the concentration of uranium by laser fluorimetry in two sub-samples taken from various bottles chosen at random.

By applying the F-test it was found that the results did not differ significantly for uranium and that this material could be considered homogeneous for a sample size of greater or equal to 500 mg (significance level of 0.05).

4. Evaluation of results

The original data that were received from the participating laboratories were edited (converted to the same units and format) before being entered into a computer data file. This data file was processed by a computer program especially written for evaluating intercomparison results. Results which deviated significantly from the population were considered to be outliers and rejected if they failed either one of the following statistical tests at the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$:

- 1) Dixon's
- 2) Grubb's
- 3) coefficient of skewness, and
- 4) coefficient of kurtosis.

Additional information on acceptance criteria can be found in reference (1).

4.1 Explanation of tables

4.1.1. Data tables

The laboratory mean values for a specific element for which at least two laboratory means were supplied are presented in Tables 1 to 3.

LAB. CODE NO.: Each laboratory was assigned a code number, which is the same throughout the report. To ensure anonymity these code numbers do not correspond to the sequence of the laboratories in the list of participants given at the end of the report.

METHOD CODE: The analytical techniques employed by the participating laboratories are represented in the form of codes (a letter and number). The key to the different analytical techniques is given in Table A

NO. OF DETERMINATIONS: The number of individual results for a given element reported by the participating laboratory.

LAB. MEAN: The arithmetic mean computed from all the individual results reported by the participating laboratory. An asterisk (*) after the lab mean denotes that it was detected and rejected as an outlier. Outliers were not used to compute the overall mean for this element.

LAB. STANDARD DEVIATION: The absolute and relative standard deviations were calculated if at least three results were reported by the participating laboratory.

[1] R. Dybczynski, A. Tugsavul, O. Suschny, Analyst 103 (1978), 733

4.1.2. Summary of results tables

The summary of the results for IAEA-313 is given in Table B. Most of the terms used in the summary table have been already defined. The standard error (S.E.) is defined as the standard deviation of the mean values divided by the square root of the number of laboratory means.

4.2. Description of figures

A figure was plotted for an element when at least five or more laboratory means were reported. The laboratory means are plotted in ascending order (microg/g or Bq/kg) on the y-axis with their corresponding laboratory code noted along the x-axis.

The reported uncertainties or "error bars" (standard deviation of the laboratory mean) are also shown. The code above the error bar is the laboratory method code, while the value below the error bar is the number of individual determinations. If a "less than" value was reported, an arrow downwards was employed rather than the numerical value and these values were not used to compute the overall mean. The mean value and the 95% confidence interval for all the accepted laboratory means are listed in the figure caption when appropriate. Finally, the solid points indicate those values that (filled in circles) were detected and rejected as outliers for the calculation of the overall laboratory mean.

4.3. Criteria for recommended values and confidence intervals.

Please note that these criteria are especially designed for this report and do not apply for general consideration.

The following criteria have been used for data classification:

1. The relative uncertainty of the overall mean (\bar{x}) at the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$ defined as $\frac{SE \cdot t_{0.05}}{\bar{x}}$ is lower than a) 20%, b) 30%;
2. The overall mean was calculated on the basis of the results obtained from at least two different analytical methods.
3. The percentage of outliers was less than a) 20%, b) 30%;
4. At least 20 laboratory averages have been used for the calculation of the overall mean.

The overall mean for the particular element was classified as "reference value" (class A), when criteria 1a, 2, 3a, and 4 were fulfilled. When criteria 1b, 2, 3b, and 4 were fulfilled the overall mean of a given element was classified as "reference value" (Class B).

5. Results and conclusion

The results obtained from this intercomparison are detailed in Tables 1-4.

Since a large number of laboratories provided their results using a different analytical methods, it was possible to establish "recommended values" for uranium, thorium and Ra-226. A survey of outlying results seems to indicate that a relative small number of laboratories are mainly responsible for producing erroneous results, and not the analytical technique or the kind of element being determined. Certain differences between the methods, however, seem to exist in isolated cases and this problem deserves further investigation.

The recommended values for the activity concentration (Bq/kg) of Ra-226 and U, Th(microg/g) in IAEA-313 are summarized in Table C.

6. Acknowledgements

The authors of this report wish to thank to Ms. Katalin Lewis-Goettler for processing the results and to the Oesterreichisches Forschungszentrum for the ⁶⁰Co irradiation of these intercomparison samples. Last, we would also like to thank all the participating laboratories listed at the end of this report for their cooperation in providing the data for this intercomparison.

Table A

Laboratory method codes used in the IAEA - 313 Intercomparison

Method Code	Method
G2	Gamma ray spectrometry without sample pre-treatment
G3	Gamma ray spectrometry with sample pre-treatment
F1	Fluorimetry. Without specification
F2	Fluorimetry. Laser
K1	α - counting techniques
K2	α - spectrometry with specification
M1	Mass spectrometry without specification
M2	ICP - Mass spectrometry
N2	Neutron activation analysis. Thermal.Instrumental
N3	Neutron activation analysis. Epithermal.Instrumental
N7	Delayed neutron counting
R1	Radon emanation method
S2	Spectrophotometry without specification
T1	Fission track method
X1	X-ray fluorescence analysis

TABLE NO. 1 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL 0.05

RESULTS OF INTERCOMPARISON FOR RA-226 IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990

UNIT: BQ/KG

NO.	LAB. CODE NO.	METHOD CODE	NO.OF DETERM.	MEAN	STANDARD DEV.		ACCEPTANCE CODE **
					ABS	REL %	
1	2	G2	4	338.65	3.29	1.0	OK
2	14	G2	6	278.03	5.81	2.1	-4.9
3	15A	R1	3	508.00	14.18	2.8	9.1
4	15B	R1	3	506.67	6.51	1.3	19.6
5	16	G2	2	551.00	15.56	2.8	11.1
6	17	G2	3	360.00	17.32	4.8	OK
7	18	G2	6	215.72	1.78	0.8	-51.0
8	19	R1	6	296.67	25.82	8.7	-0.4
9	20	K1	6	356.33	42.10	11.8	OK
10	21	G2	4	317.75	10.28	3.2	OK
11	22	R1	3	423.33	5.77	1.4	7.7
12	23	N2	6	258.67	13.13	5.1	-3.7
13	24	G2	6	358.50	12.61	3.5	OK
14	25A	K1	1	200.00			LO
15	25B	G2	4	277.00	14.99	5.4	-2.0
16	26	R1	3	334.33	24.79	7.4	OK
17	27	G2	6	340.83	24.16	7.1	OK
18	28	G2	6	339.33	10.78	3.2	OK
19	29	G2	6	310.80	9.22	3.0	OK
20	32	G2	3	346.77	1.27	0.4	OK
21	34A	G2	4	368.10	3.38	0.9	OK
22	34B	G2	4	362.00	13.40	3.7	OK
23	35	G2	3	263.67	0.58	0.2	-74.3
24	36	G2	6	314.33	3.20	1.0	OK

** FOR CONFIDENCE INTERVAL 306.59 TO 378.95

TABLE NO. 2 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL 0.05

RESULTS OF INTERCOMPARISON FOR TH IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990

UNIT: MICROG/G

NO.	LAB. CODE NO.	METHOD CODE	NO.OF DETERM.	MEAN	STANDARD DEV.		ACCEPTANCE CODE **
					ABS	REL %	
1	1	X1	6	72.83	0.98	1.3	-2.0
2	2	G2	4	74.97	1.27	1.7	OK
3	3	G2	6	84.83	2.32	2.7	2.4
4	4	N2	6	110.63*	2.80	2.5	11.2
5	6	X1	6	73.00	0.89	1.2	-2.0
6	7	X1	4	23.75*	2.00	8.4	-25.5
7	8	N2	4	75.25	1.26	1.7	OK
8	10	S2	4	35.32*	4.97	14.1	-7.9
9	11	S2	4	69.50	1.85	2.7	-2.8
10	12	N2	5	74.45	2.12	2.8	-0.1
11	13A	N2	6	77.00	1.62	2.1	OK
12	13C	M2	6	57.82*	1.48	2.6	-11.4
13	14	G2	6	73.83	2.10	2.8	-0.4
14	15A	N2	6	85.00	1.55	1.8	3.6
15	15B	N2	6	85.17	1.83	2.2	3.2
16	17	G2	3	79.33	2.08	2.6	OK
17	18	G2	6	565.77*	6.55	1.2	74.2
18	19	K1	6	51.00*	10.51	20.6	-2.3
19	22	G2	3	80.33	2.08	2.6	0.5
20	23	N2	6	49.33*	2.51	5.1	-10.1
21	24	G2	6	80.05	2.99	3.7	0.2
22	25A	G2	4	74.52	3.42	4.6	-0.1
23	25B	K1	2	85.60	3.11	3.6	2.0
24	27	G2	6	74.50	2.17	2.9	-0.1
25	28	N3	6	77.32	1.89	2.4	OK
26	29	N2	6	72.58	4.26	5.9	-0.5
27	30	T1	3	68.77	3.09	4.5	-1.9
28	31	T1	2	69.00	0.14	0.2	-40.7
29	33	N2	4	116.52*	4.46	3.8	8.3
30	34A	G2	4	82.65	2.72	3.3	1.2
31	34B	G2	4	82.02	2.59	3.2	1.0

** FOR CONFIDENCE INTERVAL 74.76 TO 79.37

TABLE NO. 3 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL 0.05

RESULTS OF INTERCOMPARISON FOR TH-232 IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990

UNIT: MICROG/G

NO.	LAB. CODE NO.	METHOD CODE	NO.OF DETERM.	MEAN	STANDARD DEV.	
					ABS	REL %
1	32	G2	3	87.03	0.81	0.9

TABLE NO. 4 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL 0.05

RESULTS OF INTERCOMPARISON FOR U IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990

UNIT: MICROG/G

NO.	LAB. CODE NO.	METHOD CODE	NO.OF DETERM.	MEAN	STANDARD DEV.		ACCEPTANCE CODE **
					ABS	REL %	
1	1	X1	6	16.67	0.52	3.1	-0.5
2	2	G2	4	57.22*	2.91	5.1	13.1
3	3	G2	6	29.00*	1.10	3.8	8.9
4	4	N2	6	21.72	1.23	5.7	2.0
5	5	F2	6	18.22	0.80	4.4	OK
6	6	X1	6	11.00	0.63	5.7	-9.3
7	8	M1	4	20.79	0.12	0.6	13.5
8	9	K2	3	46.13*	2.04	4.4	13.2
9	10	S2	4	11.15	2.49	22.4	-2.3
10	11	F1	4	15.80	1.10	7.0	-1.0
11	12	N2	6	16.06	0.32	2.0	-2.7
12	13A	N2	6	21.85	0.21	0.9	12.6
13	13B	N7	6	20.62	0.37	1.6	3.7
14	13C	M2	6	15.82	0.27	1.7	-4.0
15	14	G2	6	14.73	3.13	21.2	-0.7
16	15A	N7	6	21.52	0.33	1.5	7.0
17	15B	N7	6	21.73	0.48	2.2	5.1
18	17	G2	3	37.33*	9.29	24.9	1.9
19	18	G2	6	30.80*	0.97	3.2	11.9
20	19	F1	6	171.67*	9.83	5.7	15.5
21	22	G2	3	31.00*	3.61	11.6	3.3
22	23A	N7	6	16.52	0.28	1.7	-1.4
23	23B	N2	6	15.17	4.42	29.1	-0.4
24	24	G2	6	22.52	1.61	7.1	2.0
25	25A	G2	4	36.67*	6.35	17.3	2.7
26	25B	K1	3	19.20	3.25	16.9	OK
27	26	K2	3	17.83	1.94	10.9	OK
28	27	G2	6	16.83	1.47	8.7	-0.1
29	28	N3	6	20.37	0.63	3.1	1.8
30	29	N2	6	20.45	2.00	9.8	0.6
31	30A	T1	6	20.23	0.92	4.5	17.1
32	30B	T1	6	19.08	1.24	6.5	OK
33	30C	T1	3	16.50	0.20	1.2	-2.0
34	31A	T1	6	20.18	1.33	6.6	0.7
35	31B	T1	6	19.07	1.79	9.4	OK
36	31C	T1	3	14.73	0.31	2.1	-7.1
37	33	N2	4	15.05	1.30	8.7	-1.4
38	34A	G2	4	20.00	2.59	12.9	0.3
39	34B	G2	4	21.57	2.77	12.9	0.8

** FOR CONFIDENCE INTERVAL 16.91 TO 19.24

TABLE NO. 5 SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL 0.05

RESULTS OF INTERCOMPARISON FOR U-238 IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990

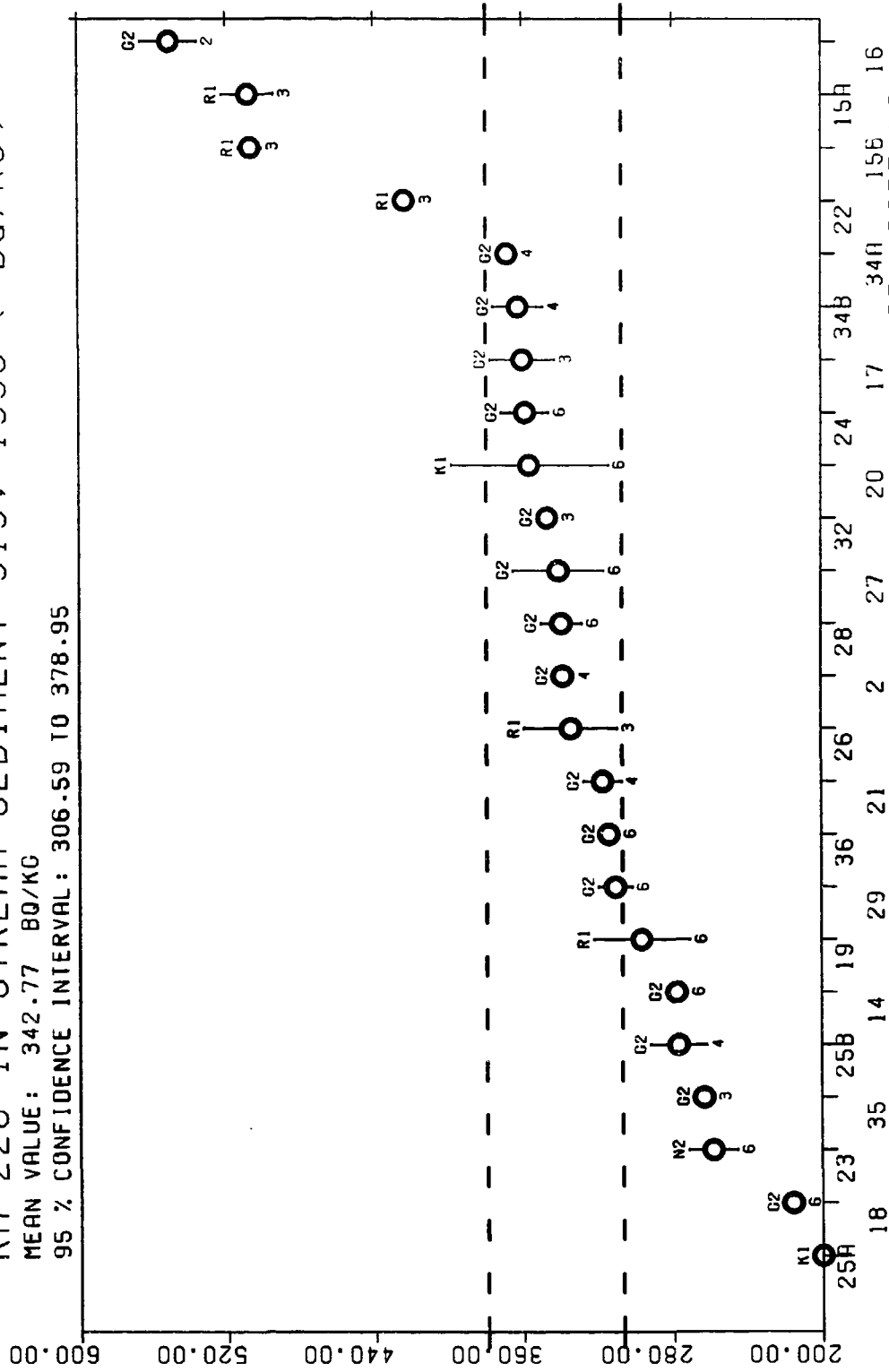
UNIT: MICROG/G

NO.	LAB. CODE NO.	METHOD CODE	NO.OF DETERM.	MEAN	STANDARD DEV.	
					ABS	REL %
32	G2		3	20.72	0.07	0.3

RA-226 IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990 (BQ/KG)

MEAN VALUE: 342.77 BQ/KG

95 % CONFIDENCE INTERVAL: 306.59 TO 378.95

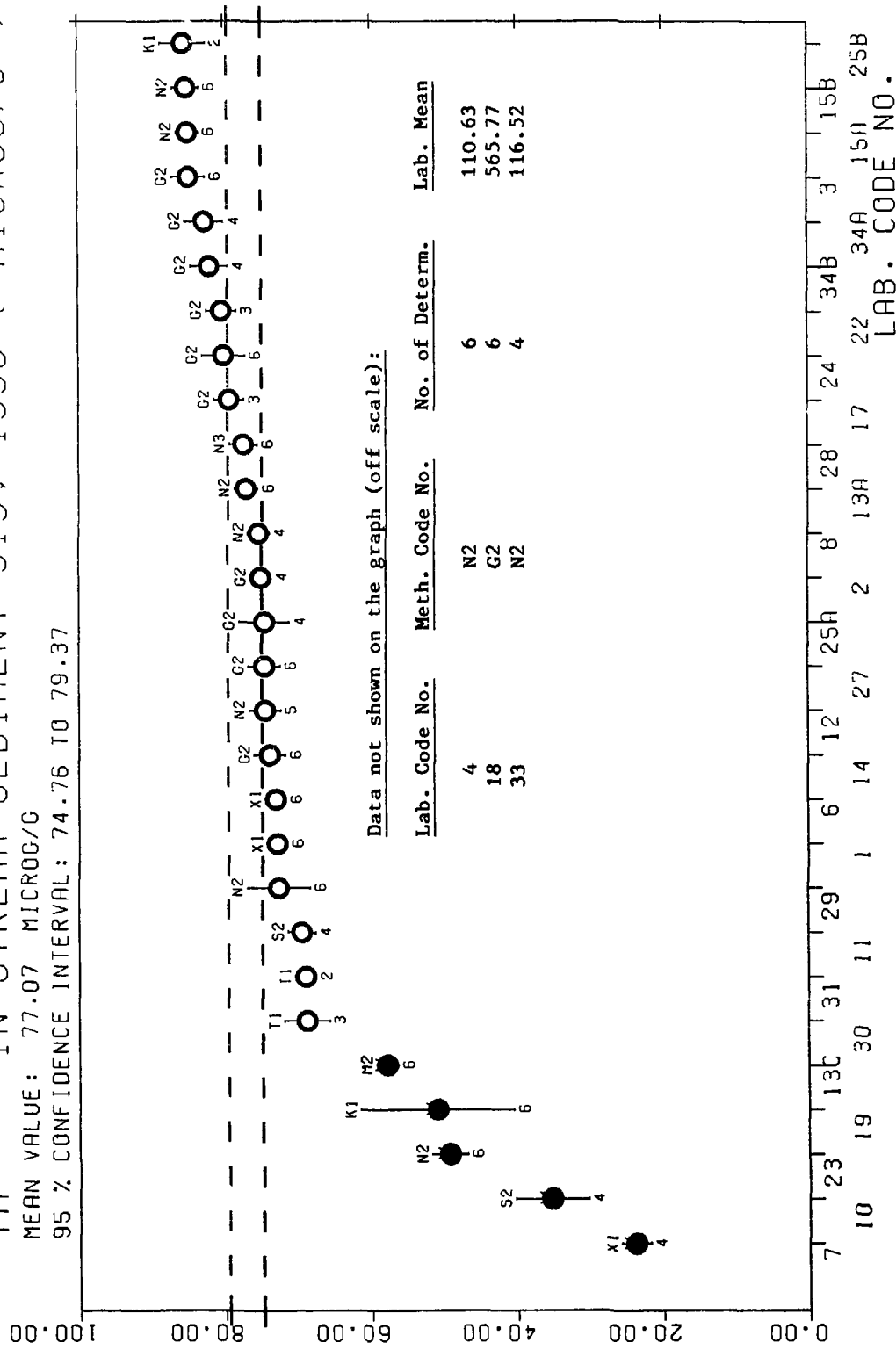


LAB. CODE NO. 16
34B 15B 17

TH IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990 (MICROG/G)

MEAN VALUE: 77.07 MICROG/G

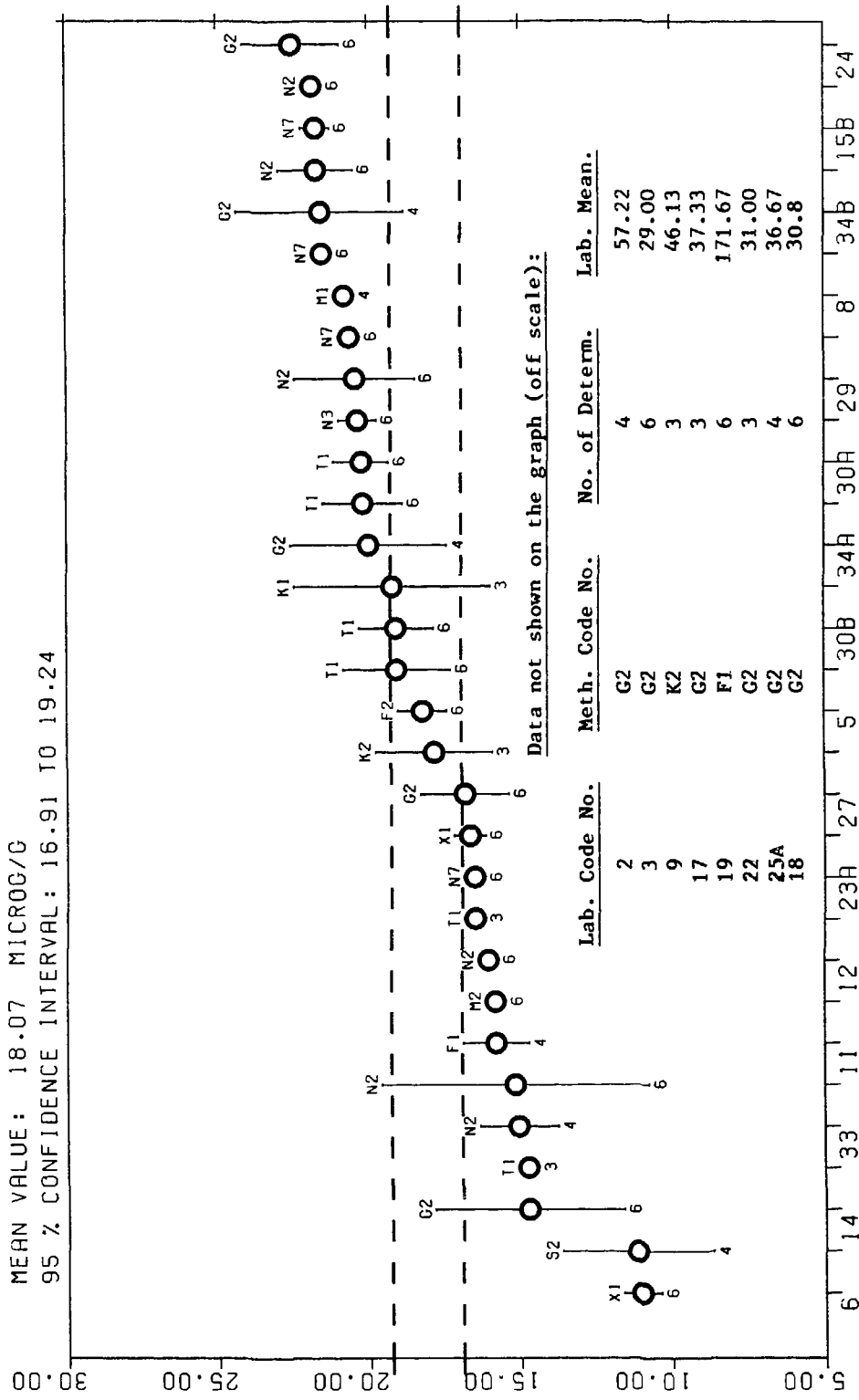
95 % CONFIDENCE INTERVAL: 74.76 TO 79.37



LAB. CODE NO.

U IN STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990 (MICROG/G)

MEAN VALUE: 18.07 MICROG/G
 95 % CONFIDENCE INTERVAL: 16.91 TO 19.24



Data not shown on the graph (off scale):

Lab. Code No.	Meth. Code No.	No. of Determ.	Lab. Mean.
2	G2	4	57.22
3	G2	6	29.00
9	K2	3	46.13
17	G2	3	37.33
19	F1	6	171.67
22	G2	3	31.00
25A	G2	4	36.67
18	G2	6	30.8

6 14 33 11 12 23H 27 5 30B 34H 30H 29 8 34B 15B 24
 10 31C 23B 13C 30C 1 26 31B 25B 31A 28 13B 15A 4 13A
 LAB. CODE NO.

Table B

SUMMARY OF RESULTS OF THE INTERCOMPARISON STREAM SEDIMENT-313, 1990

RADIONUCLIDE DETERMINED	RA-226	TH	U
UNIT	BQ/KG	MICROG/G	MICROG/G
NUMBER OF LABORATORY REPORTED RESULTS	24	31	39
INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATIONS	104	150	197
NUMBER OF LABORATORY ACCEPTED RESULTS	24	23	31
INDIVIDUAL DETERMINATIONS	104	108	162
TOTAL RANGE OF LABORATORY AVERAGES	200.00 - 551.00	23.75 - 565.77	11.00 - 171.67
RANGE OF ACCEPTED LABORATORY AVERAGES	200.00 - 551.00	68.77 - 85.60	11.00 - 22.52
PERCENTAGE OF OUTLYING LABORATORIES	0	26	21
OVERALL MEAN OF ACCEPTED LABORATORY AVERAGES	342.77	77.07	18.16
STANDARD DEVIATION (S.D.)	ABS 85.68 REL% 25.0	ABS 5.33 REL% 6.9	ABS 3.09 REL% 17.0
STANDARD ERROR (S.E.)	ABS 17.49 REL% 5.1	ABS 1.11 REL% 1.4	ABS 0.55 REL% 3.1
CONFIDENCE INTERVALS FOR THE MEAN OF POPULATION FOR SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL .05	306.59 - 378.95	74.76 - 79.37	17.03 - 19.29

Table C

Recommended values and confidence intervals for Uranium, Thorium and Ra-226 in IAEA-313 (Stream Sediment).

Element	Recommended Value	Confidence Interval
Ra - 226	343 Bq/kg	307 - 379 (Class A)
Th	77.1 microg/g	74.8 - 79.4 (Class B)
U	18.2 microg/g	17.0 - 19.3 (Class B)

*Confidence intervals are for significance level 0.05

Reference date: 30 January, 1988

List of participating laboratories for the IAEA's Intercomparison Study of the Stream Sediment (IARA - 313) for Ra - 226, Thorium and Uranium

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