

CALL FOR TENDER

for Ring Test Organizer(s)

to prepare and coordinate the interlaboratory studies of European Standards in support of the Standardisation Request M/564, , amended by the Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 47 final (M/564 Amdt 1), and by the Commission Implementing Decision C(2023) 8288 final (M/564 Amdt 2) to the European Committee for Standardisation as regards the EU fertilising products in support of Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 of the European Parliament and of the Council

Starting date: 2026-07-27

Deadline for tenders: 2026-09-15

I Introduction

I.1 General

Several methods developed by CEN/TC 260 "Fertilizers and liming Material" Working Group 8 "Organic and organo-mineral fertilizers" (CEN/TC 260/WG8) require to be validated by interlaboratory studies. A detailed overview of the projects is presented in Annex I. These methods will form the basis for the drafting of European Standards (EN).

For these projects, a **ring test organizer**, which will prepare and coordinate the interlaboratory studies, will be contracted.

I.2 Context

The European Committee for Standardization (CEN) is requested to draft harmonised standards and European standardisation deliverables that support the implementation of standardization request M/564 to the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) as regards the EU fertilising products in support of Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, (amended by the Commission Implementing Decision C(2022) 47 final (M/564 Amd1) and by the Commission Implementing Decision C(2023) 8288 final (M/564/Amd 2)).

II Objectives

The objectives of this project are described in Annex I.

III Execution

III.1 General tasks of Ring Tests Organizer(s)

The Ring Tests Organizer shall prepare and coordinate the interlaboratory studies, which involves the following tasks:

- collect the samples;
- perform sample preparation on the materials that are going to be used during the interlaboratory studies prior to shipping to the participating laboratories according to information given in Annex I;
- homogeneously sub-sample aliquots (test portions) to be tested by each laboratory;
- perform homogeneity tests on each material that is going to be used during the interlaboratory studies after sample preparation and prior to shipping to the participating

laboratories using a recognized method, e.g. as described in VDLUFA “Book of methods” and report on the results;

- select strains of the target pathogens to be tested according to availability and in consultation with project leader and task group leader;
- perform calculations so that nominal concentrations of the pathogens on spiked samples will be as expected, according to the information given in Annex I;
- depending on the discussion with the project leader and task group leader, spike samples with the target pathogens. For any information regarding the spiking protocols, please contact sbilliere@bnferti.fr;
- perform stability tests, to ensure that the nominal concentrations of the pathogens on spiked samples will be stable through shipment and testing;
- prepare and ship sufficient amounts of the materials that are going to be used during the interlaboratory studies to the selected (European-based) laboratories, ensuring that there are shipped under refrigeration ($5\text{ °C} \pm 3\text{ °C}$), with rapid transportation and arrival during the first half of a week (before Thursday);
- confirm that the participating labs have received the samples under suitable conditions;
- inform the project leaders and task leaders regarding any unforeseen circumstances during the preparation or sending of samples;
- be in contact with laboratories participating in each interlaboratory study and answer questions if necessary;
- cooperate with the statistician on all relevant matters (in planning the interlaboratory studies, in determining the nominal concentrations, in decoding the samples, in the statistical evaluation, in the validation of the test methods, etc)
- collaborate (in general) with the project leader, task leaders, participating laboratories, working group convenor and secretary in order to solve potential problems arising during the conduction of the ILS;
- participate in meeting(s) covering topics regarding the interlaboratory study;
- prepare an ILS report and submit it to the project leader for approval.

III.2 Timeframe

The timeframe for the ILS is embedded in the general timeframe for the projects, which is the responsibility of CEN/TC 260/WG 8. The below target dates and timeframe are a realistic estimation but may still change depending on the progress of the methods to be developed:

- STEP 1: Reception of the samples to be prepared: November 2026 at the latest
- STEP 2: Sending of the samples to be tested to the laboratories so the ILS can start beginning of December 2026 at the latest
- STEP 3: Start of the cooperation work related to the statistical data to validate the methods: STEP 2 + maximum 2 months

IV Financial support

The European Commission and EFTA have decided to provide financial support for the Ring Test Organizer to prepare and coordinate the interlaboratory studies necessary to validate the methods developed by Working Group CEN/TC 260/WG8. The financial support from the European Commission and EFTA is based on the SMP 'Single Market Programme Regulation' (including its Financing Decision) and the MGA (Multi or mono beneficiary(ies) Grant Agreement). Unless specified otherwise, costs of external subcontractors are generally funded at 100%, with approx. 95% being borne by EC and 5% by EFTA. Costs have to qualify as eligible as defined in *MGA N° 2021-04* and also in compliance with [EC Financial Regulation](#), and be justified. The payment is usually divided into several instalments after completion of defined milestones and

approval of the interim/final reports and the justification of costs. The subcontractors shall fulfil the conditions of the MGA N° 2021-04, including those relating to liability, ownership of results, confidentiality, conflict of interests, publicity, evaluation, assignment, checks and audits.

The subcontractors' costs shall be justified with copies of the relevant invoices. All relevant evidence shall be kept in view of future payments (reports, work, drafts and deliverables, contracts & invoices, time sheets, tickets, boarding cards, hotel invoices, attendance lists with signatures, meeting agendas & reports, invoices for any consumables, purchase orders, etc...).

Costs incurred before the Grant Agreement is signed (unless, exceptionally differently agreed with the EC) and before the selection procedure is finalized, will not be considered as eligible for EU financial support.

Ring tests organizer(s) selected will sign an Agreement with AFNOR. AFNOR attaches great importance to contractual terms and conditions and, as such, the candidate's acceptance of the clauses of AFNOR's standard contracts is analysed and rated. The template of the agreement is attached to this Call for tender. Any contractual reservations that the candidate may wish to propose must be clearly identified in the table in the 'Contract Form' document. The candidate is invited to specify expressly: the number of the article concerned by any amendment, the initial text of the standard contract, the amendments proposed by the candidate and the reasons for requesting an amendment. The absence of any comment on the Contract Form filled in the contract form attached, implies acceptance of all the conditions of the proposed contract.

The candidate is clearly informed that no contractual negotiations may take place after notification of the selection. Payments to ring tests organizer(s) are dependent on AFNOR having received the corresponding payments from CEN. Applicants should be forewarned that the elapsed time between completion of the deliverables and AFNOR being in a position to issue the payment is at least five months. This will be partly overcome by the fact that CEN and the European Commission have agreed on payment steps.

V Selection criteria

The applicants shall comply with the requirements given in Annex II.

VI Award criteria

The weight attributed to each required skill/expertise is also given in Annex II.

From the applications received as a result of the open call for tenders, the selection of the ring tests organizers will be done by a selection panel.

The selection and appointment of the ring test organizers will be conducted by a selection panel that may be composed of:

- the Secretary of CEN/TC 260 "Fertilizers and liming materials";
- the Chairperson of CEN/TC 260 "Fertilizers and liming materials";
- the Convenor of CEN/TC 260/WG 8 "Organic and organo-mineral Fertilizers";
- a representative of the Secretary of CEN/TC 260/WG 8 "Organic and organo-mineral Fertilizers";
- A representative from CEN.

VII Eligibility criteria

The following candidates will be excluded:

- evaluation score is lower than 65% in total
- evaluation score on the criteria “Communication skills and proficiency in English of the contact person” is at lower than 65% of maximum mark on the criteria
- subject of a non-likely judgment of recourse for a professional infringement
- in an irregular tax situation or in an irregular special taxation situation
- providing incomplete or erroneous information.
- submitting their application after the submission deadline.
- presenting any conflict of interest.

VIII Tenders

Tenders shall be sent (only by email) to CEN/TC 260/WG 8 Secretary, Ms. Stéphanie Billiere (see contact details below), as soon as possible, to be received at the latest by **2026/09/15**. Applications received after this deadline will not be taken into consideration.

The tender shall be in English and contain:

- Application form in Annex IV ;
- Any required accreditation certificates;
- A schedule and a description of the execution of the tasks which will be carried out in the project as such (that can be details in Annex IV, point G – description of the offer);
- A table with detailed information on the costs (an example of table is given in Annex III);
- Appropriate documentation to prove the economic and financial capacities;
- Any further documents to prove the qualification required in the above Clauses on Selection and Award criteria;
- A signed declaration (an example of declaration is given in Annex V), by which the candidate(s) certifies not to be subject to one of the exclusion criteria as described in Clause “Eligibility criteria” and the veracity of the adjoining documents.

Please note that, to ensure equal treatment of all tenders, it is not possible to modify offers after their submission in relation to the technical and financial proposals. Therefore, incompleteness in this section can only result in negative impact for the evaluation of award criteria. Please note also that proposals deviating from the technical specifications may be rejected for non-conformity.

Tenders should be sent by legal representative, i.e. to be considered, any possible association has to be formalized according to the local legislation before submitting the tender. Working teams, partnerships and other groups of people, particularly under the aegis of an institute qualify as contractors for the service contracts awarded in the course of this call for tenders. Partnerships or joint ventures and other legally binding co-operations regardless of their organizational form qualify as well, provided they are recognized entities under the applicable national laws. Potential candidates may come from the public sector as well as from the private industry. It is essential however that the qualifications and experience of the individual fulfilling the tasks are properly described.

It is possible to apply for a work package as a consortium. If a consortium is formed, one institute needs to be identified as the leader of the consortium and the division of labour between the consortium members should be clearly described and justified. In this case, only the leader of the consortium would sign the contract with the contractor and ensure that all tasks are fulfilled and is responsible for the justifications and expenses of the consortium members. It is essential however that all members of the consortium are properly identified within the offer.

Regarding question concerning the information provided in this call for tenders or in case of need for clarification or additional information please contact CEN/TC 260/WG 8 Secretary, Ms Stéphanie Billiere (see contact details below).

If due to queries or other reasons supplementary information to this call for tender is required, this will be published on the website of the AFNOR and CEN-CENELEC.

Please send your application to :

BN FERTI (on behalf of AFNOR) Ms Stéphanie Billiere CEN/TC 260/WG 8 Secretary sbilliere@bnferti.fr Le Diamant A – 92909 LA DEFENSE CEDEX France Phone : +33 (0) 7 50 12 18 84

Annex I. Project Plan

1. Background and general objectives

Background of Standardisation request M/564

With Standardization Request (SReq) M/564 of February 2020 and its amendments, the European Commission (EC) charged the European Committee for Standardization (CEN) to elaborate harmonized European Standards and European standardization deliverables in the framework of the Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 on fertilising products.

The new Regulation creates a level playing field for all fertilizing products. At the same time, new common requirements for quality, safety and labelling will allow European farmers to make informed choices, contributing to making food production more cost and resource effective. The harmonized standards will help economic operators and competent authorities to verify the compliance of CE-marked fertilizing products against the legal requirements.

The aim of the SReq is to develop methods on sampling and analysis of fertilizing products. The establishment of standardized methods of analysis is of utmost importance to guarantee a uniform application and control of the European legislation in all Member States. Standardized methods of analysis are an indispensable element in increasing the quality and safety for fertilizing products for the benefit of farmers. In this perspective, validated modern analytical methods are a prerequisite for reliable analytical results.

In accordance with Article 13(2) of Regulation (EU) 2019/1009, tests for verifying the conformity of EU fertilizing products with the requirements set out in Annexes I, II and III to that Regulation which are in conformity with harmonized standards or parts thereof, the references of which have been published in the *Official Journal of the European Union*, are to be presumed to be reliable and reproducible to the extent that the tests are covered by those standards or parts thereof.

Harmonized standards help ensuring a high level of protection of human, animal and plant health and of the environment throughout the European Union and contribute to the free movement of quality EU fertilizing products in the Union. Given that such standards are technology-neutral and performance-based, they also contribute to ensuring equal conditions of competition among relevant economic operators dealing with EU fertilizing products, in particular small and medium-sized enterprises. Harmonized standards help manufacturers in proving the conformity of their products with the relevant requirements set out in Union harmonization legislation.

The Standardization Request includes a very large number of standardization projects and a broad scope of application with regard to the product range. Three CEN/Technical Committees (TCs) will perform the work mandated under this SReq:

- CEN/TC 260 Fertilizers and liming materials,
- CEN/TC 223 Soil Improvers and growing media, and
- CEN/TC 455 Plant biostimulants.

This proposal concerns the standards relevant to CEN/TC 260 'Fertilizers and liming materials'.

General objectives within CEN/TC 260

The objective of CEN/TC 260 is the elaboration of harmonized standardized methods for sampling and analysis of fertilizers and liming materials. The secretariat is held by the German Institute for Standardization (DIN). The list of standards adopted by CEN/TC 260 is available on [CEN CENELEC website](#). Many of these standards have been developed in the frame of three EU Mandates as M/335, M/418 and M/455.

The elaboration of the elements requested in SReq M/564 and its amendments will be realized within CEN/TC 260 and its 5 Working Groups. These standardization deliverables will cover fertilizing products under the following Product Function Categories:

- PFC 1 Fertilizers
- PFC1/A Organic fertilizers
- PFC 1/B Organo-mineral fertilizers
- PFC 1/C Inorganic fertilizers
- PFC 2 Liming materials
- PFC 5 Inhibitors
- PFC 7 Fertilizing product blends,

and the following Component Material Categories (CMCs):

- CMC 1 Virgin material substances and mixtures
- CMC 8 Nutrient Polymers.

Furthermore, other CMCs will be addressed in the standardization deliverables if relevant for the fertilizing products of CEN/TC 260.

2. Workload within CEN/TC 260/WG8 for ring test organizer(s)

CEN/TC 260/WG 8 "*Organic and organo-mineral fertilizers*" has initially been asked to develop 19 documents. They have to be elaborated in two steps: as Technical Specification first (CEN/TS) first and then as European Standards (EN or hEN). The CEN/TS have already been published and are used as a basis for the development of the ENs.

This call for tenders concerns several above-mentioned European Standards for which the performance characteristics of the methods need to be determined by means of interlaboratory studies. Although the working group manages organic and organo-mineral fertilizers, it has also been tasked with testing certain methods on inorganic fertilizers. Therefore, **the projects subject to this call for tenders fall mainly within the categories in Regulation (EU) 2019/1009 designated by PFC 1C.**

3. Overview of projects for which this call for tenders is launched

Homogeneity tests have to be performed for all methods. Only potential specific requirements are specified in the following Tables.

Project 1 : Microbial Criteria

Prepare and coordinate the interlaboratory studies of the following projects

CEN Reference	Title	Number of samples to be collected, prepared ² and sent to the laboratories ³	Approximate amount to be sent to the laboratories ⁴	Spiking and homogeneity testing requirements by organisation responding to this call for tenders	Sample preparation to be carried out according to :
EN 17780	Organic, organo-mineral and inorganic fertilizers — Detection of <i>Salmonella</i> spp.	1 material collected 32 samples sent to the laboratories after spiking at 3 pathogens levels (+ blank)	800 g at least	1 material (inorganic fertilizer with more than 1% of organic carbon), 4 pathogen levels per material (not spiked, spiked at low, medium and high concentration), 8 replicates per level	prEN 1482-5
EN 17781	Organic, organo-mineral and inorganic fertilizers — Enumeration of <i>Escherichia coli</i>	1 material collected 8 samples sent to the laboratories after spiking at 3 pathogens levels (+ blank)	80 g at least	1 material (inorganic fertilizer with more than 1% of organic carbon), 4 pathogen levels per material (not spiked, spiked at low, medium and high concentration), 2 replicates per level	prEN 1482-5
EN 17804	Organic, organo-mineral and inorganic fertilizers — Enumeration of enterococci	1 material collected 8 samples sent to the laboratories after spiking at 3 pathogens levels (+blank)	80 g at least	1 material (inorganic fertilizer with more than 1% of organic carbon), 4 pathogen levels per material (not spiked, spiked at low, medium and high concentration), 2 replicates per level	prEN 1482-5

Annex II: Selection criteria for ring test organizer(s) willing to prepare and coordinate interlaboratory studies on methods developed by CEN/TC 260/WG8

The applicants shall comply with the following requirements:

1. Financial and economic capacity to execute the project

- Sufficient economic and financial capacity to guarantee continuous and satisfactory performance throughout the envisaged lifetime of the contract.
- Sufficient financial capacity to cover all pre-financing foreseen under the contract.

2. Technical and professional capacity

Table 2 – Technical and professional capacity criteria with their weight in the selection process.

PROFILE	90 %
Number of years of experience in organizing and coordinate interlaboratory studies	20 %
Relevant experience in the planning and the coordination of interlaboratory analytical studies, preferably with international character, and involving participants from different countries	25 %
Accreditation ISO 17043	5 %
Ability to perform sample preparation according to the requirements given in the Tables of Annex I prior to shipping to the laboratories participating in the interlaboratory studies	10 %
Ability to gather and ship the requested materials to the laboratories participating in the interlaboratory studies	10 %
Ability to perform spiking with subsequent homogeneity and stability testing	10 %
Availability of staff, equipment, materials and consumables required for the execution of the mission	10 %
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS	10 %
Communication skills and proficiency in English of the contact person as the test methods are provided in English only and in order to effectively participate in (web) meetings in English	10 %
TOTAL	100 %

Candidates replying to this call shall score at least 65 % of the selection criteria mentioned in the table above. They also shall score at least 6,5% on the criteria “Communication skills and proficiency in English of the contact person”.

After evaluation, the replies from applicants will be ranked using the equation below to determine which replies offer best value for money, in which quality defines 70 % and the price defines 30 % of the total score for the tender.

$$\text{Score for tender X} = 0,3 \left(\frac{\text{cheapest price}}{\text{price of tender X}} \right) + 0,7 \left(\frac{\text{points awarded to tender X according to Table A2.1}}{100} \right)$$

Annex III: Table with detailed information on the costs

The following table shall be used in the tender to give detailed information on the costs regarding the work of the ring test organizer.

Project N°1 : Microbial criteria

Man rates, Analysis rates, etc	Cost
TOTAL COST :	0,00

**Annex IV: Application to a Call for Tender / Consultation process
in compliance with SMP Single Market Programme Regulation
(and its financing decision) & MGA (Mono or Multi
beneficiary(ies) Grant Agreement)**

A- Contact details of the Expert

Name: Position: Phone: Email address: Personal website (if any):
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B- Information about the organisation/s the expert is working (name, website, contact person, phone, email)

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C- Curriculum Vitae (maximum 4 A4 pages) - can also be enclosed separately

D- Please specify the position you are applying for:

Please indicate for which project(s) you are applying for by filling in the table below.	
<i>Project reference</i>	<i>Apply as ring test organizer (Yes or No)?</i>
1 : Microbial criteria	

E- Please describe and prove evidence of the required skills and expertise for the role you are applying for (half a page maximum including your proposed approach)

YES	NO	Skills and expertise	Short description of the evidence of the required skills and expertise for the role you are applying for
		FINANCIAL AND ECONOMIC CAPACITY TO EXECUTE THE PROJECT	
		Sufficient economic and financial capacity to guarantee continuous and satisfactory performance throughout the envisaged lifetime of the contract. Sufficient financial capacity to cover all pre-financing foreseen under the contract.	
		PROFILE	
		Number of years of experience in organizing and coordinate interlaboratory studies	
		Relevant experience in the planning and the coordination of interlaboratory analytical studies, preferably with international character, and involving participants from different countries	
		Accreditation ISO 17043	
		Ability to perform sample preparation according to the requirements given in the Tables of Annex I prior to shipping to the laboratories participating in the interlaboratory studies	
		Ability to gather and ship the requested materials to the laboratories participating in the interlaboratory studies	
		Ability to perform spiking with subsequent homogeneity and stability testing	
		Availability of staff, equipment, materials and consumables required for the execution of the mission	
		ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND COMMUNICATION SKILLS	
		Communication skills and proficiency in English of the contact person as the test methods are provided in English only and in order to effectively participate in (web) meetings in English	

F- Information on the costs of the experts: table as per Annex III

G- Description of the offer (answer to the call for tenders)

I certify that all documents provided are veracious and in conformity with reality and certify not to be in any situation described below:

- a) subject of a non-likely judgment of recourse for a professional infringement
- b) to be in an irregular tax situation or in an irregular special taxation situation
- c) to provide with incomplete or erroneous information

I also certify that I had no conflict of interest by submitting the present offer.

Signed:

On behalf of: (print name here)

Date:

Annex V: Declaration on honour on exclusion criteria

I certify that all documents provided are veracious and in conformity with reality and certify not to be in any situation described below :

[Please tick the appropriate boxes]

- ☐ subject of a non-likely judgment of recourse for a professional infringement
- ☐ to be in an irregular tax situation or in an irregular special taxation situation
- ☐ to provide with incomplete or erroneous information

I also certify that I had no conflict of interest by submitting the present offer and I am not concerned by any exclusion criteria listed below :

[Please tick the appropriate boxes]

- ☐ they are bankrupt or being wound up, are having their affairs administered by the courts, have entered into an arrangement with creditors, have suspended business activities, are the subject of proceedings concerning those matters, or are in any analogous situation arising from a similar procedure provided for in national legislation or regulations;
- ☐ they have been convicted of an offence concerning their professional conduct by a judgment which has the force of res judicata;
- ☐ they have been guilty of grave professional misconduct proven by any means which the contracting authority can justify;
- ☐ they have not fulfilled obligations relating to the payment of social security contributions or the payment of taxes in accordance with the legal provisions of the country in which they are established or with those of the country of the contracting authority or those of the country where the contract is to be performed;
- ☐ they have been the subject of a judgment which has the force of res judicata for fraud, corruption, involvement in a criminal organisation or any other illegal activity detrimental to the European union's financial interests;
- ☐ following another procurement procedure or grant award procedure financed by the Community budget, they have been declared to be in serious breach of contract for failure to comply with their contractual obligations)

Signed :

On behalf of:

Date :