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## Standardization of $k_0$ -NAA for short-lived nuclides using pneumatic carrier facility (PCF) at BARC

Neutron Activation Analysis (NAA) using short-lived radionuclides is advantageous in terms of less turn-around time of analysis. As a part of  $k_0$ -based NAA (single comparator NAA) standardization program for short-lived nuclides, pneumatic carrier facilities (PCF) at CIRUS and Dhruva reactors of Bhabha Atomic Research Centre (BARC) were characterized by determining sub-cadmium-to-epithermal neutron flux ratio ( $f$ ) and epithermal neutron flux shape factor ( $\alpha$ ), which are two reactor based input parameters. Bare triple monitor method using  $^{197}\text{Au}$ - $^{94}\text{Zr}$ - $^{96}\text{Zr}$  as well as  $^{197}\text{Au}$ - $^{50}\text{Cr}$ - $^{98}\text{Mo}$  were used for  $\alpha$  determination since there is a restriction in cadmium mass to be used as a wrapper/cover for sample irradiation. The  $f$ -value was calculated using bare bi-isotopic method.

The  $k_0$ -factors of the short-lived nuclides (half-lives of nuclides 11 s to 60 min) of elements namely F, Se, Sc, Rb, Al, V, Ti, Cu, Ca, Mg, Br, I, Cl and In with respect to gold ( $^{197}\text{Au}$ ) were determined in the present work. Gold standards (5-10 micro gram) were prepared on filter paper matrix. The elemental standards were prepared using primary standards in solid or liquid form and were irradiated with gold standard for 1 min in Dhruva reactor and 1-3 min in CIRUS reactor. The measurement of gamma-rays was carried out using a 40 % relative efficiency HPGe-detector coupled to a digital spectrometer with loss-free counting facility and the sample-to-detector distance was maintained at 10-15 cm distance. The absolute detection efficiency of the detector was obtained using  $^{133}\text{Ba}$  and  $^{152}\text{Eu}$  multi gamma-ray standard sources. The determined experimental  $k_0$ -factors of the isotopes were found to be in good agreement with the recommended  $k_0$ -factors in most of the cases. The  $k_0$ -factors of isotopes with widely varying  $Q_0$  factors with respect to  $^{197}\text{Au}$  (15.7) were compared with recent literature values. The method was validated by determining concentrations of elements like Al, V, Ti, Cu, Ca, Mg, Br and Cl in IAEA reference materials (RMs) namely SL-3, SL-1, Soil-7 and V-10 and Cu, V, I and Cl in synthetic multielement standards (SMELS-I) obtained from SCK-CEN, Belgium.

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**Primary author:** Dr ACHARYA, RAGHUNATH (Radiochemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - 400 085, India)

**Co-authors:** Dr REDDY, A. V. R. (Analytical Chemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - 400 085, India); Mr KUMAR, AMIT (Radiochemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - 400 085, India); Dr SWAIN, KALLOLA KUMAR (Analytical Chemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - 400 085, India); Mrs AJITH, NICY (Analytical Chemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - 400 085, India); Dr VERMA, RAKESH (Analytical Chemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - 400 085, India)

**Presenter:** Dr SWAIN, KALLOLA KUMAR (Analytical Chemistry Division, Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Trombay, Mumbai - 400 085, India)

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