Research Group Study Participation Guidelines

Academicians, contract research organizations, corporate sponsors and manufacturers (herein referred to as vendors) are encouraged to participate fully in ABRF RG studies.

Individuals, including vendors, who accept samples from ABRF are expected to comply with the following specific recommendations designed to protect the confidentiality of the study and to minimize inappropriate or misleading advertisements:

Confidentiality: Vendors and other study participants should not release any characteristics of an ABRF sample to outside parties prior to public disclosure of these characteristics by ABRF. Disclosure by ABRF is defined as public release of the nature of the unknown, generally at a national meeting or by distributing reprints or other documentation to members and the scientific community.

Publishing or distributing data: After disclosure of sample characteristics by ABRF, vendors and other study participants may publish or distribute data from their analyses on ABRF samples if they wish. Appropriate uses include tutorials, user bulletins, letters to customers or users, advertisements and other distributions related to marketing, research, or education of customers or users. It is expected that all participants who use and distribute data derived from ABRF samples will comply with the following restrictions:

- An ABRF Research Group study is not a competition and under no circumstances should it be referred to as such.
 Words and phrasing that imply a competition such as 'winner,' 'best of,' etc. are strictly forbidden. We suggest referring to the purpose of the study as "benchmarking".
- Individual performance relative to the anticipated answer is acceptable, but should not be directly compared to the
 performance of other participants. Comparisons to ABRF data should also specifically emphasize that many factors
 will affect analytical results (for example, the data obtained in a company's R & D lab may exceed feasible
 expectations for an "average" resource or research facility under routine conditions) and that other participating
 laboratories may not have the same goals for the desired outcome (i.e., may be training new laboratory members or
 trying out new techniques).
- Representations and publications should fairly emphasize differences between any data comparisons. For example, instrument reliability may not be concluded by comparing instruments in the field with an average age of 5 years with a participant's run on a new instrument.
- Any comparisons to ABRF data derived from resource or research facilities analyzing samples as unknowns should prominently indicate: the number of samples the participant received, the number of runs performed by the participant, and whether the actual characteristics of the sample were known by the participant at the time the participant's analysis was performed.
- Publications should contain a disclaimer stating that ABRF prepared and provided the sample to all participants, does not endorse any specific manufacturer, instrument or laboratory.
- Vendors and study participants are required to distribute potential publications to the RG for comments regarding compliance with these guidelines.

Commercializing samples or results of ABRF studies: The ABRF brand will remain associated with any commercial product that may result from the collaboration between an RG and a vendor, even if intellectual property is sought by the corporate donor.

Recipient: We recommend that this document be distributed to any appropriate marketing and senior personnel in the company or institution to ensure compliance. A copy of this document, Research Group Study Participation Guidelines, can be found on the ABRF website, www.abrf.org, under the Forms and Documents menu.