

## Proposals for NORMAN Joint Programme of Activities 2026

<b>Title</b>	<b>Interlaboratory Study / Developing Exercise on Microplastics in water and sediment (DE17)</b>
<b>Type of activity</b>	Interlaboratory Study (ILS)
<b>Leader</b>	WUR/WEPAI-QUASIMEME (W-Q), NIVA, VU
<b>Topic / activities</b>	<p><b>Background / Justification for the proposed activity:</b></p> <p>WEPAI-QUASIMEME, in close collaboration with NIVA and VU, has organized several ILS in recent years on the quantification of microplastics in water and sediment. The most recent ILS (2024/2025) involved about 50 participants and included three types of microplastics (50–5000 µm), spiked manually or added as tablets in both matrices.</p> <p>Overall performance in both matrices is still far from the reliability expected in established ILS, with interlaboratory coefficients of variation ranging from 37% to 226% (only three measurands in sand achieved a CV &lt;20%). This highlights the substantial work still needed to ensure accurate and reliable analysis of microplastics in environmental samples. There is also a clear need for more reliable reference-material tablets with well-defined particle counts for specific microplastic types.</p> <p><b>Description of the proposed activity and expected outcomes for 2026:</b></p> <p>To maintain progress toward achieving reliable quality standards for microplastics analysis in environmental samples, a new ILS will be organized by W-Q, NIVA, and VU for 2026/2027, covering both water and sediment. The aim is to include six types of microplastics in the 20-500 µm range. However, particularly for the reference-material tablets, the final number of microplastic types may vary depending on the availability of suitable materials on the market that meet the minimum requirements for this ILS.</p> <p>New reference-material tablets with well-defined particle counts for specific microplastic types will be sought on the market. Microplastic reference materials intended for manual spiking have already been identified and will be purchased – six types of microplastics will be available for this purpose.</p> <p>Samples will be prepared and shipped to participating laboratories by W-Q. A comprehensive performance assessment report will be prepared after the results-submission deadline and shared with participants. If deemed necessary based on the outcomes of the ILS, a dedicated workshop will be organized. Key outcomes, conclusions, and any recommendations will be provided to NORMAN for the Activity Report of 2027, and, if requested by the NORMAN SC, a presentation may be delivered at the NORMAN GA 2027.</p> <p><b>Expected timeline of events:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Registration:</b> March - 1 September 2026</li> <li>- <b>Sample preparation:</b> September 2026</li> <li>- <b>Analysis and submission of results:</b> October 2026 – February 2027</li> <li>- <b>Performance Assessment Report:</b> March-April 2027</li> <li>- <b>Workshop (if needed):</b> May or June 2027</li> </ul> <p><b>Expected outcomes for 2026:</b></p> <p>Enhanced awareness and engagement of NORMAN members in the ILS, contributing to improved quality standards for microplastics analysis in environmental matrices.</p> <p><b>Expected outcomes for 2027:</b></p> <p>A comprehensive performance-assessment report, including major outcomes and conclusions (for participants only); a potential workshop addressing key findings, achievements, and challenges; a summary of results for inclusion in the NORMAN 2027 Activity Report; and a potential presentation at the NORMAN GA 2027.</p> <p><b>Added value / Link with other NORMAN activities and / or other projects</b></p> <p>Microplastics analysis and environmental monitoring are within NORMAN core activities, with the NDS serving as a key output compiling extensive monitoring data. This ILS will support and enhance the credibility and reliability of microplastics analysis in environmental matrices, thereby strengthening NORMAN's influence with European regulatory bodies. Encouraging NORMAN members who generate and share microplastics monitoring data to participate in this ILS will add value for participating laboratories and further improve the credibility of the data included in the NDS.</p>
<b>Participants</b>	Any laboratories interested in this ILS.
<b>Proposed contribution</b>	<p>The costs of organizing this ILS will be covered by a participation fee.</p> <p>In-kind contribution from W-Q, NIVA and VU will come as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Personnel effort to find suitable microplastics reference material and sample-preparation</li> <li>2) Organizing the workshop if deemed necessary</li> <li>3) Preparing a summary report with major outcomes, conclusions, and any recommendations for the NORMAN Activity Report of 2027</li> <li>4) Preparing a presentation to be delivered at the NORMAN GA 2027.</li> </ol>
<b>Contribution needed</b>	Contribution needed from NORMAN consists of supporting the dissemination of this ILS by publishing



<b>from NORMAN Association<sup>1</sup></b>	<p>information on the NORMAN website and, upon request, circulating an announcement or invitation through the NORMAN members mailing list. These communications should include links to the W-Q website for more information and to the registration form.</p> <p>Links for more information: <a href="#">WEPAL-QUASIMEME website</a> Link for registration form: <a href="https://participants.wepal.nl/participation/order.php">https://participants.wepal.nl/participation/order.php</a> → select "Special exercises" and then "DE17 – Microplastics" (Period 4)</p> <p><b>Financial contribution:</b> 5000€ for supporting the purchase of microplastics reference material, which will allow to greatly reduce the participation fee for NORMAN members.</p>
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<sup>1</sup> Please, provide here a transparent justification of the requested resources and of the in-kind contribution, thereby distinguishing between the costs associated with "person-months" for the organisation, the "travelling costs" for invited speakers and the costs for the logistics (e.g. meals, room rental etc.)