

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON HARMONISATION OF TECHNICAL  
REQUIREMENTS FOR REGISTRATION OF PHARMACEUTICALS FOR HUMAN USE

**ICH HARMONISED TRIPARTITE GUIDELINE**

**EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF PHARMACOPOEIAL  
TEXTS FOR USE IN THE ICH REGIONS ON  
MICROBIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF NON-STERILE PRODUCTS:  
MICROBIAL ENUMERATIONS TESTS GENERAL CHAPTER  
Q4B ANNEX 4A(R1)**

Current *Step 4* version  
dated 27 September 2010

*This Guideline has been developed by the appropriate ICH Expert Working Group and has been subject to consultation by the regulatory parties, in accordance with the ICH Process. At Step 4 of the Process the final draft is recommended for adoption to the regulatory bodies of the European Union, Japan and USA.*

**Q4B Annex 4A(R1)  
Document History**

Code	History	Date
Q4B Annex 4A	Approval by the Steering Committee under Step 2 and release for public consultation.	5 June 2008
Q4B Annex 4A	Approval by the Steering Committee under Step 4 and recommendation for adoption to the three ICH regulatory bodies.	12 November 2008

**Current *Step 4* version**

Q4B Annex 4A(R1)	Integration of the Health Canada Interchangeability Statement under Section 4.5 after approval by the Steering Committee.	27 September 2010
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**EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF PHARMACOPOEIAL TEXTS FOR  
USE IN THE ICH REGIONS**

**ON**

**MICROBIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF NON-STERILE PRODUCTS:  
MICROBIAL ENUMERATIONS TESTS  
GENERAL CHAPTER**

**ICH Harmonised Tripartite Guideline**

Having reached *Step 4* of the ICH Process at the ICH Steering Committee meeting  
on 12 November 2008, this guideline is recommended for  
adoption to the three regulatory parties to ICH

*(This annex was revised -R1- to include the Interchangeability Statement from Health  
Canada on September 27, 2010)*

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# EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATION OF PHARMACOPOEIAL TEXTS FOR USE IN THE ICH REGIONS

ON

## MICROBIOLOGICAL EXAMINATION OF NON-STERILE PRODUCTS MICROBIAL ENUMERATIONS TESTS GENERAL CHAPTER

### 1. INTRODUCTION

This annex is the result of the Q4B process for Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests.

The proposed texts were submitted by the Pharmacopoeial Discussion Group (PDG).

### 2. Q4B OUTCOME

#### 2.1 Analytical Procedures

The ICH Steering Committee, based on the evaluation by the Q4B Expert Working Group (EWG), recommends that the official pharmacopoeial texts, Ph.Eur. 2.6.12. Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests, JP 4.05 Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: I. Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests, and USP <61> Microbiological Examination of Nonsterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests can be used as interchangeable in the ICH regions.

#### 2.2 Acceptance Criteria

The proposed texts evaluated did not contain acceptance criteria.

### 3. TIMING OF ANNEX IMPLEMENTATION

When this annex is implemented (incorporated into the regulatory process at ICH *Step 5*) in a region, it can be used in that region. Timing might differ for each region.

### 4. CONSIDERATIONS FOR IMPLEMENTATION

#### 4.1 General Consideration

When sponsors or manufacturers change their existing methods to the implemented Q4B-evaluated pharmacopoeial texts that are referenced in Section 2.1 of this annex, any change notification, variation, and/or prior approval procedures should be handled in accordance with established regional regulatory mechanisms pertaining to compendial changes.

#### 4.2 FDA Consideration

Based on the recommendation above, and with reference to the conditions set forth in this annex, the pharmacopoeial texts referenced in Section 2.1 of this annex can be considered interchangeable. However, FDA might request that a company demonstrate that the chosen method is acceptable and suitable for a specific material or product, irrespective of the origin of the method.

### **4.3. EU Consideration**

For the European Union, the monographs of the Ph. Eur. have mandatory applicability. Regulatory authorities can accept the reference in a marketing authorisation application, renewal or variation application citing the use of the corresponding text from another pharmacopoeia as referenced in Section 2.1, in accordance with the conditions set out in this annex, as fulfilling the requirements for compliance with the Ph. Eur. Chapter 2.6.12. on the basis of the declaration of interchangeability made above.

### **4.4 MHLW Consideration**

The pharmacopoeial texts referenced in Section 2.1 of this annex can be used as interchangeable in accordance with the conditions set out in this annex. Details of implementation requirements will be provided in the notification by MHLW when this annex is implemented.

### **4.5 Health Canada Consideration**

In Canada, any of the texts cited in section 2.1 of this annex and used in accordance with the conditions set out in this annex can be considered interchangeable.

## **5. REFERENCES USED FOR THE Q4B EVALUATION**

- 5.1** The PDG Stage 5B sign-off document: *Japanese Pharmacopoeial Forum*, Volume 14, Number 4 (December 2005).
- 5.2** The pharmacopoeial references for Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests for this annex are:
  - 5.2.1** *European Pharmacopoeia* (Ph. Eur.): 6.3 Edition (official on January 2009) Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests (reference 01/2009: 20612);
  - 5.2.2** *Japanese Pharmacopoeia* (JP): 4.05 Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: I. Microbiological Examination of Non-Sterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests as it appears in Supplement I to the Japanese Pharmacopoeia Fifteenth Edition (September 28, 2007, The Ministry of Health, Labour and Welfare Ministerial Notification No. 316). The English version was published on January 9, 2008;
  - 5.2.3** *United States Pharmacopoeia* (USP): <61> Microbiological Examination of Nonsterile Products: Microbial Enumeration Tests official in USP 30, January 2007.