1. INTENDED USE
The first International Standard for Birch (Betula verrucosa) pollen extract consists of ampoules, coded 84/522, containing the freeze dried residue of 1ml aliquots of an extract of Birch Pollen. This preparation was established as the 1st International Standard for Birch (Betula verrucosa) pollen extract by the Expert Committee on Biological Standardisation of the World Health Organisation in 1986.

2. CAUTION
This preparation is not for administration to humans or animals in the human food chain.

The material is not of human or bovine origin. As with all materials of biological origin, this preparation should be regarded as potentially hazardous to health. It should be used and discarded according to your own laboratory's safety procedures. Such safety procedures should include the wearing of protective gloves and avoiding the generation of aerosols. Care should be exercised in opening ampoules or vials, to avoid cuts.

3. UNITAGE
A potency of 100,000 International Units has been assigned to each ampoule.

4. CONTENTS
Country of origin of biological material: United Kingdom.

The first International Standard for Birch (Betula verrucosa) pollen extract consists of a freeze-dried extract prepared from a mixture of Birch pollen from 3 different years of collection. The pollen was more than 95% pure Birch pollen and there was less than 5% non-pollen particles by microscopic count. The pollen was defatted in diethyl ether and extracted in a solution containing sodium bicarbonate 0.6% (w/v), sodium chloride 0.5% (w/v) and thimerosal 0.020% (w/v). The extract was filtered, dialysed and freeze-dried. A total of 12.5g of freeze-dried material was supplied to the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC).

At NIBSC the bulk freeze-dried material was dissolved in sterile distilled water at approximately 3mg dry weight per ml. It was then re-filtered ending with a membrane of pore size 0.22μm and distributed in 1ml volumes at room temperature into 3,500 ampoules, coded 84/522. The mean weight of liquid content of 79 checkweight ampoules taken at intervals during the fill was 1.00266g ± 0.13%. The contents of the ampoules were then freeze-dried and secondary desiccated under the conditions normally used for international biological standards. The mean dry weight was 3.533mg (n=6) and the moisture content was 0.46% (n=6).

5. STORAGE
Store unopened ampoules at -20°C

Please note: because of the inherent stability of lyophilized material, NIBSC may ship these materials at ambient temperature.

6. DIRECTIONS FOR OPENING
Tap the ampoule gently to collect the material at the bottom (labelled) end. Ensure ampoule is scored all round at the narrow part of the neck, with a diamond or tungsten carbide tipped glass knife file or other suitable implement before attempting to open. Place the ampoule in the ampoule opener, positioning the score at position ‘A’ shown in the diagram below. Surround the ampoule with cloth or layers of tissue paper. Grip the ampoule and holder in the hand and squeeze at point ‘B’. The ampoule will snap open. Take care to avoid cuts and projectile glass fragments that enter eyes. Take care that no material is lost from the ampoule and that no glass falls into the ampoule.

7. USE OF MATERIAL
No attempt should be made to weigh out any portion of the freeze-dried material prior to reconstitution.

The total contents of the ampoule should be reconstituted with 1ml of distilled water and dissolved by gently swirling to avoid froth. No attempt should be made to weigh out any portion of the freeze-dried material.

The reconstituted standard should be used as soon as possible after reconstitution and no attempt should be made to store it in the reconstituted state.

Biological Activity.

The 1st International Standard was assessed together with 4 other freeze-dried preparations of birch pollen extract in an international collaborative study involving 20 laboratories in 11 countries. Examination of the activity of these preparations was by RAST inhibition, quantitative immunoelectrophoresis (CIE/CRIE) and isoelectric focusing, quantitative skin testing, histamine release and other methods. The proposed standard was found to have biological activity and to be suitable for use as a standard. The only major and dominating allergen in birch pollen extract, Bet v I (Ag23), was identified. The relative contents of this allergen corresponded with the relative total activities of the standard and the other extracts studied. Other antigens identified and assayed in the preliminary study were Ag19 and Ag25. Each ampoule was assigned 100,000 International Units of potency.

8. STABILITY
Accelerated degradation studies have shown that the 1st International Standard is very stable in unopened ampoules at –20°C. The predicted loss of activity is approximately 0.02% of the original potency per year when stored at that temperature.

Reference materials are held at NIBSC within assured, temperature-controlled storage facilities.

Reference Materials should be stored on receipt as indicated on the label.

NIBSC follows the policy of WHO with respect to its reference materials.

9. REFERENCES
None

10. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS
All participants in the collaborative study.

We would like to express our gratitude to the following, who by provision of finance, and in some cases also of extracts, made this work possible: Abello, Madrid, Spain; Allergopharma, Hamburg, Germany; Allermed, San Diego, Calif, USA; Allergy Laboratories of Ohio, Colombus Ohio, USA; Allergy Laboratories, Oklahoma City, Okla, USA; ALK Laboratories, Copenhagen, Denmark; Antigen Laboratories, Liberty, Mo, USA; Beecham, Betchworth, Surrey, UK; Berkeley Biologicals, Berkeley, Calif, USA; Center Laboratories, Port Washington, N.Y, USA; Diephuis Pharmacia, Groningen, The Netherlands; Greer Laboratories, Lenoir, N.C, USA; HAL Allergenen Laboratories, Haarlem, The Netherlands; Hollister-Stier, Spokane, Wash., USA; Laboratories Hamon, Montreal, Canada; Lofarma, Milano, Italy; Meridian Bio-Medical, Denver, USA; NYCO, Oslo, Norway; Omega Laboratories, Montreal, Canada; Pharmacia, Uppsala, Sweden and Stallergenes Laboratories, Paris, France.
11. FURTHER INFORMATION
Further information can be obtained as follows;
This material: enquiries@nibsc.org
WHO Biological Standards:
http://www.who.int/biologicals/en/
JCTLM Higher order reference materials:
http://www.bipm.org/en/committees/jc/jctlm/
Derivation of International Units:
http://www.nibsc.org/standardisation/international_standards.aspx
Ordering standards from NIBSC:
http://www.nibsc.org/products/ordering.aspx
NIBSC Terms & Conditions:
http://www.nibsc.org/terms_and_conditions.aspx

12. CUSTOMER FEEDBACK
Customers are encouraged to provide feedback on the suitability or use of the material provided or other aspects of our service. Please send any comments to enquiries@nibsc.org

13. CITATION
In all publications, including data sheets, in which this material is referenced, it is important that the preparation's title, its status, the NIBSC code number, and the name and address of NIBSC are cited and cited correctly.

14. MATERIAL SAFETY SHEET
Classification in accordance with Directive 2000/54/EC, Regulation (EC) No 1272/2008:
Not applicable or not classified

Physical and Chemical properties

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Physical appearance:</th>
<th>Corrosive:</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freeze-dried powder</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stable: Yes</td>
<td>Oxidising: No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hygroscopic: No</td>
<td>Irritant: No</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flammable: No</td>
<td>Handling: See caution, Section 2</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (specify):</td>
<td>Contains material of biological origin</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Toxicological properties

| Effects of inhalation: | Not established, avoid inhalation |
| Effects of ingestion:  | Not established, avoid ingestion |
| Effects of skin absorption: | Not established, avoid contact with skin |

Suggested First Aid

| Inhalation: | Seek medical advice |
| Ingestion: Seek medical advice |
| Contact with eyes: Wash with copious amounts of water. Seek medical advice |
| Contact with skin: Wash thoroughly with water. |

Action on Spillage and Method of Disposal

Spillage of ampoule contents should be taken up with absorbent material wetted with an appropriate disinfectant. Rinse area with an appropriate disinfectant followed by water. Absorbent materials used to treat spillage should be treated as biological waste.

15. LIABILITY AND LOSS
In the event that this document is translated into another language, the English language version shall prevail in the event of any inconsistencies between the documents.

Unless expressly stated otherwise by NIBSC, NIBSC’s Standard Terms and Conditions for the Supply of Materials (available at http://www.nibsc.org/About_Us/Terms_and_Conditions.aspx or upon request by the Recipient) (“Conditions”) apply to the exclusion of all other terms and are hereby incorporated into this document by reference. The Recipient’s attention is drawn in particular to the provisions of clause 11 of the Conditions.

16. INFORMATION FOR CUSTOMS USE ONLY

| Country of origin for customs purposes*: United Kingdom |
| Net weight: 0.01g |
| Toxicity Statement: Non-toxic |
| Veterinary certificate or other statement if applicable. Attached: No |

17. CERTIFICATE OF ANALYSIS
NIBSC does not provide a Certificate of Analysis for WHO Biological Reference Materials because they are internationally recognised primary reference materials fully described in the instructions for use. The reference materials are established according to the WHO Recommendations for the preparation, characterization and establishment of international and other biological reference standards http://www.who.int/bloodproducts/publications/TRS932Annex2_Inter_biol_refstandardsrev2004.pdf (revised 2004). They are officially endorsed by the WHO Expert Committee on Biological Standardization (ECBS) based on the report of the international collaborative study which established their suitability for the intended use.