Workshop on the Use of External Controls for Evidence Generation in Regulatory Decision-Making

3 November 2025, 10:00 – 17:30 (CET/CEST)

Virtual meeting/ EMA, Amsterdam – room 1D

The need for guidance on use of external controls was prioritised by the Methodology Working Party (MWP) in its consolidated 3-year workplan 2025-2027 and work has started on the Development of a reflection paper on the use of external controls for evidence generation in regulatory decision-making - Scientific guideline | European Medicines Agency (EMA) (Draft Concept Paper (CP) published for public consultation – deadline for comments: 31 October).

As part of the drafting process, the MWP would like to engage with external stakeholders to explore the opportunities and the potential use of external controls in the regulatory setting and to discuss related methodological challenges to draw causal conclusions.

As stated in the ACT EU multi-annual workplan 2025-2026, a hybrid workshop is organised on 3 November 2025 focusing mainly, but not exclusively, on the topics listed below.

Workshop on the Use of External Controls for Evidence Generation in Regulatory Decision-Making

Chaired by Peter Arlett (EMA) and Kit Roes (Radboud UMC, MWP Chair)

Joining and technical checks

09:30 – 10:00	Technical setup and remote join	30’

Welcome and Opening Remarks

10:00 – 10:05	Welcome and introduction *Emer Cooke (EMA)*	5’
10:05 – 10:15	Opening remarks *Kit Roes (MEB, MWP)*	10’

Session 1: Introduction and Background

Chairs: Carla Torre (Infarmed, CHMP/MWP) and François Houÿez (EURORDIS)

10:15 – 10:20	**Introduction to session 1** *Session chairs*	5’
10:20 – 10:50	**Overview of the use of external controls in submissions to the European Medicines Agency** *Johanna Lähteenvuo (Fimea, CHMP) & Dominik Karres (EMA)*	30’
10:50 – 11:05	**Motivation for planned reflection paper and outline of aspects to be addressed** *Elina Asikanius (FIMEA, MWP)*	15’
11:05 – 11:20	**Q&A session** *Moderated by session Chairs*	15’

Session 2: From concept to protocol: structured pre-planning of the use of external controls

Chairs: Murielle Mauer (EORTC) and Kit Roes (Radboud UMC, MWP Chair)

11:20 – 11:25	**Introduction to session 2** *Session chairs*	5′
11:25 – 11:45	**External Control Arms Driving Regulatory Decision Making: Industry Examples and Learnings** *Robert Carroll (Bristol Myers Squibb)*	20′
11:45 – 12:05	**A Practical Framework for External Control Trials** *Hans Ulrich Burger (Medical University of Graz)*	20′
12:05 – 12:25	**External controls: Emulating half of the target trial** *Miguel Hernan (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health)*	20′
12:25 – 13:00	**Discussion** *Moderated by session Chairs*	35′
Lunch break		**50′**

Session 3: Methodological considerations for design aspects in comparisons using external controls

Chairs: Elina Asikanius (FIMEA, MWP) & Patrice Verpillat (EMA)

13:50 – 13:55	**Introduction to session 3** *Session chairs*	5’
13:55 – 14:10	**Navigating non-randomized comparisons: from pitfalls to practice** *Rima Izem (Novartis)*	15’
14:10 – 14:25	**Definition of Time-Zero for Time-to-Event Data in external arm studies** *Laurent Azoulay (McGill University)*	15’
14:25 – 14:40	**Quantifying and mitigating measurement bias in real-world endpoints when constructing external control arms** *Benjamin Ackerman (J&J)*	15’
14:40 – 14:55	**Strategies to overcome challenges of eligibility criteria for historical data as External Control Arm source** *Natalia Muehlemann (Cytel) & Alfredo Farjat (Bayer)*	15’
14:55 – 15:40	**Session discussants: Angelika Geroldinger (AGES), Andrei Barbulescu (EMA), Olga Kholmanskikh Van Criekingen (FAMHP), Miguel Hernan (Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health), David McConnell (NCPE)**	45’

Coffee break **20’**

Session 4: Identification and evaluation of data sources in medicines development

Chairs: Olaf Klungel (Utrecht University) and Juan Jose Abellan (EMA)

16:00 – 16:05	**Introduction to session 4** *Session chairs*	5’
16:05 – 16:20	**Application of the EMA Data Quality Framework to assess the feasibility of a non-interventional study** *Mònica Sabaté (VHIR)*	15’
16:20 – 16:35	**Non-Interventional Studies: From Data Collection to Reliable Insights** *Marianne Uguen (Roche)*	15’
16:35 – 16:50	**Examining the Validity of External Controls Relative to Randomized Controls: The Essential Role of Data Quality** *Ruthanna Davi (Medidata)*	15’
16:50 – 17:20	**Discussion** *Moderated by session Chairs*	30’

Closing session and next steps

17:20 – 17:30	**Meeting summary and outline of next steps** *Peter Arlett (EMA) and Kit Roes (Radboud University Medical Centre)*	15’