

SME Office

NEWSLETTER

Information for SMEs on the EU regulatory environment for medicines.
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Coronavirus disease (COVID-19)

A dedicated [new webpage](#) on COVID-19 has been launched. It includes regulatory guidance for developers and companies, information on potential treatments and vaccines under investigation, availability of medicines and public-health advice.

([EMA/CHMP/ICH/804273/2017](#)). It provides a globally agreed framework to facilitate the management of post-approval pharmaceutical changes in a predictable and efficient manner across the product lifecycle. More information can be found in a dedicated [webpage](#).

EMA's quality of medicines questions and answers Q&A (Part 1) was updated ([Link](#)) on topics including the use of peptones in the manufacture of active substance.

Information on nitrosamines for marketing authorisation holders (MAHs) has been updated on 27 March 2020 on topics including testing, reporting, limits (see [dedicated webpage, questions & answers \(Q&A\) document](#)).

A Q&A document on the impact of EU-USA mutual recognition agreement on marketing authorisation applications (MAAs) and relevant variations has been published ([EMA/679016/2019](#)).

The European Commission (EC) has released an updated draft Annex 1 on the EU GMP guidelines on manufacturing of sterile medicinal products for consultation until 20 May 2020 ([Link](#)). This version introduces significant modifications in several sections following a first public consultation in 2018, and aims to gather further stakeholders' feedback on certain manufacturing steps.

Clinical trials

EMA has published on 15 April 2020 a notice intended for clinical trial sponsors and vendors on requirements for qualification and validation of computerised systems used for managing clinical trial data ([EMA/INS/GCP/467532/2019](#); Questions 8 and 9 of [good clinical practice \(GCP\) Q&A](#)).

Scientific guidelines for human medicines

Quality guidelines

A new ICH guideline Q12 on pharmaceutical product lifecycle management was published on 4 March 2020

Preclinical and clinical guidelines

The following ICH guidelines will come into force in the third quarter of 2020:

- ICH S5 (R3) on 'detection of toxicity to reproduction for human pharmaceuticals' ([EMA/CHMP/ICH/544278/1998](#)); it was revised to expand its scope to vaccines and biopharmaceuticals and includes guidance on e.g. exposure margins in dose level selection, risk assessment, qualification of alternative assays, studies deferral.
- ICH S11 on 'nonclinical safety testing in support of development of paediatric pharmaceuticals' ([EMA/CHMP/ICH/616110/2018](#)); it provides recommendations on design and timing of juvenile animal studies for products with prior adult use or for initial human use in children.
- ICH M9 on 'biopharmaceuticals classification system (BCS)-based biowaivers'; it provides recommendations to support the biopharmaceuticals classification of medicinal products and BCS-based biowaiver of bioequivalence studies ([EMA/CHMP/ICH/493213/2018](#)).
- Addendum to ICH E9 (R1) on 'statistical principles for clinical trials on estimands and sensitivity analysis in clinical trials'; it presents a structured framework for clinical trial planning, conduct, data collection and interpretation of data analyses and the role of sensitivity analysis in exploring robustness of conclusions drawn from the main statistical analysis ([EMA/CHMP/ICH/436221/2017](#)).

A clinical pharmacology and pharmacokinetics Q&A was updated on topics including general and product-specific bioequivalence ([Link](#)).

Pharmacovigilance

A new international standard, the ISO ICSR format, which is based on the ICH E2B(R3) modalities for reporting suspected side effects in individual case safety reports, will become mandatory as of 30 June 2022 for all reporting to EudraVigilance. It will improve the quality of data collected, increase the ability to search and analyse these data and strengthen personal data protection. More information can be found in a [press release](#) and [webpage](#).

EMA publishes since February 2020 the direct healthcare professional communications (DHPCs) agreed at EU level, and the links to national registers of DHPCs, which aims at notifying healthcare professionals of important new safety information about a medicine and any actions they should take ([Link](#)).

A revised list of Important Medical Event (IME) terms was published on 16 March 2020 ([MedDRA version 23.0](#)). The list aims to facilitate the classification of suspected adverse reactions for pharmacovigilance activities in the EU. It was revised to consider the latest version of MedDRA, the ICH definition of seriousness and important medical event ([EMA/136938/2020](#)).

New or updated guidance have been published:

- A revised explanatory note to good pharmacovigilance practices (GVP) Module VII ([EMA/670256/2017 Rev. 1](#)).
- Vendor and third party service provider registration in EudraVigilance external compliance testing environment (XCOMP) for testing a company's own software/IT system interoperability with EudraVigilance ([EMA/382824/2017](#)).
- EudraVigilance Registration Manual ([EMA/13454/2020 Rev. 5](#)).

Regulatory guidance

The following documents have been updated:

- Pre-authorisation guidance ([EMA/821278/2015](#)) on topics including MAA requirements for medicinal products containing or consisting of genetically modified organisms.
- Checklist for sponsors applying for the transfer of orphan medicinal product (OMP) designation ([EMA/41277/2007 Rev. 11](#)).
- Guidance on paediatric submissions in the eSubmission Gateway / Web Client ([EMA/672643/2017 Rev.2](#)).
- Paediatric investigation plans Q&A updated on procedural topics ([Link](#)).
- Type II variation and worksharing assessment timetables – Guide to selecting the appropriate timetable ([EMA/103586/2017Rev.1](#)).
- Guidance for parallel distribution applicants (see [IRIS guide for Parallel Distribution applicants](#)).
- Parallel distribution frequently asked questions (FAQ) on e.g. procedural aspects, rebranding, responsibilities of a parallel distributor for biologics, annex/EU marketing authorisation publication, impact of change of excipients or devices, manufacturers on leaflet and labelling, safety updates, 'dormant' status, repackaging, validity of notice, safety updates/bulk changes/annual update and fees ([Link](#)).

Product information (PI)

Key principles outlining a harmonised approach to guide the development and use of electronic PI (ePI) for human medicinal products in the EU have been published ([Link](#)). The development of electronic tools to improve access of patients and healthcare professionals to information on medicinal products was one of the key recommendations in an EC report and EMA's subsequent action plan to improve the PI of medicinal products. More information can be found in a [press release](#).

Fees for applications to EMA

Adjusted fees for centralised procedures fees under [Regulation \(EU\) 658/2014](#), came into effect on 1 April 2020 (see updated [explanatory note on fees](#)).

Medical devices regulation

The date of application of the new medical devices regulation has been postponed to 26 May 2021 (see [Regulation \(EU\) 2020/561 amending Regulation \(EU\) 2017/745](#) and [EC press release](#)).

The change aims to minimise risks of potential shortages of medical devices during the ongoing pandemic due to potential capacity issues of authorities or conformity assessment bodies. A provision allowing the placing on the market of medical devices without conformity assessments was also introduced in the interest of public health. The in vitro diagnostics medical devices regulation has not been amended and will become applicable from 26 May 2022.

Revised EMA recommendations on procedural aspects and dossier requirements for the consultation of EMA by a notified body on an ancillary medicinal substance or an ancillary human blood derivative incorporated in a medical device was published on 21 January 2020 ([EMA/CHMP/578661/2010 rev.1](#)). The guidance was updated to take into account the new medical device Regulation (EU) 2017/745.

Advanced Therapy Medicinal Products (ATMPs)

An updated EC-DG Health and Food Safety and European Medicines Agencies action plan on ATMPs was published on 17 February 2020 ([Link](#)).

Good manufacturing practice (GMP)

A draft reflection paper on GMP and MAHs was released for consultation until 17 April 2020 ([EMA/457570/2019](#)). It focuses on GMP-related responsibilities that apply to MAHs with respect to European Commission (EC) guide to GMP (part I, II and relevant annexes) for human and veterinary use.



Veterinary medicines

Scientific guidelines

A Q&A document in support of the guideline on assessment of persistent bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) or very persistent and very bio accumulative (vPvB) substances in veterinary medicinal products (EMA/CVMP/ERA/52740/2012) has been published on 31 January 2020 ([Link](#)).

EMA updated on 28 January 2020 the scientific advice on the categorisation of antibiotics intended for animal care. The revised categorisation considers all classes of antibiotics, additional criteria such availability of alternative antibiotics and the risk of antimicrobial resistance. More information can be found in a [press release](#) and [webpage](#).

Pharmacovigilance

EMA upgraded on 12 February 2020, the 'EudraVigilance – European database of suspected adverse drug reaction reports' website ([Link](#)) to provide information on suspected adverse events of veterinary medicines (see also [press release](#)).

A revised Veterinary Dictionary for Drug Regulatory Activities (VeDDRA) list of clinical terms for reporting suspected adverse reactions in animals and humans to veterinary medicinal products was published on 10 March 2020 ([EMA/CVMP/PhVWP/10418/2009-Rev.10-corr](#)).

Other news

Presentations, reports and/or videos of the following events have been published:

- EMA Regulatory Science Strategy to 2025 ([Link](#)) . See also dedicated website ([Link](#)) and press release ([Link](#)).
- Final reports (phase two) on big data in the context of medicines development and regulation in the EU from Heads of Medicines Agencies/EMA joint Task Force on Big Data ([Link](#)).
- EU International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) for identification of medical products (IDMP)/Substance, Product, Organisation and Referential (SPOR) data Task Force meeting – 10/2019 ([Link](#)).
- Report of the workshop on the use of registries in the monitoring of cancer therapies based on tumours' genetic and molecular features – 29 November 2019 ([Link](#)).

United-Kingdom's withdrawal from the EU

Updated Brexit-related guidance for companies have been published: EC/EMA notice to stakeholders including details on provisions during/after the transition period and rules for Northern Ireland ([Link](#)), EMA practical guidance ([EMA/478309/2017Rev. 5](#)). The dedicated webpage on Brexit-related guidance for pharmaceutical companies is available

under [Link](#).

Registered SMEs

Currently, 1724 companies have SME status assigned by the Agency.

The names and profiles of these companies are published in the Agency's public [SME Register](#).

If you would like to have your company details included in the SME Register, you must first apply for SME status at the Agency.

See the [Applying for SME status](#) section of the SME Office pages on the Agency's website for information on how to do this.



About the SME Office

The SME Office was set up within the European Medicines Agency to address the particular needs of smaller companies.

The Office has dedicated personnel who can help SMEs by:

- responding to practical or procedural enquiries;
- setting up briefing meetings to discuss their regulatory strategy;
- organising info days and training sessions.

Need more information?

Visit the European Medicines Agency website:

<http://www.ema.europa.eu>

In particular, these sections may interest you:

[SME Office](#)

[Pre-authorisation \(human medicines\)](#)

[Pre-authorisation \(veterinary medicines\)](#)

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