20 January 2025
EMA/CHMP/VWP/14129/2025
Public Health Threats

Consolidated 3-year rolling work plan for the Vaccine Working Party (VWP)

Chair: Mair Powell

Vice-Chair: vacant

Work plan period: January 2025 – December 2027 (with a first review point after one year)

Dates of Meetings: Monthly.

Official address Domenico Scarlattilaan 6 ● 1083 HS Amsterdam ● The Netherlands
Address for visits and deliveries Refer to www.ema.europa.eu/how-to-find-us
Send us a question Go to www.ema.europa.eu/contact **Telephone** +31 (0)88 781 6000 An agency of the European Union

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1. Strategic goals

The Vaccine Working Party (VWP) is a working party established to address vaccine-related topics in relation to clinical development and non-clinical development (the latter with focus on pharmacology studies supporting demonstration of protection and immunogenicity). Fulfilment of broad long-term goals linked to the EMA/EMRN Regulatory Science Strategy to 2025:

1.1. Short-term strategic goals

- Joint VWP-ETF revision of EMA considerations on COVID-19 vaccine approval, Non clinical and Clinical module
- Finalisation of a joint VWP- ETF addendum to the Guideline on Clinical Development of new vaccines to address clinical trials in immunocompromised persons
- Finalisation of the joint VWP- ETF revision of the Guideline on Influenza Vaccines, Non-clinical and Clinical Module
- Drafting of a joint VWP-ETF concept paper for a new Guideline on Vaccines against Orthopoxviruses, Non-clinical and Clinical module
- Training of EU assessors

1.2. Long-term strategic goals

- Catalysing the integration of science and technology in medicines' development:
  - Support development of biomarkers
  - Diversify and integrate the provision of regulatory advice along the development continuum
- Driving collaborative evidence generation – improving the scientific quality of evaluations:
  - Leverage non-clinical models and 3Rs principles
  - Develop network competence and specialist collaborations to engage with big data
- Enabling and leveraging research and innovation in regulatory science:
  - leverage collaborations between academia, healthcare experts and network scientists to address regulatory science research questions
  - Disseminate and exchange knowledge, expertise and innovation across the network and to its stakeholders

2. Tactical goals

2.1. Guidance activities

COVID-19 vaccines reflection paper

The current guidance documents (EMA/592928/2020 and EMA/117973/2021) for COVID-19 vaccine development need to be revised based on current criteria for approval of new COVID-19 vaccines, including guidance on immunobridging strategies and scenarios in which use of immune makers for inferring protection is not appropriate.

A concept paper has been drafted. In 2025, the reflection papers will be transformed into a VWP-ETF joint guideline document.

Addendum to the Guideline on Clinical Development of new vaccines, EMEA/CHMP/VWP/164653/05

The revised guideline was adopted by CHMP and published in 2022.

In 2023 it was felt necessary to develop an addendum concerning on clinical trials to assess the safety, immunogenicity and efficacy of vaccines in immunocompromised individuals as this is currently missing.

The addendum has gone through a 3-months public consultation in the second part of 2024.

The VWP-ETF joint addendum is aimed to be finalised in Q1-25.

Guideline on Influenza Vaccines, Non-clinical and Clinical Module, EMA/CHMP/VWP/457259/2014

This guideline entered into force in 2017. Since then, several requests for CHMP scientific advice as well as new MAAs have pointed to the need to update and clarify certain sections of this guidance to make it clearer and more comprehensive on specific matters. A concept paper to describe the proposed changes has been finalised and published for public consultation in 2023.

The VWP-ETF joint work on the revision of this guideline will continue throughout 2025.

Interim guidance on enhanced safety surveillance for seasonal influenza vaccines in the EU, EMA/PRAC/222346/2014

This guidance focuses on the requirements for annual enhanced safety surveillance to rapidly detect any increased local and systemic reactogenicity, or other unexpected adverse immune response that may arise during the influenza vaccine product life-cycle. It also outlines principles to be followed for improved continuous routine surveillance for influenza vaccines.

Based on the experience gathered so far, there is the need to revise the current requirements to improve the quality and quantity of the data collected for regulatory appraisal.

The PRAC-VWP-ETF joint work on the revision of the interim guidance on ESS started in the last quarter of 2024 and will continue in 2025.

Guidance on the development of vaccines against orthopoxviruses (NEW)

Considering the latest developments in terms of vaccines against orthopoxviruses, there is a need to generate a new guideline on the nonclinical and clinical requirements.

A VWP-ETF joint concept paper on this matter is intended to be produced in 2025.

2.2. Training and workshop activities

Training of assessors identified as being, or likely to be, involved in the clinical evaluation of vaccines. The material would be taken from recent scientific advice and applications.

The training is intended to cover the following topics:

- basic principles for clinical vaccine development
- immunogenicity data to support licensure

- vaccine efficacy studies
- vaccine effectiveness studies
- vaccine safety pre- and post-licensure
- understanding of the regulatory remit and how regulatory decisions are used by PHAs (including NITAGs where appointed) and the WHO (for prequalification)

The trainers would be VWP members ± co-opted external experts to cover specific topics.

The training is considered a priority and expected to take place during Q2/Q3 2025.

In collaboration with the ETF, a workshop to discuss aspects related to the revised influenza guideline is intended for Q2 2025.

2.3. Communication and Stakeholder activities

Attendance at Vaccine Cluster virtual meetings with international regulators on efficacy and safety issues related to vaccines on an *ad hoc* basis.

2.4. Multidisciplinary collaboration

The VWP will provide product-related support upon request from emergency task force (ETF) innovation task force (ITF), Scientific advice working party (SAWP), Coordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedures - Human (CMDh) and Scientific Advice Working Party (SAWP) and relevant Committees.

The VWP intends to work in close collaboration with methodologists and biostatisticians to develop guidance documents concerning statistical issues related to the analysis and interpretation of vaccine efficacy and immunogenicity trials.

3. Operational goals

The VWP will provide product-related support upon request from the ETF, ITF, SAWP and EMA Committees.

VWP plans to have one face-to-face meeting per year. For 2025 it is planned to take place during April-May.

4. List of Abbreviations

CMDh - Coordination Group for Mutual Recognition and Decentralised Procedures – Human

ETF - emergency task force

ITF - innovation task force

SAWP - Scientific Advice Working Party