



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
DIRECTORATE GENERAL
JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE
Directorate F – Health, Consumers and Reference Materials
Unit F1 Health in Society

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION INITIATIVE ON COLORECTAL CANCER (ECICC) WORKING GROUP

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1. BACKGROUND

In 2008, the [European Parliament Resolution](#) called on the Commission to develop European accreditation/certification programmes for cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment based on European guidelines. The European Commission Initiative on Colorectal Cancer (ECICC) will be launched by the European Commission as a response to this call. This is the second European initiative of this kind, following the European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC). The key element of ECICC is the development of the *ECICC guidelines* for prevention, screening and diagnosis and the *ECICC quality assurance (QA) scheme* covering the entire care pathway.

The European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), in collaboration with the Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), is hereby calling for expression of interest from potential candidates to be appointed to the working group of the ECICC (see Annex I for an overview of ECICC scientific and technical areas). Selected candidates will form the working group of the ECICC (hereinafter 'the group')

The group will:

1. critically evaluate and summarise the existing evidence and develop patient-centred, evidence-based guidelines on colorectal cancer prevention, screening, and diagnosis;
2. develop quality and safety indicators and performance measures for the *ECICC QA scheme* for colorectal cancer services, covering all processes of colorectal cancer care from screening to end-of-life care;
3. assist the JRC in addressing comments on the *ECICC guidelines* and the *ECICC QA scheme* collected from key stakeholders (e.g. individuals, professional organisations, hospitals etc.) through public consultations/surveys or other means;
4. promote the use of the *ECICC guidelines* and the *ECICC QA scheme* in the group's members' home countries;
5. support the JRC in the dissemination of outputs (via, for instance, scientific papers, at conference presentations, and interactions with related working groups) and support the implementation of the *ECICC guidelines* and the *ECICC QA scheme* as referred to in points 3-4;
6. assist the JRC in the feasibility testing of the *ECICC QA scheme* in volunteering services and in modifying it if/as needed;
7. participate in subgroups matching their expertise, as workload permits (The work of the group will principally rely on the work performed by the subgroups established to work on specific topics. These subgroups will include one or two group members and several subgroup experts and will be dissolved when their specific mandate has been fulfilled.);
8. support the JRC in conducting studies or surveys (e.g. scientific, methodological, or technical support) underpinning the ECICC's main tasks, as defined in points 1-7;
9. provide input to scientific publications.

Applicants who have been included in the list of suitable candidates but have not been appointed to the group will be included in reserve list of available experts. The JRC will seek the applicants' consent before adding their names to the reserve list.

The group will work in close collaboration with *subgroup experts* appointed to the respective subgroups chosen primarily from the reserve list. If additional scientific or technical expertise is needed for specific topics, the group will also rely on outsourced expertise (invited experts) from Commission expert pools or other affiliation for a limited time period.

The JRC will form a second group with representatives of relevant communities, organisations or entities with particular interest in the activities of ECICC, after the establishment of the ECICC working group, subject to this call. The ECICC working group will collaborate with this stakeholder representatives group during the initiative activities.

The members of the group (hereinafter, 'the members') will cover the competence areas listed in Annex I.

2. FEATURES OF THE GROUP

2.1 Composition

The group will consist of 10-15 members, depending on the distribution of the necessary expertise.

Members of the group will be individuals appointed in their personal capacities (Type A members¹) who will act independently and in the public interest, not representing any private, commercial, or national interests.

The selection procedure will take into account the selection criteria outlined in the section 4.2 of this call provided by the applicant in the application form.

The members must not have any interest (in particular, relevant professional and financial interests) in relation to the ECICC that could affect their impartiality. Applicants must therefore submit a duly completed declaration of interests (DOI) form (Annex III), indicating any interest that may compromise or reasonably be perceived to compromise their independence, including any relevant circumstances relating to their close family members. Procedural guidance on compiling the DOI is also annexed to this call (Annex II).

If appointed to the group, the members will be asked to sign a declaration of confidentiality and commitment (Annex IV) as well as annual written updates of their

¹ <https://ec.europa.eu/transparency/regexpert/index.cfm?do=faq.faq&aide=2>

declaration of interests and written and/or oral updates of their declarations of interest before meetings. These declarations will be made public.

2.2 Appointment

The members will be appointed by the JRC from the pool of applicants complying with the requirements referred to in section 4.1 (eligibility requirements) and 4.2 (selection criteria) of this call.

The members will be appointed for two years. Their term of office may be renewed to cover the entire duration of the ECICC, provided they continue to satisfy the eligibility requirements and the selection criteria, and the needed commitment to the work of the group. They will remain in office until their appointments are terminated or they are replaced.

In order to ensure continuity and smooth functioning of the group, the JRC will establish and maintain a reserve list, from which group members could be appointed or replaced and subgroup experts could be appointed to the subgroups. The JRC will seek the applicants' consent before including their names in the reserve list. The list may be updated by the JRC at any time based on applications received during the open call, which will remain open until three months before the closure of the ECICC project, allowing for continuous applications and ensuring a continuously populated reserve list.

The members who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the group's deliberations or who, in the opinion of the JRC, do not comply with the confidentiality condition set out in [Article 339 of the Treaty](#) on the Functioning of the European Union, will no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the group and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.

2.3 Operation of the group

Independence will be ensured by means of regular DOI and a conflict of interest management policy.

The members will actively contribute to the work of the group. They will sign a declaration of commitment to this effect (Annex IV).

Depending on demand and subject to fluctuations, the members are expected to be available for tasks completed remotely and to attend meetings by video-/teleconferencing, with the average frequency not exceeding 2-3 days per month. In addition, they may be required to occasionally attend physical meetings.

At the proposal by and in agreement with the JRC, the rules of procedure (RoP) will be adopted by simple majority of the group.

The group will select two co-chairs (one clinical or content expert and one methodological expert) and two vice-chairs from among its members at their first meeting. The co-chairs' and vice-chairs' responsibilities will include close interaction with the JRC; planning the group's work; chairing, steering, and moderating the discussions at meetings; and drawing conclusions and other roles as outlined in the RoP.

For specific tasks, the co-chairs may, on a rotating basis and based on the available expertise, appoint rapporteurs or co-rapporteurs from among the members.

The members are expected to actively contribute to discussions of the group and examine and comment on documents under preparation, respecting due deadlines. The members must have a sufficient level of IT literacy to be able work remotely, including electronic methods for the management and exchange of documents, as well as to join virtual meetings by means of web-based tools. Working documents will be made available and drafted in English. Meetings will also be held in English.

The group's opinions will be adopted by consensus. If consensus cannot be reached, the position will be adopted by simple majority of the members. The members that have voted against or have abstained from voting will have the right to document their minority opinion and the underlying reasoning.

In agreement with the JRC, the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations be made publicly available.

The JRC may set up subgroups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of rules of procedure adopted by the group. Subgroups will report back to the group. They will be dissolved when their mandate has been fulfilled. Candidates on the reserve list may be appointed to the subgroups as subgroup experts.

2.4 Remuneration for the experts

Travel and subsistence expenses of the members participating in the activities of the group and its subgroups will be reimbursed by the Commission. Reimbursement will be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

Experts will in principle not be remunerated for the services they offer. However, the Commission may decide to pay for extraordinary activities, in terms of the amount of the work and compliance to tight deadlines, to achieve specific goals of the activities. This would

amount to a maximum of 12 days per year, per expert (€450 per day, as of May 2020). If the Commission decides to pay for such extraordinary activities, the JRC will sign an expert contract with the experts.

2.5 Transparency

The group will carry out activities by observing principles of transparency. All relevant documents will be published by the JRC on the Healthcare Quality public website, which will be set up for ECICC to match that of the previous initiative ECIBC (for reference, please visit "membership documents" following [this link](#)). In particular, the following data will be made available to the public, without undue delay:

- (a) name of individuals appointed as group members and their brief CVs;
- (b) rules of procedure;
- (c) the members' declarations of interests, confidentiality, and commitment;
- (d) draft agendas and or agendas of meetings;
- (e) minutes of meetings;
- (f) consumer and stakeholder dialogue activities.

Exceptions to publication will be considered where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001.

2.6 Confidentiality

The members and subgroup experts are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff.

In line with the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1396, the members will not divulge information, including commercially sensitive or personal data, acquired as a result of the group's work, even after they have ceased to be members. They will sign a declaration of confidentiality to this effect. In line with the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1396, the members will comply with the Commission's security rules on the protection of EU classified and sensitive non-classified information, as set out in the Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 and 2015/444.

Should the members fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested individuals are invited to submit their application to the JRC using the appropriate online application form (available at <https://healthcare-quality.jrc.ec.europa.eu/news-and-events/call-for-expression-of-interest-for-the-working-group-on-colorectal-cancer>).

Applications must be completed in English.

Individuals applying in their professional capacity are required to fill in the online application form for professionals. Individuals applying as patients and/or caregivers are required to fill in the online application form for patients and/or caregivers.

Supporting documents:

An application will be deemed valid only if it is sent by the deadline and includes all the documents listed below:

- a completed on-line application form;
 - application form for professionals
 - application form for patients and/or caregivers
- a curriculum vitae in electronic Europass format, not exceeding 4 pages in length; (<https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/documents/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions>);
- a publication list – ten best scientific publications in a relevant field published in the last ten years. (The applicant may also additionally provide a list of ten publications of other types, e.g. book chapters) (**not required for applications from patients and/or caregivers**);
- a DOI using the standard DOI form attached to this call.

Applicants must disclose any circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interest by submitting a DOI. Submission of a duly completed DOI form is necessary in order to be eligible for appointment in a personal capacity.

Additional supporting documents may be requested at a later stage.

All documents submitted by applicants must be duly completed, legible, signed (bearing a wet signature when relevant) and numbered sequentially.

Deadline for application:

The deadline for applications is extended to 16 May 2021.

Individuals may submit an expression of interest to be included in the reserve list, at any time prior to the last three months before the closure of the ECICC project.

Applications received after the above deadline will only be evaluated for inclusion in the reserve list.

4. SELECTION PROCEDURE

All valid applications will be subjected to a selection procedure consisting of four main steps:

1. checking of the applications against the eligibility requirements and drawing up a list of eligible applications;
2. evaluation of eligible applications against the selection criteria in order to shortlist suitable candidates;
3. appointment of the members from among the shortlisted candidates;
4. establishing a reserve list from the list of suitable candidates that have not been appointed as group members.

Only the applicants included in the list of suitable candidates will be contacted asking for their consent.

4.1 Eligibility requirements

4.1.1. Applying as professionals

To be considered as eligible, the applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Must have a university degree at postgraduate level (bachelor's + 2 years), in an area relevant to the subject of this call;
2. Must have a minimum of 10 years of relevant professional experience² in at least one of the relevant competence fields listed in the call (see Annex D);
3. Must have active employment or involvement in at least one of the competence fields applied for;
4. Must have good knowledge of the English language, allowing professional functioning in English³ (including active participation in deliberations and writing reports in English);
5. Must not be an ECICC National Contact.

Only the applicants who meet all these requirements will be included in the subsequent selection steps.

² To confirm the eligibility requirement of 10 years of professional experience (years are counted only if they are in a relevant field):

- years of study included in eligibility criterion 2 (post-graduate education) are NOT counted as professional experience;
- each additional post-graduate course of study can be counted as working experience up to a maximum of ONE year;
- doctoral studies can be counted as working experience up to a maximum of THREE years;
- a medical specialisation can be counted as working experience up to a maximum of FIVE years;

³As a guide, 'Ability to work in English' corresponds to level B2 or above, as set out in the Council of Europe reference document for the European Language Portfolio ('Common European Framework of Reference: Learning, Teaching, and Assessment'). For more information, please refer to: <http://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/resources/european-language-levels-cefr>

4.1.2. Applying as patients and/or caregivers

To be considered as eligible, the applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

1. Must have an understanding of issues and needs of individuals attending colorectal cancer services and their caregivers;
2. Must have an understanding of the views of a wide network of individuals attending colorectal cancer services and their caregivers;
3. Must have good knowledge of the English language, allowing professional functioning in English⁴ (including active participation in deliberations and writing reports in English);
4. Must not be an ECICC National Contact.

Only the applicants who meet all requirements will be included in the subsequent selection steps.

4.2 Selection criteria

Applications that meet all eligibility requirements will be evaluated on the basis of the following aspects in order to shortlist the suitable candidates:

For professionals:

1. postgraduate education;
2. work experience;
3. relevant professional, scientific, and technical expertise.

For patients and/or caregivers:

1. experience in working groups and patients' organisations;
2. knowledge of evidence-based health care and related European context and policies.

Evaluation will be based on the evidence provided by the applicant. The successful applicants will be placed on the list of suitable candidates.

4.3 Appointment of members

The members will be appointed from the list of suitable candidates (see section 4.2).

For the appointment of the members to the working group, the European Commission will ensure that the composition of the working group includes all the necessary specialities with a high level of expertise, with a balanced geographical and gender distribution, and that manageable conflict of interest (CoI) are sufficiently balanced, in particular the intellectual aspects. The evaluation of any possible CoI of the candidate will be based on the information provided by the candidate by duly filling in the DOI form.

⁴ Please see note 3, page 8

5. ANNEXES

The documents related to the call can be found [in this link](#).

ANNEX I. Expertise required: informative table

ANNEX II. Guidance for the compilation of the declaration of interests (DOI) form:
informative document to be read before filling in the DOI form

ANNEX III. Declaration of interests (DOI) form: to be filled in by the applicant

ANNEX IV. Declarations of confidentiality and commitment: draft version of the
document - to be signed if appointed to the ECICC working group

ANNEX V. Privacy statement: to be read and signed by the applicant