European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer

Development of European guidelines for breast cancer screening and diagnosis

Call for expressions of interest

Membership in the Guidelines Development Group (GDG) of the European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC)

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Abbreviations

European Commission	EC
European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer	ECIBC
Guidelines Development Group	GDG
Joint Research Centre	JRC
Quality Assurance Scheme Development Group	QASDG

Introduction

On 2 December 2003, the Council adopted the *Recommendation (2003/878/EC) on cancer screening*. Recognizing that the overall benefits should outweigh any harm that may result from screening, the Council recommended population-based screening for breast, cervical and colorectal cancers on the basis of the available evidence, subject to implementation of appropriate quality-assurance systems. The WHO endorsed these recommendations in 2011 for its 53 Member States in the European Region.

The preparation of **European guidelines on best practice** was identified as the most important means for ensuring the development of high quality cancer-screening programmes at national/regional level. Via the development of the European set of guidelines for breast cancer screening and diagnosis, this action has been successfully implemented in the case of breast cancer.

In 2006, the European Commission oversaw the production of the ***4th edition of the European Guidelines for Quality Assurance in Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis*** in cooperation with: the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the European Reference Organisation for Quality Assured Breast Screening and Diagnostic Services; the European Breast Cancer Network; and the European Society of Mastology. The purpose of these guidelines was to promote best practices identified via a consensus-based approach from regional and national breast-cancer screening programmes over the last 20 years. As such, they provide a valuable resource for health professionals and advocates throughout the EU involved in breast-cancer screening programmes based on mammography. The physical and technical guidelines set the quality control requirements for mammography equipment and its proper functioning as well as for radiology, radiography, pathology, surgery (when applied for diagnosis) and training. Finally, a certification protocol in the EU guidelines establishes the minimum requirements for certification of diagnostic and screening units. A a set of supplements to the guidelines was published by the Commission in 2013.

In 2008, the *Council Conclusions on reducing the burden of cancer* invited the European Commission to explore the potential for developing a European pilot accreditation scheme for breast-cancer screening and follow-up, also based on the European Quality Assurance guidelines. The Commission Communication on Action against Cancer: European Partnership sets out the intention of the Commission to develop a voluntary **European pilot accreditation scheme for breast cancer screening and follow-up,** building on the European guidelines for quality assurance in breast cancer screening and diagnosis as the most longstanding and developed guidelines in the area.

Tasks to be performed

In December 2012, the European Commission assigned this particular action to the Joint Research Centre (JRC). The following tasks were defined in the action:

1. To develop a new version of the European Guidelines for Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis based on new knowledge and evidence;

2. To develop a voluntary European Quality Assurance (QA) scheme for Breast Cancer Services based on the EU legislative framework on accreditation, as defined in the Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council setting out the requirements for accreditation and market surveillance.

For each task, a working group will be set up.

The working groups will be established following a Call for Expression of Interest organised by DG SANCO. The selection process will be based on specific qualification criteria and will adhere to the principles of transparency implemented as a rule in the establishment of scientific and consultative groups in the European Commission. These principles strictly safeguard against any potential conflict of interest. Owing to the inter-dependence of the work of the two tasks, close coordination and collaboration between the two working groups is essential for the success of the initiative. Both working groups will establish, under guidance of the JRC, their internal rules on meetings and procedures for adoption of texts. In addition, any necessary outsourcing – e.g. external peer review or literature review – will be established by the JRC according to the usual tendering procedures of the European Commission.

For further information on the European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer (ECIBC):

- **DG SANCO webpage: European Commission initiative on Breast Cancer: description of workin-group structure**
- **JRC-webpage: European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer - ECIBC**

Purpose of this call

This open call will recruit the members of the GDG, in particular:

- **Professionals:** people actively working in breast cancer screening and diagnosis.
- **'Individual citizens or patients':** users of breast cancer screening and diagnosis services (such as patients diagnosed of breast cancer), their family members and their carers.
- **Methodologists** in fields relevant to guideline development.

This call is addressed to individuals who wish to be considered for membership in the 'guidelines development group' (GDG) for the 'European guidelines for breast cancer screening and diagnosis', hereinafter referred to as the 'new European Guidelines'. Interested individuals who satisfy the eligibility criteria and who possess the relevant competences are invited to apply.

Applicants should note that the work of the project is scheduled for duration of at least 30 months. All candidates to the GDG will apply in their individual capacity – i.e. not representing any organisation or affiliation.

This call for expressions of interest is open to citizens from Europe and elsewhere.

Remit of the GDG

The GDG will be the working group directly involved in the processes required for producing and implementing the new European guidelines. Among their tasks the following will be included.

- Deciding on topics to be covered within the guideline (the 'guideline scope')
- Formulating questions to answer
- Development of the recommendations based on evidence summaries provided by contracted external experts
- Provide support during the consultation stage
- Approval of the final guideline document

The work of the GDG will be based on the principles of excellence, independence, multidisciplinary approach and transparency.

Composition of the GDG

The GDG will consist of a multidisciplinary and balanced group. The group will be composed in an inclusive manner, within the limits of a workable size to facilitate discussion. The GDG will attempt to reflect the views of the key people that will be affected by the guideline, that is, professionals working in breast cancer screening and diagnosis, and citizens (users of breast cancer screening and diagnosis services, their family members and their carers). Methodologists will be also invited to participate.

The GDG will bring together the following key profiles:

- **Professionals** involved in fields relevant to breast cancer screening and diagnosis. This includes, among others, healthcare professionals working in breast cancer screening and diagnosis services, and those working in healthcare quality and safety.

- **Individual citizens or patients**, which include users of breast cancer screening and diagnosis services (for example, women attending breast cancer screening programmes or women diagnosed with breast cancer), their family members and their carers.

- **Methodologists** in fields relevant to guideline development.

The GDG members shall be chosen on the basis of skills, experience and knowledge appropriate to carry out the tasks assigned to them. They are expected to have a high level of experience in at least one of the fields of competence detailed in table 1.

The GDG will cover the following fields of competence:

Table 1. Fields of competence represented in the GDG

	Profiles Each GDG member will choose only one profile		
	I. Professionals	**II. Individual citizens or patients**	**III. Methodologists**
Fields of competence Each GDG membership applicant may choose in the application form more than one field of competence within the respective profile	1. Cancer registries and databases 2. Communication in cancer 3. Cancer epidemiology 4. General practice 5. Health care systems administration 6. Health promotion, such as community nursing or other disciplines 7. Information technology 8. Management of breast cancer screening programmes 9. Nursing 10. Pathology 11. Medical physics 12. Policymaking 13. Psycho-oncology 14. Public Health 15. Quality and patient safety 16. Radiography 17. Radiology	18. Carers and family members 19. Patients diagnosed of breast cancer 20. Users of screening programmes	21. Development of quality indicators 22. Decision aids 23. Equity in guidelines 24. Evaluation of breast cancer screening programmes (including the assessment of benefits and harms) 25. Evaluation of diagnostic tests 26. Evidence-based guidelines development 27. Guidelines implementation 28. Health economics 29. Integration of patient values in guidelines 30. Prevention and management of conflicts of interests in guidelines 31. Quality assurance guidelines 32. Synthesis of qualitative evidence 33. Systematic reviews of diagnostic tests 34. Systematic reviews of public health interventions

Professional members of the GDG

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria.

- Have a university degree in a relevant subject to the guideline topic, such as medicine, nursing, social science, public health, health policy, or a health-related discipline
- Have a minimum of 10 years of relevant professional experience in relevant fields (see table1)
- Be employed or involved in a field relevant to breast cancer screening and diagnosis
- Proficiency in English should be to a level that will allow to participate in discussions, understand working documents and, if needed, draft a written contribution
- Independent: the advice delivered must not be influenced by any consideration other than the evaluation of scientific elements relating to the topic addressed

Selection criteria

The following selection criteria will be applied in evaluating eligible candidates.

- Relevance of professional experience
- Experience in more than one field of competence
- Involvement in multidisciplinary working groups at a regional level
- Involvement in multidisciplinary working groups at a national level
- Involvement in multidisciplinary working groups at an international level
- Knowledge of the European context, EU Institutions and policies, with special reference to the health sector (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience)
- Communication skills, in particular in coordinating working groups and consensus-building
- Knowledge of evidence-based health care (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience)
- Experience in guideline development (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience).
- Experience in systematic reviews (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience)
- A Masters level qualification in a relevant subject to the guidelines

- A PhD qualification in a relevant subject to the guidelines
- Record of peer-reviewed publications in a relevant field as reported in the CV for the application

Individual citizens or patients

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria.

- Have an understanding of issues relevant to women attending breast cancer screening and diagnosis services (for example, those who have participated in breast cancer screening programmes or those who have been diagnosed with breast cancer)
- Have an understanding of the views of a wide network of women and their parents or carers (as obtained, for example, through membership of a patient organisation related to breast cancer)
- Proficiency in English should be to a level that will allow to participate in discussions, understand working documents and, if needed, draft a written contribution.
- Independent: the advice delivered must not be influenced by any consideration other than the evaluation of scientific elements relating to the topic addressed.

High academic profile will not be a requirement for selection for this category.

Selection criteria

The following selection criteria will be applied in evaluating eligible candidates.

- Experience as a member of patients' organizations.
- Involvement in multidisciplinary working groups (at regional, national and international level)
- Knowledge of the European context and policies at EU level, with special reference to the health sector (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience)
- Communication skills, in particular in coordinating working groups and consensus-building.
- Basic knowledge of evidence-based health care (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience)

Methodologists

Eligibility criteria

Applicants must fulfil the following criteria.

- Have a university degree.
- Have a minimum of 10 years of professional experience in relevant fields (see table 1).
- Proficiency in English should be to a level that will allow to participate in discussions, understand working documents and, if needed, draft a written contribution.
- Independent: the advice delivered must not be influenced by any consideration other than the evaluation of scientific elements relating to the topic addressed.

Selection criteria

The following selection criteria will be applied in evaluating eligible candidates.

- Relevance of professional experience
- Experience in more than one field of competence (see table1)
- Involvement in working groups at a regional level
- Involvement in working groups at a national level
- Involvement in working groups at an international level
- Experience in evidence-based guidelines development (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience).
- Experience in systematic reviews (as obtained through university courses, postgraduate specialization and/or working experience)
- Communication skills, in particular in coordinating working groups and consensus-building
- A Masters level qualification in a relevant subject to the guidelines
- A PhD qualification in a relevant subject to the guidelines would be an asset
- Record of peer-reviewed publications in a relevant field as reported in the CV for the application

Independence

The GDG members are appointed in a personal capacity. Applicants are required to include a declaration of commitment to act independently of any external influence and a declaration of any interests which might be considered prejudicial to their independence. If appointed, they will agree to make both annual written declarations of interest and written and/or oral subject specific declarations of interest knowing that these will be made public.

Selection process

The selection process will consist of three stages.

1. Verification of the admissibility of the applications and eligibility of applicants.
2. Comparative evaluation and establishment of a list of the most suitable applicants.
3. Appointment of members of the panel from this list.

A selection board will be set up for stages (i) and (ii), composed of Commission officials responsible for policy and legislation in the areas of public health, health systems and scientific research.

In the process, shall take appropriate measures to seek a balanced composition within the expert groups and evaluation panels in terms of:

- skills, experience, and knowledge;
- geographical diversity;
- gender balance; and
- independence (potential conflicts of interest).

Appointment of members

The Commission will inform the candidates of the result of the selection procedures as soon as possible.

The Director-General for Health and Consumers will appoint the members of the panel from the list of candidates established by the selection board.

The names; CVs, pictures, Commitment declarations and Conflict of interest declarations of the appointed members of the panel will be published in the European Commission webpages.

Appointment of the Chair and the Co-chair of the GDG

The GDG, once appointed, shall elect from among its members its Chair and Co-Chair.

Duties of the GDG members

The following are the duties of the GDG members:

- Participate for a period of at least 30 months
- Preparatory work for the GDG meetings
- Attend meetings at JRC premises in Ispra on a regular basis, approximately one meeting (1-2 day) every 4-5 months.
- To attend training on guidelines development
- To meet in the plenary sessions of the ECIBC (one per year)
- Decide topics to be covered within the guidelines ('guidelines scope')
- Formulate the questions to answer
- Develop and agree on the recommendations provided in the guidelines using evidence summaries
- Identify priorities for practice and priorities for research
- Develop quality indicators
- Endorse the final guidelines document for approval
- Support JRC on responding to comments collected through consultation
- Contribute as required between meetings
- Most of the working documents will be in English and the meetings will be also conducted in English.
- Applicants should be willing to work with electronic methods for the management and exchange of documents and attend video or audio meetings.

Indemnities

Unless stated otherwise in the letter of invitation, GDG members shall be entitled to indemnities related to their participation in the meetings[a].

Protection of personal data

The Commission will ensure that applicants' personal data are processed as required by Regulation (EC) No 45/2001 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 18 December 2000 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions and bodies and on the free movement of such data (OJ L 8, 12.1.2001). This applies in particular to the confidentiality and security of such data.

Applications

Application forms are available at this same webpage.

Applications should be done applying what described in the application webpage and by filling all the forms and sending them by e-mail to arrive before **1 December 2014 midnight (Luxembourg local time)** to the following mailbox: SANCO-ECIBC-GDG@ec.europa.eu

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http://www.cc.cec/dgintranet/jrc/intranet/procurement/experts/documents/jrc_quick_glance_at_expert_rules.pdf