EUROPEAN COMMISSION
JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

Directorate F – Health and Food
Unit F1 Disease Prevention

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION INITIATIVE ON BREAST CANCER (EC-BC) EXPERT POOL
(Version 4, 21 August 2024)

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1. BACKGROUND

1.1. The European Commission initiative on Breast Cancer

In 2008, the European Parliament Resolution ([1]) called on the European Commission (EC) to develop European accreditation/certification programmes for cancer screening, diagnosis, and treatment based on European guidelines. In response, the European Commission initiative on Breast Cancer (EC-BC) was launched by the EC and started the activities in 2015.

The key pillars of the EC-BC are the development of the European Guidelines for Breast Cancer Screening and Diagnosis and a European Quality Assurance (QA) scheme covering the entire care pathway. For each pillar, a working group was set-up: the Guideline Development Group (GDG) and the Quality Assurance Scheme Development Group (QASDG).

The members of both working groups were selected *via* an open call. The developed guidelines and requirements for breast cancer services are publicly accessible from the European Commission's website on cancer screening and care (JRC) ([2]).

1.2. The EC-BC Expert Pool

The European Commission intends to establish an expert pool for EC-BC supporting the activities of the working groups with specific expertise needed during the process. In particular, the expert pool will be used for:

1. Eventual nominations of additional working group members and/or replacement of current working group members as and if needed. The activities of the working groups are carried out *via* online and on-site meetings.
2. Nominations as topic-specific group members. The topic-specific groups work primarily on healthcare questions, developing proposals for the recommendations and/or requirements using systematic reviews provided by independent external experts.
3. Nominations as external experts. External experts shall contribute to specific tasks with limited duration, when additional ad-hoc expertise is required. The mandate of an external expert will end when the specific tasks will be concluded. These activities will mainly be performed through online meetings.

The expertise list to be covered by the EC-BC expert pool, which is subject to applications is attached as **Annex I**.

In case a member of the expert pool is chosen for any of the future needs, the JRC will seek consent of the expert before nomination providing details on the topic, the expected workload and duration.

The experts appointed to one of the working groups or to a topic-specific group shall fill in a Declaration of Interests (DoI) form, which is also part of the application form for this expert pool. Information on how to fill in the form can be found in Annex II of this document. The appointed experts will also be requested to sign declarations of confidentiality and commitment (Annex III).

([1])European Parliament Resolution on combating cancer in the enlarged European Union http://www.europarl.europa.eu/sides/getDoc.do?pubRef=-//EP//TEXT+TA+P6-TA-2008-0121+0+DOC+XML+V0//EN

([2])EC's website on cancer screening and care https://cancer-screening-and-care.jrc.ec.europa.eu/en

2. OPERATION OF THE EC-BC WORKING GROUPS AND ITS TOPIC-SPECIFIC GROUPS

2.1. Remuneration

In case of on-site meetings, travel and subsistence expenses of the members participating in the activities will be reimbursed by the Commission. Reimbursement will be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission.

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 October 2022). If the Commission decides to pay for such extraordinary activities, the JRC will sign an expert contract with the experts.

2.2. Transparency

The EC-BC working groups and the topic-specific groups will carry out activities by observing principles of transparency. All relevant documents will be published by the JRC on the Healthcare Quality public website ([3]). In particular, the following data will be made available to the public:

a) Full name of the person appointed as EC-BC working group and/or topic-specific group members and their brief CV,
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, and
f) Stakeholder's 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 ([4]).

2.3. Confidentiality

The topic-specific group members are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members.

Consequently, and in line with the Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1396 ([5]), the topic-specific group 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 topic-specific group members will comply with the Commission's security rules

([3])EC-BC website
https://healthcare-quality.jrc.ec.europa.eu/discover-EC-BC/governance/EC-BC-working-groups
([4])Article 4 of Regulation (EC) No 1049/2001. OJ L 145, 31.5.2001, p. 43–48
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32001R1049&from=en
([5])Commission Implementing Decision (EU) 2019/1396. OJ L 234, 11.9.2019, p. 23–30
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019D1396&rid=17

on the protection of EU classified and sensitive non-classified information, as set out in the Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 ([6]) and 2015/444 ([7]).

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

3. APPLICATION PROCEDURE

Interested individuals are invited to submit their application using the appropriate online application form available on the Healthcare Quality website ([8]). Applications must be completed in English.

Experts applying in their professional capacity are required to fill in the online application form designed for professionals. Persons applying as patients and/or caregivers are required to fill in the respective online application form designed for patients and/or caregivers only.

Supporting documents:
An application is only valid if sent by the indicated deadline and all the documents listed hereafter are included:

- A completed on-line application form, either an:
  - application form for patients and/or caregivers; or an
  - application form for professionals;
- A *Curriculum Vitae* in electronic Europass format ([9]), not exceeding 4 pages in length;
- A list of publications – the ten best scientific publications in a relevant field published during the last ten years (the applicant may also additionally provide a list of ten publications of other types, e.g. book chapters); **this list is not required for applications from patients and/or caregivers**;
- A filled in and signed DoI form (the DoI form is embedded to the application form);
- A read, understood and accepted privacy statement (the statement is embedded to the application form).

Note:
Applicants must disclose any circumstances that could give rise to a conflict of interests (CoI) by submitting a DoI. Submission of a duly completed DoI form is necessary in order to be eligible for appointments.
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.
The applications for the EC-BC expert pool will remain open for at least five years.

([6])Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443. OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41–52
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015D0443&from=EN
([7])Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/444. OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53–88
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015D0444&from=GA
([8])Healthcare Quality website
https://healthcare-quality.jrc.ec.europa.eu/EC-BC/open-calls/call-for-expression-of-interest
([9])CV Europass format
https://europass.cedefop.europa.eu/en/doccuments/curriculum-vitae/templates-instructions

4. SELECTION PROCEDURE

4.1. Eligibility requirements

To be considered eligible for inclusion into the expert pool, the applicants must satisfy the following criteria:

All applicants:

1. Must have good knowledge of the English language, allowing professional interacting in English ([10]) (including active participation in deliberations and writing reports in English);
2. Must not be an EC-BC National Contact.

Professionals:

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 five years of relevant professional experience ([11]) in at least one of the relevant competence fields listed in the call (Annex I);
3. Must have an active employment or involvement in at least one of the competence fields;

Patients and/or Caregivers:

1. Must have an understanding of issues and needs of individuals attending breast cancer services and their caregivers;
2. Must have an understanding of the views of a wide network of individuals attending breast cancer services and their caregivers;

Only the applicants meeting all requirements can be included in the expert pool.

4.2. Selection criteria

To select suitable candidates, applications that meet all eligibility requirements will be evaluated considering the following aspects:

Professionals:

1. Postgraduate education;
2. Work experience;
3. Relevant professional, scientific and technical expertise.

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.

Evaluations will be based on the evidence provided by the applicant.

([10]) As 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

([11]) To confirm the eligibility requirement of 10 years of professional experience (years are counted only if they are in a relevant field to the call): 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.

4.3. Evaluation of the DoI forms

The filled in DoI forms will be evaluated by the JRC CoI Management Panel. Determined CoI do not imply that the applicant will not be apt for inclusion in the expert pool. Only applicants who are deemed to have non-manageable CoIs will not be included in the expert pool.

5. INCLUSION IN THE EC-BC EXPERT POOL

Applicants who fulfil the eligibility criteria, pass the evaluation against the selection criteria and do not have non-manageable CoIs will be included in the EC-BC expert pool.

5. ANNEXES

Annex I

Expertise required ([12])

- Anaesthesiology/intensive care/pain management specialist
- Breast care nurse
- Cancer rehabilitation specialist
- Cancer registry and databases expert
- Communication in cancer care expert
- Cancer care pathway or nurse navigator
- Data manager with experience in cancer
- Decision aids expert
- Epidemiologist with expertise in modelling
- Epidemiologist/public health/preventive medicine specialist with expertise in prevention and/or screening for breast cancer
- General practitioner
- Geneticist
- Guidelines methods expert (development, implementation, integration of patient values, conflict of interest prevention and management)
- Health equity expert
- Health economist
- Interventional radiologist
- Immunologist
- Systematic review expert including of diagnostic tests, public health interventions, and qualitative evidence
- Screening program manager
- Medical oncologist
- Molecular pathologist
- Nuclear medicine specialist
- Nurse with experience in community, hospital and/or oncology care
- Nutrition specialist
- Oncology pharmacist

([12])All experts will be appointed in their personal capacities acting independently and in the public interest, not representing any private, commercial or national interests.

- Palliative care specialist
- Patient safety specialist
- Pathologist
- Psycho-oncologist and/or psychosocial care specialist
- Quality indicators development
- Quality assurance in healthcare expert
- Radiologist specialised in breast cancer screening and/or diagnostic imaging
- Radiation oncologist
- Reconstructive breast surgeon
- Surgeon specialised in breast cancer surgery
- Other professions relevant to breast cancer care

Annex II

Guidance for completing the EC-BC Annual Declaration of Interests ([13]) (DoI) form

I. INTRODUCTION

This guidance relates to the implementation of the provisions on independence and transparency of Commission Decision C(2016) 3301.

It aims to give clear indications on how to declare any interest that could affect the ability of the EC-BC members to act in the public interest.

According to Decision C(2016) 3301, the responsibility for declaring all relevant interests is placed on the individuals completing their declaration. A false or incomplete declaration may have consequences on the acts adopted by the Commission on the basis of the experts' advice, since this could be challenged before the Court of Justice/General Court under the conditions of Article 263 TFUE ([14]).

Interests are declared as an indication if conflicts of interest (CoIs) could arise. The expert shall not assess whether a CoI is present. The assessment of whether a CoI exists will be performed by the CoI evaluation panel from the JRC.

To be noted that a declared "interest" is not automatically considered to lead to a CoI. It is well understood that, in general, individuals who are involved in a particular process have an inherent professional interest in the subject area and in being involved in the process as such.

The following information covers the Declaration of Interests (DoI) form to be filled in by EC-BC members.

II. WHAT TO DECLARE?

The European Commission recognises that high quality and up-to-date scientific expertise is by nature, based on prior experience, connection to the scientific world and involvement in current research. Therefore, and as previously indicated, having an interest does not necessarily mean having a CoI.

EC-BC members shall declare:

1. Investments

([13]) According to European Commission's Decision C(2016) 3301 establishing horizontal rules on the creation and operation of Commission expert groups, Articles 2(4) and 11 each member of an expert group has to complete a DoI form.

([14]) TFUE, Article 263
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:12008E263:EN:HTML

Stocks, bonds, stock options, other securities as well as to commercial business interests (e.g., proprietorships, partnerships, joint ventures, board memberships, controlling interests) in a legal entity. Holding any form of equity, bonds, and partnership interests in the capital of a company is included.

The holding of financial interests connected with a pension scheme or other complex investment funds would not be considered a financial interest, provided that the individual has no influence on its financial management.

2. Employment and consulting

All forms of employment and consulting, part-time or full-time, either remunerated or non-remunerated, in any legal entity.

3. Research

Any activity as an investigator in research studies related to breast cancer, including the drafting of research programmes or the selection of research projects and current funding of research in relation to matter or work financed by a private or public entity, including grants, rents, sponsorships and fellowships. Non-monetary support (equipment, facilities) and other type of support (i.e. honoraria for being a speaker, holding a training) are included.

4. Memberships

For example,

- Any participation in the internal decision-making body of a company, trade association or other private entity such as a non-profit organisation dealing with issues related to breast cancer (e.g. board membership, directorship).
- Any paid or unpaid, past, present or envisaged activity in which the expert or his depended collaborators provided technical or scientific advice or services in domains of relevance for breast cancer.

5. Intellectual property rights (IPR)

Rights granted to creators and owners of works that are the result of human intellectual creativity that bring personal financial benefit to the expert.

Only the IPR falling within the remit of the work of breast cancer need be declared. These can be copyrights, patents, trademarks as well as proprietary know-how in a substance, technology or process.

6. Public statements and positions

Expert opinion or testimony for a legal entity or other body as part of a regulatory, legislative or judicial process; holding an office or other position, paid or unpaid, where interests were represented or opinions defended in domains of relevance for breast cancer.

7. Interests of immediate family members

Known interests related to breast cancer held by family members and relatives (spouse, parents, children, brothers and sisters, irrespective of whether they live at the same address or not) or other persons under the care of the members of the household of the expert.

8. Other activities

Any interests other than those mentioned before which can be perceived as a potential source of conflict. It should be intended as any membership or affiliation other than those mentioned before which can be perceived as an interest.

III. PUBLICATION

The DoI of the EC-BC members will be made public in accordance with the provisions on transparency foreseen by Decision C(2016) 3301. These will be posted on the European Commission website on cancer screening and diagnosis.

COMPLIANCE WITH PROVISIONS ON PERSONAL DATA PROTECTION

The European Commission processes personal data pursuant to Regulation (EU) 2018/1725 ([15]) of the European Parliament and of the Council of 23 October 2018 on the protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data by the Union institutions, bodies, offices and agencies on the free movement of such data.

The specific processing of data included in the EC-BC DoI form by the JRC's Directorate F, Health and Food, F1 Disease Prevention Unit, Healthcare Quality Group is covered by the notification DPR-EC-00656.1 ([16]), Data Protection Office public register.

([15]) Protection of individuals with regard to the processing of personal data
https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/?uri=CELEX%3A32018R1725
([16]) Personal data processing including the DoIs
https://ec.europa.eu/dpo-register/detail/DPR-EC-00656

Annex III

EC-BC

Declarations of confidentiality and commitment

NOTE:

The version included hereafter is a draft version for future declarations of confidentiality and commitment that members are expected to submit as members of an EC-BC group.

This version is made available for information only and is not required to be included as supporting documentation when submitting an application to the EC-BC expert pool.

European Commission initiative on Breast Cancer
Declaration of confidentiality

For information only – not part of the application process

Name:

I hereby declare that:

1. I am aware of my obligation to respect confidentiality and not to divulge any information acquired as a result of my work for the European Commission initiative on Breast Cancer (EC-BC), unless it is made publicly accessible by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC). I will respect the confidential nature of the scientific opinions expressed by the members of the EC-BC during meetings and discussions. I will not disclose such information even after my participation in the EC-BC activities has ceased.
2. I am aware of the Commission's security rules for protecting European Union classified information and sensitive non-classified information, as laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 and 2015/444. Should I receive confidential information or restricted information in the course and context of my duties for the group, I will treat it as strictly confidential and use it exclusively for the purpose for which it was made available. I will handle the information in accordance with the provided handling instructions and not divulge them to any third party.

The above implies that the undersigned:

- Will not divulge, publish, or otherwise make available to any third party, information received from the group without prior written consent of the JRC, even after completion of a specific event or assignment. The duty of confidentiality exists vis-à-vis any third party, including employees, employers, affiliates or the general public;
- Will not use information received from the EC-BC for personal benefit or the benefit of any third party;
- Will ensure safe storage of the confidential or restricted information (in accordance with the corresponding handling instructions), by applying appropriate security measures if the information is managed electronically, and will not retain the information for longer than needed for the completion of an assignment within the EC-BC.

Date:
Signature:

European Commission Initiative on Breast Cancer
Declaration of commitment

For information only – not part of the application process

Name:

1. Commitment

While contributing to the activities of the European Commission initiative on Breast Cancer (EC-BC), I will:

- Act independently in the public interest and make complete declarations of any direct or indirect interests that might be considered prejudicial to my independence;
- Inform the JRC Scientific Secretariat if I take part in another group/activity with interest in the field of breast cancer and/or in relation to the activities of the EC-BC.
- Comply with the group's rules on the handling of conflict of interest;
- Contribute actively to the work of the group through working remotely and, when necessary, by attending meetings;
- Conduct myself in exemplary manner in all activities linked to the group;
- Comply with the rules on reimbursement of travel expenses and payment of allowances and indemnities in place in the Commission;
- Ensure appropriate use of scientific publications provided by the JRC scientific secretariat and respect copyrights as outlined below;
- Always contact the JRC Scientific Secretariat beforehand when communicating with the media, stakeholders, or the general public on a matter that falls within the group's remit.

2. Copyrights and library working tools

In case the undersigned is involved in the preparation of scientific publications, she/he may receive them from the JRC scientific secretariat, protected by copyrights, as hand-outs or via e-mail.
The undersigned will be allowed to make limited use of the scientific publications but shall not, even after the termination of the activities within the group:

- Distribute copies to third parties;
- Use them for commercial purposes;
- Use the materials for other purposes than the assignment with the group.

Duration: The validity of the present declaration is limited to the mandate of the group (at least five years) from the date of signature, unless the undersigned informs the JRC scientific secretariat on the termination of her/his activities within the group.

Date:
Signature: