ESCMID invitation to submit proposals for clinical practice guidelines projects

Background
European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID) is highly committed to develop rigorous and trustworthy guidance documents with a global perspective on priority topics, ensuring that resources and attention are devoted to those areas in which clinical recommendations will provide the greatest benefit to patients, clinicians, and policy makers.

In this view, ESCMID is repeating the initiative launched in 2019 as part of the guidelines programme, to ensure sustainability of the model and to develop new, timely clinical practice guidelines in the field of infectious diseases, clinical microbiology and infections.

Aim
The objective of this call is to invite interested parties to propose to undertake the development of full clinical practice guidelines in one of the proposed topics, as listed below. They will engage in following the best recognized standards to produce clinical practice guidelines, from the identification of objectives and health questions, search and selection of relevant evidence, to the formulation of recommendations.

Topics
Topics for guidelines are here intended as broad areas, where the applicant is expected to propose scope and focus, balancing feasibility and comprehensiveness.

In this call, ESCMID will consider proposals in the following areas:

1. Diagnosis and treatment of Community Acquired Pneumonia;
2. Diagnosis and treatment of Brain Abscess management;
3. Update of the 2014 ESCMID guideline of prevention of infections due to MDR-GN.

Eligibility
This call is open to ESCMID study groups and individual ESCMID members. Individual ESCMID members should, if possible, liaise with relevant ESCMID study groups to present joint proposals.

Proposals with other scientific societies are encouraged, and this information should be included in the application; in case the project is selected for funding, funding will be granted conditional on a Memorandum of Understanding between the cooperating societies.

A single member/study group will be allowed to submit only one proposal.

Proposals from non-ESCMID members will not be considered.

Procedure
The procedure to select the proposals for the development of clinical practice guidelines will proceed as follow:

1) Applicants to the call will complete the submission template, as detailed below, and submit it to the ESCMID Secretariat by email in PDF or other suitable format (guidancedocuments@escmid.org).

2) Proposals will be checked by the Secretariat to assess if the submission requirements are met;

3) Suitable proposals will be subsequently evaluated by the ESCMID Guideline Director (with Subcommittee) and ESCMID Guideline Officer, who will select the most suitable proposals (see below for quality criteria);

4) The ESCMID Executive Committee will approve and allocate funding to the selected proposals. Comments and proposed modifications will be sent back to the ESCMID Guidelines Director, who will liaise with the applicants.

5) The applicants of the selected proposals will be contacted for confirmation and for further steps (in particular, selection of the remaining panel members; see below)

The overall procedure, and any issues not covered in the present call, are detailed in the ESCMID Manual for clinical practice guidelines and other guidance documents.

Key dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Step</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Notes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Call for projects</td>
<td>4/09/2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Deadline for project submission</td>
<td>01/11/2020</td>
<td>Email to: <a href="mailto:guidancedocuments@escmid.org">guidancedocuments@escmid.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Selection of funded projects</td>
<td>01/12/2020</td>
<td>By GL subcommittee and EC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Call for additional panel members</td>
<td>02/12/2020</td>
<td>By GL subcommittee</td>
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<td>Deadline for application to be panel member</td>
<td>04/01/2021</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final selection of panel members</td>
<td>04/02/2021</td>
<td>By EC, GL subcommittee and GL Officer</td>
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<tr>
<td>Kick off of the funded projects (TC)</td>
<td>By March 2021</td>
<td>Drafting group chair</td>
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<tr>
<td>First F2F meeting of the funded projects</td>
<td>ECCMID 2022</td>
<td>Drafting group</td>
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Guideline panel

The applicant of the proposal will serve as panel chair. The ideal size of the panel is around 9-15 members from different (predominantly European) countries. The applicant will propose a third of the panel members, a third will be proposed by the guideline subcommittee and the EC, and a third will be selected by an open call in the following weeks.

The panel should include both specialists in the narrow field under discussion, and people with a wider perspective. The chair and the members of the panel should be drawn from the membership of the Society whenever possible. The participation of a least one member or an advisor proficient in the methodology of systematic reviews is strongly recommended. It is strongly advised to include a representative of the patient population or of the lay public into the guideline panel. Gender, country and, whenever applicable, clinical specialty balance should be ensured.

Experts will not be eligible to be part of the guideline panel if they are already members of the panel of more than another guideline.

ESCMID has a clear policy on Conflict of Interest (CoI) of guideline panel members. Please refer to the Guidelines manual for details. The drafting group chair shall have no current or recent (i.e. past 5 years) direct or indirect financial CoI. The drafting group as a whole shall include no more than 50% of members with direct or indirect financial CoI.

Conflict of Interest declarations

A thorough Conflict of Interest statement will be required from the applicant at the time of the submission of the proposal (the ESCMID template can be found at the following link). If the proposal is selected for funding, the statement will be asked from all guideline panel members; it will be highly appreciated if the statement from the proposed panel members is submitted together with the application.

Interest is defined as any direct or indirect financial or nonfinancial interest besides the development of the guideline itself, i.e. to the purposes of the guidance document development represents a “secondary interest”. A Conflict of Interest arises when there is a risk that the professional judgement of an author regarding the specific guidance document will be influenced by a secondary interest.

Conflicts of interests do not necessarily imply improper motivation or require immediate exclusion of a person from involvement in guidance document development, but since they can influence decision-making, all Conflicts of Interest should be declared, transparently reported, identified and properly managed in order to limit bias.

Conflicts of Interest will be assessed considering both the nature of the interest, the relevancy to the task at hand and the potential impact. Conflict of Interests considered to be at high risk may lead to the refusal of the proposal.

Submission template

Only proposals including a fully completed version of the attached submission template will be evaluated.

Applicants are invited to check the list of ongoing ESCMID guidelines projects before submitting their proposal, in order to avoid overlapping.

The template includes all critical components of a clinical practice guideline, covering the items composing the Appraisal of Guidelines for REsearch & Evaluation (AGREE II) instrument:

- Scope and Purpose
- Stakeholder Involvement
- Rigour of Development
- Clarity of Presentation


In addition, the proposal should describe the following:

- Composition of the guidelines panel
- Availability to regularly re-assess the need for updates to the original guidelines
- Conflict of Interest declaration of the submitter
- Timeline for the guideline development process
- Required budget

ESCMID has adopted the Grading of Recommendations Assessment, Development and Evaluation (GRADE) approach to guidelines development. Any deviation should be properly justified in the proposal.

The systematic review of the literature, data extraction and the drafting of the summary of findings tables will be made in cooperation with the ESCMID Evidence Review Group.

**ESCMID support**

Specific support will be provided by ESCMID in the guideline development process:

- Members from the evidence review group (usually 2-4 young professionals) will support data extraction for the systematic review of the literature
- The ESCMID guideline manager will provide help in coordinating and setting up telephonic conferences

**Amount of funding**

The total budget for this call is 100 000 Euros. Overall, four proposals are expected to be retained and funded – this number might be lower or higher according to the number of proposals, the requested budget, etc.

A tentative budget should be submitted together with the proposal. This should contain the total costs of the development of the clinical practice guidelines, including travel costs, the salary of a librarian (as needed), and coordination travel costs. The organization and costs of teleconferences and data extraction will be covered by ESCMID and should not be included in the budget.

The final allocated budget will be assigned by the ESCMID Executive Committee.

**Criteria for proposal selection**

Proposals will be assessed according to multiple criteria, including:

- Scope and Purpose (clarity, precision, and adherence to the current call topics)
- Stakeholder Involvement (proposed guideline panel’s curriculum on the topic, previous experience in guideline development, presence of methodologists and patient representatives, gender/country/specialty balance)
- Rigour of the proposed development methods
- Clarity of Presentation of the proposal
- Expected applicability
- Editorial Independence (CoI declarations)
- Expected timelines
- Estimated budget