



The future of cancer therapy

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EORTC Principles for Site Activation

POL018
Version 1.4

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1 PURPOSE

The objective of this policy is to describe the principles for site activation and start of recruitment in EORTC studies. It defines the process and timelines by which EORTC will grant authorization to sites to join a particular study. It also defines the decisions that can be taken towards non-performing sites during study activation and start of recruitment on site.

The steps described in this policy require high involvement including optimal coordination, engagement and cooperation from the joining sites.

2 SCOPE

This policy applies to any clinical study for which EORTC is responsible for the selection, activation and authorization of sites to allow patients registration in the study. Certain parts of this procedure might not be applicable in case of intergroup studies. This is described in the intergroup agreement.

3 DEFINITIONS

- ◆ **Competent Authorities (CA):** In the frame of clinical trial, the official entity at country level controlling the performance of biomedical research.
- ◆ **Confirmation of Participation (COP) form:** a document through which the site confirms participation to the study and provides the name of the Principal Investigator (PI), the estimated recruitment number, the contact details of the site staff and the address of any potential service facility.
- ◆ **Disease Oriented Group (DOG):** A group consisting of investigators, specialized in a particular cancer disease.
- ◆ **Ethics Committees (EC):** An independent body in a Member State, consisting of healthcare professionals and nonmedical members, whose responsibility it is to protect the rights, safety and wellbeing of human subjects involved in a trial and to provide public assurance of that protection, by, among other things, expressing an opinion on the trial protocol, the suitability of the investigators and the adequacy of facilities, and on the methods and documents to be used to inform trial subjects and obtain their informed consent.
- ◆ **National Coordinator (NC):** a selected Principal Investigator (PI) who has a supportive and advisory role towards all investigators within his/her country participating in the same multi-centre study and who has as main responsibility the review and/or the submission (depending on the country) of the local documentation required for regulatory approval of the study in his/her country.
- ◆ **Protocol Review Committee (PRC):** An independent panel of experts. The PRC reviews and approves all clinical studies proposed by EORTC Groups prior to activation.
- ◆ **Service facilities:** any location, different from the main site, where part of the study treatment is provided (e.g. Radiation Therapy in a central facility, surgery in a nearby expert site) or where study-related tasks (e.g. human biological material processing and/or sample storage) are performed.
- ◆ **Study Coordinator (SC):** The EORTC Study Coordinator is the coordinating investigator of the trial. For specific responsibilities of the Study Coordinator. More information can be found in the EORTC Study Coordinator Tasks and Responsibilities Form (PD-002-AF-02).

- ◆ **Study start-up package:** Package sent to all investigators who confirmed their participation. It includes all necessary documents for authorizing their site to participate in the study.
- ◆ **Waiting list:** Sites that meet the selection criteria but could not be selected due to limitations in number of participating countries and sites, will be added to a waiting list.

4 POLICY

All EORTC clinical studies are conducted in compliance with applicable laws, regulations and guidelines.

Swift site activation across all EORTC studies are key to assure timely completion of a study that might positively impact patient's standard of care.

5 SITE ACTIVATION PROCESS

5.1 CALL FOR INTEREST AND SITE FEASIBILITY

The call for interest is launched to the relevant investigators, having an interest in the concerned field of activity, inviting them to read and acknowledge the [EORTC terms and conditions](#). Investigators who accepted the EORTC terms and conditions will receive the study feasibility questionnaire along with the Protocol Review Committee (PRC)-approved protocol synopsis (outline).

This feasibility questionnaire will capture estimated recruitment and study-specific information in order to have an objective assessment of the feasibility per site. The form must be completed through the web application within 2 weeks. An extension of maximum 2 weeks can be considered. Once these timelines have passed, interested sites can always reach out to the EORTC study team to check if participation is still possible.

The answers to the feasibility questionnaire are analysed by the EORTC study team and are discussed with the Study Coordinators, the Disease Oriented Group (DOG) chair and other parties (if applicable). As soon as all parties have agreed on the final site list, the EORTC study team informs all sites that completed the feasibility questionnaire on the outcome of the site selection process.

5.2 CONFIRMATION OF PARTICIPATION

Upon approval of the protocol by PRC, the EORTC study team requests the Confirmation of Participation (COP) form from the sites that are selected for study participation.

With this document the site confirms participation to the study and provides the name of the Principal Investigator (PI), the estimated recruitment number, the contact details of the site staff and the address of any potential service facility.

The COP form must be completed and returned to the EORTC study team within 3 weeks following receipt. An extension of maximum 3 weeks can be considered.

5.3 COLLECTION OF SITE-SPECIFIC DOCUMENTS FOR REGULATORY SUBMISSIONS

Following receipt of the COP and based on the study-specific regulatory submission strategy, sites are requested to provide site-specific documents needed for the regulatory submissions of the study. The documents required for submission to the Ethics Committee(s) and their validity are different in each country. The EORTC study team will provide the site with timelines by when these documents should be provided to the EORTC study team. Reply in due time is of high importance in order to prevent any delay in the regulatory submissions. In case of no reply or limited responsiveness from

the site, the EORTC study team, following consultation of the Study Coordinator (SC), Disease Oriented Group (DOG) Chair and other involved parties (if any), may decide to delay the activation of the site by postponing the submission to regulatory bodies or to replace the site by a site on the waiting list.

5.4 CA/EC SUBMISSION OF THE STUDY BY THE PI

Certain sites might be responsible for the submission of the study to their EC and/or CA (*). The EORTC study team will inform them in due time in case this is applicable for their site. The EORTC study team will provide these sites with a submission package. Adaptation to local requirements falls under the responsibility of the participating site (the PI) with support of the EORTC study team. EORTC will support the site to allow submissions in the planned timeframe. In case the site acts as the central applicant in the country, timely submission is of high importance for all participating sites in this country.

The EORTC study team, following consultation of the SC, DOG Chair and involved parties, reserves the right to remove sites from the list of selected sites in case of non-compliance within the agreed timelines.

() This task might be part of the role of the selected NC for the study. If the investigator is appointed as NC, more information on the tasks and responsibilities can be found in the provided country- and study-specific national coordinator guidelines.*

5.5 STUDY-SPECIFIC AGREEMENT

Following receipt of the completed COP and depending on the projected activation timelines of the country, the EORTC study team will provide the site with the draft study-specific agreement for review. A signed agreement must be in place prior to site authorization. EORTC will only put in place a single agreement with the main site's legal entity. EORTC will not put in place additional agreements with individual departments, service facilities, nor provide payments to individuals or separate departments, unless required by applicable legislation.

Following consultation of the SC, DOG Chair and involved parties, the EORTC study team reserves the right to remove sites from the initially selected site list in case no agreement can be concluded within 3 months following receipt of all regulatory approvals applicable for your site.

5.6 STUDY-SPECIFIC RADIOTHERAPY, IMAGING AND/OR SURGERY QUALITY ASSURANCE PROCEDURE(S)

Some studies require the completion of study-specific quality assurance (QA) procedures prior to site authorization (e.g. radiotherapy, imaging, and surgery). Upon receipt of the COP and depending on the projected activation timelines of the country, the EORTC study team will inform the site of the study-specific QA procedure(s) that must be completed prior to site authorization. The Principal Investigator (PI) is responsible to provide EORTC with the contact persons for these procedures. The PI will follow-up on the applicable study-specific quality assurance procedures to ensure that these are completed in a timely manner prior to site authorization.

The EORTC study team, following consultation of the SC, DOG Chair and involved parties, reserves the right to remove sites from the selected site list in case the quality assurance procedure cannot be completed within a reasonable timeframe.

5.7 STUDY START-UP PACKAGE

At the time of submission of the study to the Ethics Committee(s) within the country, the EORTC study team provides the site(s) with the study start-up package. This package contains all the study-specific documents required for a site to understand the study requirements and to start the activation of the study on site. Part of the documents will need to be returned to the EORTC study team prior to site authorization.

Sites commit to return all documents within the agreed timelines. The EORTC study team, following consultation of the SC, DOG Chair and involved parties, reserves the right to remove sites from the list of selected sites if sites fail to provide all the requested documents within 6 months upon receipt of the site activation package.

5.8 SITE AUTHORIZATION

Once the study is activated, sites can be authorized to recruit patients if the following requirements are fulfilled:

- All site-specific documents as provided in the study start-up package have been completed and returned to EORTC study team;
- A signed site-specific study agreement between EORTC and PI's site is in place;
- All applicable regulatory approvals for the activation of the site are in place;
- The study team has received a confirmation of training of the Principal Investigator (PI);
- All applicable study-specific quality assurance procedures (e.g. radiotherapy, imaging, surgery) needed prior to site activation have been completed;
- The site has received and confirmed the initial supply of the study drug(s) (if applicable);
- The site has received and confirmed the initial supply of the sample collection kit(s) (if applicable).

Sites are only allowed to start patient recruitment upon receipt of the official authorization email from the EORTC study team.

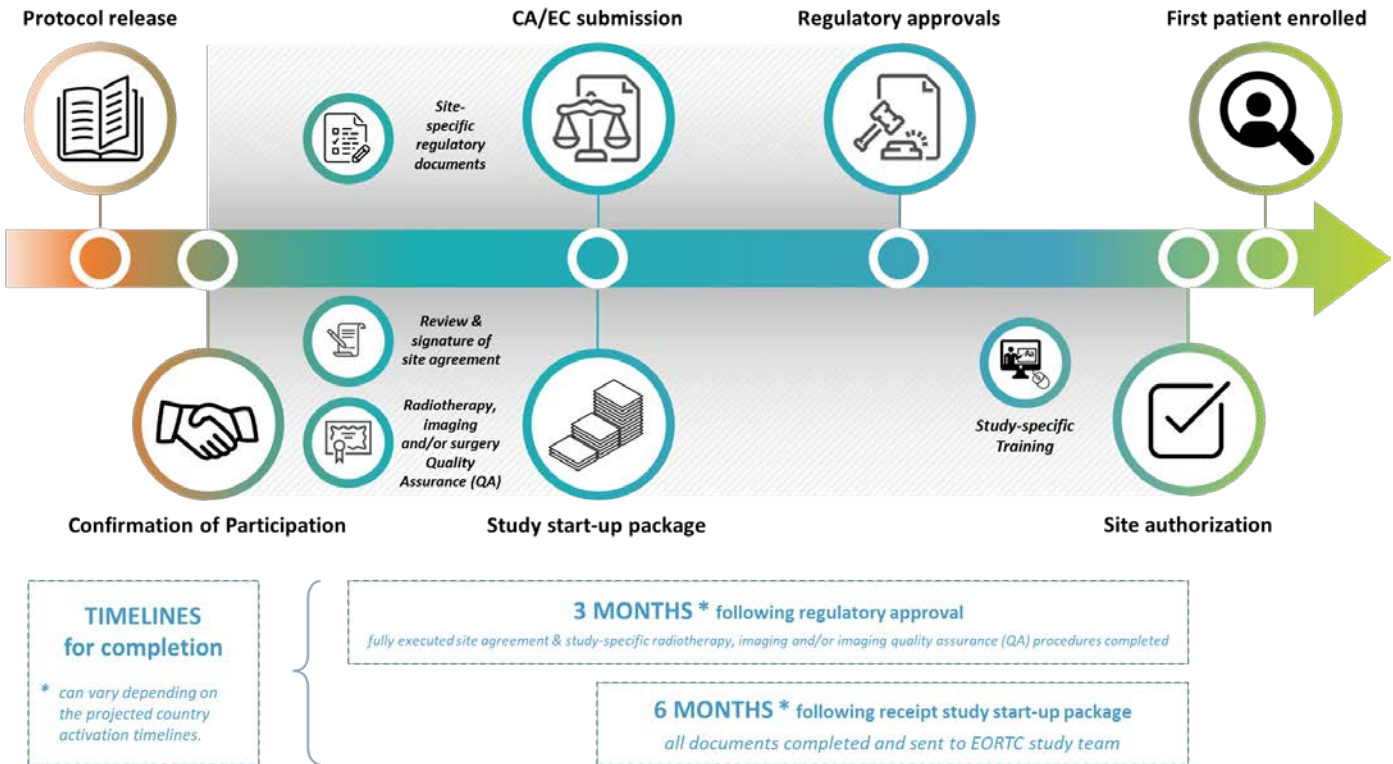
Note: site personnel can only register patients in iMedidata Rave when the mandatory e-learning have been completed (if applicable).

6 RECRUITMENT OF FIRST PATIENT

The EORTC study team will follow-up on first patient recruitment at each site on a regular basis after site authorization.

- In absence of patient recruitment after 3 months after authorization and taking into account the expected recruitment rate the site indicated in the COP, the EORTC study team will investigate if any limiting factor can be actively addressed to overcome recruitment difficulties.
- After 6 months from authorization and taking into account the expected recruitment rate the site indicated in the COP, sites failing to prove that adequate screening procedures are in place and not documenting recruitment failure, are considered as no longer interested and will be closed for patient entry and replaced by a site on the waiting list.

7 SUMMARY OF EORTC SITE ACTIVATION PROCESS AND ASSOCIATED TIMELINES



The site selection procedure occurs after approval of the protocol synopsis by the PRC and confirmation of costs, timelines and associated funding. The details with respect to this process are not covered in this graphical summary as it occurs prior to protocol release. Deviations of these standard timelines are possible depending on study specificities.

8 ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS

Document title	Reference (file name or path)
Site Selection	CM-005-SOP-01
Site authorization for Patient Registration	CM-005-SOP-02
Site Activation: from confirmation of study participation up to site authorization	CM-005-SOP-04

9 DOCUMENT HISTORY

Version number	Brief description of change	Author	Effective date
1.0	Initial release	Denis Lacombe	27 Mar 2007
1.1	Implementation of updated EORTC Headquarters procedures.	Denis Lacombe	06 Apr 2011
1.2	Update and clarification of the definition of confirmation of interest, the contents of the initiation package, and the conditions for site activation.	Christine de Balincourt	04 Apr 2014
1.3	Addition of the EORTC confidentiality statement during the site feasibility stage.	Christine de Balincourt	02 May 2017
1.4	Details have been added regarding the site activation and authorization procedure (<i>including</i> submission of the study to the regulatory bodies, review and signature of the site agreement and initiation and completion of study-specific radiotherapy, imaging and/or surgery QA procedures). Secondly, terminology was updated according to the latest SOP updates. Lastly, a schematic overview was added for the investigator.	Laurien Vancleef	21 Jan 2021