

Minutes

Information Session - 2023 calls for application for EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs) for public health

On Friday 20 October 2023 The European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), supported by the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), hosted an online information meeting on the 2023 calls for application to establish EU Reference Laboratories (EURLs) for public health. The meeting was divided into two sessions: one focusing on application procedure and issues faced by applicants, which attracted over 120 participants, and one focusing on EURL applicant endorsement and other issues faced by national competent authorities, with over 90 participants.

Introduction to EURLs for public health and published calls for applications

DG SANTE explained the legal basis for setting up EURLs for public health, namely the Regulation (EU) 2022/2371 on serious cross-border threats to health, where Article 15 is of pertinence.

On 2 October 2023, DG SANTE published the first calls for applications for EURLs for public health, in the following fields: Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) in bacteria¹; vector-borne viral pathogens²; emerging, rodent-borne and zoonotic viral pathogens³; high-risk, emerging and zoonotic bacterial pathogens⁴; Legionella⁵; and Diphtheria and Pertussis⁶. The deadline for submission of applications is Thursday 30 November at 17:00 CET; further information can be found online⁷ and via the Guide for Applicants⁸. It was explained that the designation of a laboratory as an EURL, following the current selection procedure and subsequently done via an implementing act, is separate from the funding. Once the EURLs have been designated, a call for proposals will be issued for the financing of the activities of the designated EURLs. A total of EUR 12.4 million has been allocated for multiannual grants to cover the costs of the activities for the EURLs designated under the currently open calls.

DG SANTE and ECDC gave an overview of some of the questions that had already been posed by potential applicants, and which are available in the Guide for Applicants (or will become available shortly after the webinar, if not yet provided). These covered who may apply, eligibility criteria, information about potential conflicts of interest, endorsements of candidate laboratories, applications as consortium and forming a consortium, and various elements of the calls for application (such as the fictitious scenarios, mandatory tasks, additional activities, description of workplan activities, and technical description). The four selection criteria were also outlined, and links to key documents were provided.

Q&A Session for Applicants

A Q&A session followed, focussing on questions and issues related to completing and submitting applications under the published calls, which were mainly of relevance for applicants. Questions focused on the specificities of submitting an application and

¹ [security_2023-eurl-call_amr-bacteria_en_1.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

² [security_2023-eurl-call_vb-viral-pathogens_en_0.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

³ [security_2023-eurl-call_e-rb-z-viral-pathogens_en_1.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁴ [security_2023-eurl-call_zoonotic-bacterial-pathogens_en_1.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁵ [security_2023-eurl-call_legionella_en_0.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁶ [security_2023-eurl-call_diphtheria-pertussis_en_0.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)

⁷ https://health.ec.europa.eu/health-security-and-infectious-diseases/surveillance-and-early-warning/eu-reference-laboratories-public-health-calls-application_en

⁸ https://health.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2023-10/security_2023-eurl-call_guide-applicants_en.pdf

completing the application form, declaring and identifying potential conflicts of interest, the specific application process, forming consortia, the number of expected EURLs, the budget and the process for funding, as well as specific technical questions. DG SANTE and ECDC provided answers to a majority of the questions posed, and the online Q&A sections will be updated accordingly.

Q&A Session for National Competent Authorities

This Q&A session focussed on applicant endorsement and other issues related to completing and submitting applications under the published calls that were mainly of relevance for national competent authorities. Questions concentrated primarily on the identification and role of endorsement entities, the actual process of endorsement, as well as liability and potential conflicts of interest. There were also specific technical questions. The EC and the ECDC provided answers to a majority of the questions posed, and the online Q&A sections will be updated accordingly.

Conclusions

Participants were informed that the slides would be made available on the EURL website. The current Q&As in the Guide for Applicants and on the website will be updated within a week. Further questions may be submitted by email⁹.

⁹ EURL-PH@ecdc.europa.eu