European Medicines Agency and European Commission (DG Health and Food Safety) action plan on paediatrics

Introduction

The EU's regulatory framework for paediatric medicines, the Paediatric Regulation[1], came into force in 2007. In 2017, the European Commission's (EC) issued their ten-year report[2] on the implementation of the Regulation, which showed that the number of medicines developed for children increased during this period. However, it also revealed specific challenges, like developing medicines for diseases that only affect children or for diseases that manifest differently in adults and children. The report also highlighted that the development and later availability at patients' bedside of paediatric medicines is often delayed when compared with adult medicines.

Based on this analysis, the EC's report identified a number of areas where short-term actions could address the identified shortcomings under the current legal framework. In order to follow up on the report's conclusions the EC and the European Medicines Agency (EMA) have developed a detailed plan to boost the development of medicines for children in Europe, in consultation with all relevant stakeholders.

This action plan takes into account the suggestions made at a multi-stakeholder workshop[3] convened by the EC and the EMA on 20th of March 2018, where ways to improve the implementation of the Paediatric Regulation were discussed. It is expected that the implementation of the proposed actions will increase the efficiency of paediatric regulatory processes in the current legal framework and boost the availability of medicines for children.

The actions are grouped according to the 5 topic areas highlighted by the Commission in the ten-year report on the implementation of the Regulation:

Topic areas
• Identifying paediatric medical needs
• Strengthening of cooperation of decision makers
• Ensuring timely completion of paediatric investigation plans (PIPs)
• Improving the handling of PIP applications
• Increasing transparency around paediatric medicines

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This plan has taken into account the impact of Brexit and the Agency's relocation and business continuity plan[4] (BCP). However, it needs to be noted that prioritisation, timelines and resource allocation will depend on how activities will be affected during the Agency's relocation. Therefore, timelines are indicative and may be subject to change. This document will be updated accordingly if and as necessary.

Actions by topic area

1. Identifying paediatric medical needs

	Action	Objectives	Status (July 2018)	Deadline
1	Develop overview of selected therapeutic areas to identify paediatric medical needs. Actions include: • Conducting public survey on criteria proposed for determining paediatric medical needs and on perceived areas of needs. • Selecting therapeutic areas based on various factors, including experience with PIPs and stakeholder feedback, for further analyses by multi-stakeholder focus groups. • Conducting multi-stakeholder workshops in selected therapeutic areas. • Publishing reports on the paediatric therapeutic landscape related to selected areas.	To raise awareness for paediatric medical needs with a view to providing a basis for strategic decision making on paediatric medicine development.	**In progress:** multi-stakeholder workshops. **On hold until 2020 due to BCP:** • survey, • selection of therapeutic areas, • publication of reports.	Completion not expected by 2020 due to BCP.[1]
2	Develop framework to ascertain paediatric needs in the context of PIP discussions.	To improve the systematic and structured assessment of medical need and the potential benefit of a medicine during PIP procedures.	In progress.	12/2020
3	Establish framework for collaboration of EMA/PDCO with the U.S. FDA's Oncology Center of Excellence Pediatric Oncology Program regarding the assessment of relevant molecular targets in paediatric cancers.	To maximise synergies and share expertise in the assessment of relevant molecular targets and to address medical needs with a global perspective.	In progress.	12/2019

[1] Deadline to be revisited in 2020

2. Strengthening of cooperation of decision makers

	Action	Objectives	Status (July 2018)	Deadline
1	Establish framework for exchange of information between the EMA/PDCO and the Clinical Trial Facilitation Group (CTFG) as well as ethics committees	To improve dialogue between EMA/PDCO and clinical trial assessors and facilitate mutual understanding of the interplay between assessment of PIPs and of clinical trials.	In progress.	12/2020
2	Enhance integration of EMA/FDA paediatric cluster activities.	To ensure knowledge and information exchange between PDCO and the paediatric regulatory cluster.	In progress.	12/2018
3	Increase transparency with regard to EMA/FDA paediatric cluster discussions.	To better inform sponsors about paediatric cluster discussions and to increase transparency for all relevant stakeholders regarding outcomes of non-product related interactions.	In progress.	06/2020
4	Increase global interactions between EMA/PDCO and other stakeholders, including other regulators and paediatric clinical research networks such as the European Network of Paediatric Research at EMA (Enpr-EMA).	To promote a global and holistic approach for paediatric medicine development.	On hold due to BCP.	Completion not expected by 2020 due to BCP.[2]

3. Ensuring timely completion of paediatric investigation plans (PIPs)

	Action	Objectives	Status (July 2018)	Deadline
1	Publish recommendations to support the conduct of paediatric clinical trials.	To facilitate the conduct of paediatric clinical trials by focusing on identification and resolution of factors impeding the conduct of trials in children.	In progress.	12/2020
2	Make training material on	To raise awareness and	Planned.	12/2019

[2] Deadline to be revisited in 2020

	Action	Objectives	Status (July 2018)	Deadline
	paediatric medicine development publicly available.	understanding of regulatory and scientific aspects of paediatric medicine development among researchers and academia.		
3	Develop training resources on clinical research for young people's advisory groups and patients/parents organisations in collaboration with Enpr-EMA and increase opportunities for dialogue between young patients and EMA/PDCO.	To educate young people's advisory groups and patients/parents on clinical research in order to enable them to best contribute to and represent their interests in the planning of clinical trials.	On hold due to BCP.	Completion not expected by 2020 due to BCP.[3]
4	Publish reflection paper on extrapolation methodologies in PIPs.	To increase awareness regarding extrapolation methodologies among medicine developers and regulators.	In progress.	12/2018
5	Revise paediatric aspects of scientific EMA guidelines.	To provide more guidance to support sponsors developing medicines for the paediatric population.	In progress: Concept paper on neonates. On hold until 2020 due to BCP: Any other guidelines	12/2020

4. Improving the handling of PIP applications

	Action	Objectives	Status (July 2018)	Deadline
1	Explore possibilities for a PIP model that allows, in certain cases, for changes to be made to PIPs as more evidence becomes available over time.	To identify possibilities for and limitations of a PIP model that allows to develop along with the evolution of scientific knowledge.	In progress.	12/2020
2	Explore opportunities for enhanced dialogue with	To foster informed discussions between EMA/PDCO and PIP	On hold due to BCP.	Completion not expected

[3] Deadline to be revisited in 2020

	Action	Objectives	Status (July 2018)	Deadline
	sponsors in the context of PIP procedures.	applicants.		by 2020 due to BCP.[4]
3	Improve processes for compliance checks	To minimise unnecessary administrative procedures	In progress	06/2020
4	Revise PIP summary report template.	To improve clarity of summary reports and focus on essential information.	On hold due to BCP.	Completion not expected by 2020 due to BCP.[5]
5	Review key elements (structure and granularity) of PIP opinions.	To focus on essential key elements of the PIP opinion and the appropriate level of detail in order to optimise the need for modifications of an agreed PIP.	In progress.	06/2020
6	Improve procedural guidance related to paediatric medicine development.	To enable stakeholders to easily find clear guidance on the Agency's website.	On hold due to BCP.	Completion not expected by 2020 due to BCP[6]
7	Simplify administrative submission requirements.	To reduce unnecessary administrative burden.	In progress.	06/2020

5. Increasing transparency around paediatric medicines

	Action	Objectives	Status (July 2018)	Deadline
1	Update Community Register of medicinal products with paediatric information (e.g. link to PIP information).	To facilitate the identification of medicinal products for which a PIP has been agreed and conducted.	Planned.	12/2020
2	Provide information on paediatric trials open for recruitment in a public register, as well as results of such trials in lay language (in accordance with Clinical Trial Regulation).	To facilitate recruitment into paediatric trials and improve clarity of published trial data.	Planned.	12/2020

[4] Deadline to be revisited in 2020
[5] Deadline to be revisited in 2020
[6] Deadline to be revisited in 2020

References

1. Regulation (EC) No 1901/2006 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December2006 on medicinal products for paediatric use and amending Regulation (EEC) No 1768/92, Directive 2001/20/EC, Directive 2001/83/EC and Regulation (EC) No 726/2004. Official Journal L 378, 27/12/2006, 1-19, 2006. Available at: http://ec.europa.eu/health/files/eudralex/vol-1/reg_2006_1901/reg_2006_1901_en.pdf [Accessed10 April, 2018].

2. Report from the Commission to the European Parliament and the Council. State of Paediatric Medicines in the EU - 10 years of the EU Paediatric Regulation ((COM (2017) 626). Available at: https://ec.europa.eu/health/sites/health/files/files/paediatrics/docs/2017_childrensmedicines_report_en.pdf [Accessed10 April, 2018].

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4. European Medicines Agency Brexit Preparedness Business Continuity Plan. Available at: http://www.ema.europa.eu/docs/en_GB/document_library/Other/2017/10/WC500236755.pdf [Accessed 06/07/2018].