

Guarantors of EQIPD: Request for Proposals

The Guarantors of EQIPD (Ensuring Quality in Preclinical Data) is a not-for-profit society established to oversee the implementation of the EQIPD Quality System (QS) that was developed in the context of the European Quality in Preclinical Data Innovative Medicines Initiative project which ran from 2017 to 2021 and received more than €4m in public funding. The system is described in a recent eLife publication ([10.7554/eLife.63294](https://doi.org/10.7554/eLife.63294)).

The development of EQIPD has been supported by a stakeholder group of over 100, and we have partnered with several organisations including Scientist.com to develop ways of implementing the EQIPD standards within their processes. Three laboratories have received full EQIPD accreditation in the pilot phase. The architecture and components for the EQIPD QS are in the public domain and can be used by any who wish to do so.

Now, the Guarantors of EQIPD (GoEQIPD) are seeking proposals from organisations who wish to work with us in implementing a mechanism through which they provide mentoring and accreditation to laboratories wishing to show that they meet EQIPD QS standards, under the direction of the GoEQIPD. We expect that organisations will wish to charge laboratories for these services, and that they will enter a financial arrangement with the GoEQIPD in return for our oversight, guidance, and endorsement of their implementation of the EQIPD QS. The Guarantors of EQIPD expect an ongoing role in evaluating assessment reports and endorsing accreditation, and in ensuring those conducting the assessments are adequately trained. We also intend to continue to be involved in the further development of the Quality System.

The potential market for the EQIPD QS is large, but the rate of adoption is not known. We expect to start with a relatively small pool of applicants that may grow rapidly over the next years. The research units seeking assessment may vary greatly in size, ranging from small labs with 2 people to large institutions, which would require different approaches to and capacities for evaluation. Applicants should expect that there may be as few as 12 customers in the first year, and should be able to cope with as many as 120 customers in the third year. We expect quarterly reports of activity and an annual report including some evaluation of the quality of EQIPD QS deployment.

We envisage that a partnership agreement(s) resulting from this request for proposals will have a three year term in the first instance, with a mid-term review (18 months) at which it will be possible for either party to give 6 months notice of withdrawing from the agreement. The agreement may be terminated at other times only by the mutual consent of the parties.

Our key requirements for implementation are:

- [1] The implementation system must be relevant to academic labs, CROs, and pharma labs. Proposals which are geographically restricted will be considered.
- [2] The cost structure must not preclude involvement of academic labs. Differential costing is allowed.
- [3] Proposals must include discussion of how those conducting EQIPD evaluations are to be trained. Absent such a system, such training can be provided by GoEQIPD.
- [4] Applicants should demonstrate a commitment to openness and transparency in their implementation and reporting of EQIPD QS activity.
- [5] Applicants should demonstrate an understanding of the needs and circumstances across the range of potential customers of the EQIPD QS.
- [6] Applicants should propose how they will assure the Guarantors of EQIPD of the quality of their deployment of the EQIPD QS.
- [7] Proposals should include details of organisational policies and performance relating to Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, prevention of bullying and harassment, and the creation and nurture of a positive organisational culture.
- [8] Applicants should propose financial arrangements with GoEQIPD, which may be flat rate, activity dependent, or a hybrid of these.
- [9] This first iteration will run for a three year term from 1st March 2022.

For further information contact Malcolm Macleod (malcolm.macleod@ed.ac.uk) or Thomas Steckler (tsteckle@its.jnj.com). Applications should be sent to Malcolm Macleod at the above email address to arrive no later than Friday 3rd December 2021.