9 December 2016
EMA/615023/2012

European Network of Centres for Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacovigilance

How to apply for the ENCePP Study Seal – Guide

30 Churchill Place ● Canary Wharf ● London E14 5EU ● United Kingdom
Telephone +44 (0)20 3660 6000 **Facsimile** +44 (0)20 3660 5555
E-mail encepp_secretariat@ema.europa.eu **Website** www.encepp.eu

1. The ENCePP Study Seal Concept

The European Network of Centres for Pharmacoepidemiology and Pharmacovigilance (ENCePP) has been created by the European Medicines Agency with a view to strengthening the available expertise and resources in Europe in the area of pharmacoepidemiology and pharmacovigilance. Ultimately, the network's goal is to both facilitate and enhance the conduct of collaborative pharmacoepidemiology and pharmacovigilance studies.

Key to ENCePP is to uphold high standards throughout the research process based on the principles of transparency and scientific independence.

To recognise studies following the ENCePP principles of standards, transparency and independence, the "ENCePP Study Seal" has been introduced. The Seal publicly identifies such studies and acts as a form of quality mark that can be reproduced in publications etc.

Studies conducted in accordance with the following principles may qualify for the "**ENCePP Study Seal**":

- The study's primary purpose is to generate data of potential scientific or public health importance and not to promote the sale of a medicinal product;
- The design of the research is not aimed towards producing a pre-specified result;
- The highest possible level of transparency regarding the use of methodological standards in the study protocol;
- The contractual arrangements between investigators and the study funder clearly define the research assignment and address critical areas of interaction, remuneration, protocol agreement, analysis of results and publication of results;
- Remuneration is only granted as specified in the research contract and independent of a particular study result;
- The study is registered in the EU PAS Register prior to its start, thereby making publicly available information on the research process;
- The study results (synopsis or manuscript) are published in the EU PAS Register in line with agreed timelines.

2. Conditions of the ENCePP Study Seal

Any pharmacoepidemiological and pharmacovigilance study may qualify for the "ENCePP Study Seal" if ALL of the following conditions are met:

1. The (primary) lead investigator belongs to an entity that is included in the ENCePP Inventory of Centres and Networks.
2. The (primary) lead investigator provides the following documentation of commitment to comply with the provisions of the ENCePP Code of Conduct prior to study start:
    - Signed Checklist of the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct Annex 2)
    - Signed Declaration on compliance with the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Code of Conduct Annex 3)
    - Signed ENCePP Checklist for Study Protocols

- Declaration of Interests (Code of Conduct Annex 5)

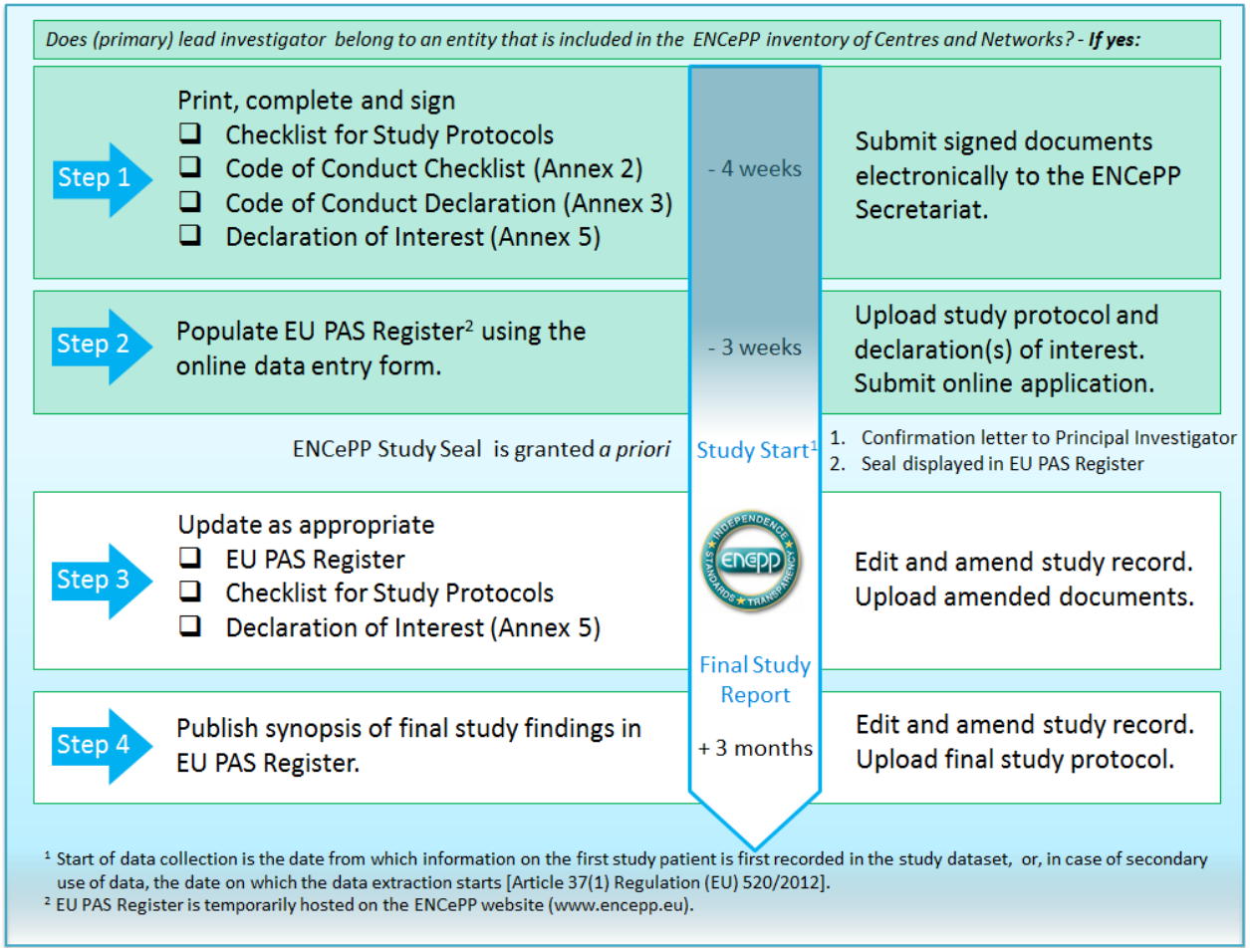
3. The study is registered in the EU PAS Register together with the full protocol prior to study start.

   The documents listed under point 2. Should be submitted in electronic format (scanned signed originals) to the ENCePP Secretariat (email: ENCePP_Secretariat@ema.europa.eu) within the timelines described below. No signature is required on the Declaration of Interests form which may be emailed directly to the ENCePP Secretariat following completion on screen.

3. The application process - Step by Step

Investigators who wish to register their studies and apply for the ENCePP Study Seal should complete the online "Data Entry Form" available on the ENCePP website (http://www.encepp.eu/encepp/studiesDatabase.jsp) as described in the EU PAS Register Guide section 3 and submit the application to the ENCePP Secretariat.

The flow chart below shows the steps of applying for the ENCePP Study Seal including timelines for the submission of documents to the ENCePP Secretariat. The application process should be started at least one month prior to the actual study start date to ensure steps 1 and 2 are completed satisfactorily before the study commences. The original and final versions of the protocol are made publicly available after the final study report.



4. Submission of additional documents

The following documents should be sent electronically to the ENCePP Secretariat (encepp_secretariat@ema.europa.eu):

a) signed **checklist** of the Code of Conduct (Annex 2)

b) signed **declaration** of the Code of Conduct (Annex 3)

c) signed **checklist for study protocols**

d) **declaration of interest** (Code of Conduct Annex 5)

As soon as the EU PAS Register has been populated and the data submitted, the ENCePP Secretariat checks for completeness of the submitted data, declarations and checklists.

If all the requirements are met, the ENCePP Secretariat dispatches a letter signed by the Chair of the ENCePP Steering Group, confirming *a priori* eligibility of the study to be considered as an "ENCePP study" and places the corresponding ENCePP Study Seal in the EU PAS Register. In addition, the applicant will receive an email confirming that the study has been accepted, including login details for future updates.

At this stage, the ENCePP Secretariat uploads the signed declaration and checklists to the EU PAS Register.

PDF-versions of the related documentation (signed checklists, signed declaration and any other information relevant to the study) are publicly available in the 'documents' section. This complies with the transparency requirements laid down in the ENCePP Code of Conduct.

On completion of the online questionnaire, the investigator has the option of making the protocol publicly available already at this stage, or after the final study report.

5. ENCePP Study Seal

Provided all the conditions described in section 2 have been fulfilled, a study may *a-priori* be awarded the "ENCePP Study Seal". A letter of confirmation will be dispatched and a corresponding "ENCePP seal" will be displayed in the electronic EU PAS Register in connection with this study. The seal makes immediately recognisable to the general public that the conduct of the study is in adherence with the ENCePP research principles and methodological standards. It is anticipated that this, through transparency and clarity of roles, will increase trust in the robustness of the research.

Investigators are reminded of the ongoing obligations the ENCePP Study Seal places on the conduct of a study, namely to adhere to the entirety of the provisions of the ENCePP Code of Conduct throughout the research process. In particular, researchers are obliged to:

- Regularly update the entry of the study in the register, as milestones are reached or in case of changes to the protocol that may affect the interpretation of the study.
- Update the ENCePP Checklist for Study Protocols and re-submit it via the EU PAS Register in case of changes to the protocol that may affect the interpretation of the study.
- After finalisation of the study report, provide the final version of the protocol through the EU PAS Register. Both the original and the final versions of the protocol will be made publicly available on the EU PAS Register at that stage.
- Make publicly available a clear summary of the main study results, whether positive or negative, and including results from prematurely terminated studies according to the timetable agreed in the

research contract. In addition, a synopsis of the study results shall be provided in the EU PAS Register, within 3 months following the publication of the final study report.

Investigators of ENCePP Seal Studies are obliged to inform the ENCePP Secretariat without delay if a study deviates from and/or no longer follows the rules of the Code. In this event the concerned study shall not be entitled to the "ENCePP Study Seal" and thus the title "ENCePP Seal Study", unless its deviation is judged by the ENCePP Steering Group not to affect the standards expected of an ENCePP Seal Study, including the principles of transparency and independence.

Figure 1: The ENCePP Study Seal

6. Documents

All relevant documents are available for download from the ENCePP website.

- ENCePP Code of Conduct
  http://www.encepp.eu/code_of_conduct/index.shtml
- Checklist of the ENCePP Code of Conduct (Annex 2) http://www.encepp.eu/code_of_conduct/index.shtml
- Declaration of compliance with the Code of Conduct (Annex 3) http://www.encepp.eu/code_of_conduct/index.shtml
- Declaration of Interests for ENCePP Seal Studies (Annex 5)
  http://www.encepp.eu/code_of_conduct/documents/Annex5_DoIForm.pdf
- ENCePP Checklist for Study Protocols
  http://www.encepp.eu/standards_and_guidances/checkListProtocols.shtml
- A PDF version of the data entry form may be downloaded from the ENCePP website: http://www.encepp.eu/encepp/studyRegistration.htm#

7. Information and contact

More information can be found on the ENCePP website: www.encepp.eu or by contacting the ENCePP Secretariat at encepp_secretariat@ema.europa.eu