13 Issue 13
February 2023

EUROPEAN MEDICINES AGENCY
SCIENCE MEDICINES HEALTH

Clinical Trials HIGHLIGHTS

An agency of the European Union

Welcome to Clinical Trials Highlights

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

A weekly **CTIS Newsflash** is now circulated to all CTIS users & Newsletter subscribers

Welcome to the February 2023 issue of Clinical Trials Highlights.

From 31 January 2023, CTIS is the single entry point for sponsors to submit initial clinical trial applications in the EU. This heralds a new period of implementation of the Clinical Trials Regulation (CTR). The latest report with metrics on the implementation of the CTR and the use of CTIS is available on the EMA website.

The EU Clinical Trials Regulatory Network is committed to support sponsors in the transition to the CTR. EMA has made available extensive CTIS training material, which is kept up-to-date to reflect changes and improvements in the system. A reinforced CTIS User Support Service addresses user queries. The weekly CTIS Newsflash provides key updates on new releases and system developments, reminders on upcoming trainings and events, and links to useful reference material.

Moving forward, EMA's focus in 2023 will remain on further stabilising and improving user experience in CTIS, future proofing the system and developing new functionalities to address high priority business needs.

- EMA CTIS Team

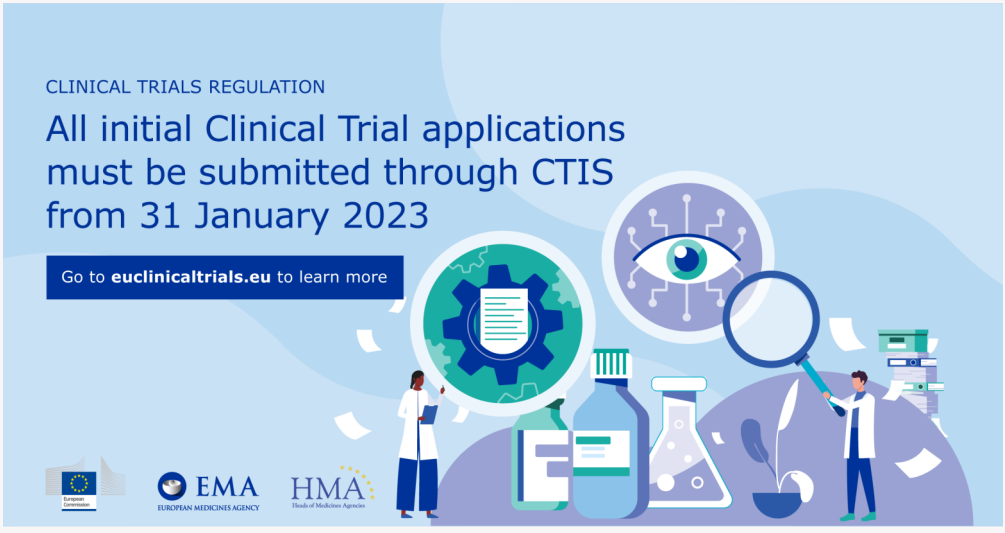

Image 1.
CTIS use is mandatory for initial clinical trial applications as of 31 January 2023.

CTIS Development

Recent Improvements in CTIS

The latest CTIS releases have resolved a significant number of issues, enhancing the user experience and delivering system improvements in the following areas:

- Improvements to application creation/preparation of documents and data, with enhancements to the additional Member State application functionality and the identification of authorised medicinal products.
- Authorisation and supervision of clinical trials, with enhancements to the Member State API (Application Programming Interface) and the features related to considerations, decision and disagreement.
- Communication between Sponsor and Member State users, with enhancement to the notices and alerts functionality and the pop-up cancel button behaviour.

Further information is available in the latest release notes and lists of known issues on the Website outages and system releases page of euclinicaltrials.eu. These release notes reflect the updates made in the most recent technical release of CTIS, while the known issues documents outline the issues that sponsor and authority users may encounter when using the CTIS secure workspaces. Where needed, workarounds to apply are proposed.

Work is ongoing to further improve the CTIS user experience. EMA is continuously monitoring user feedback to prioritise the resolution of issues and the enhancement of functionalities that are most impactful for the user community.

CTIS BI system release for MS users

An initial release of a CTIS Business Intelligence (BI) system is scheduled to take place in late February 2023.

The CTIS BI system enables Member State users to run faster, bespoke queries in a user-friendly dashboard, also allowing them to customise and save queries for future use. Member State experts will receive training and support in the use of the new CTIS BI system, ahead of a full scale release later on.

As more Member States start using the CTIS BI system (which is distinct from core CTIS), query load in the core of CTIS will be reduced, therefore improving overall performance to the benefit of all users.

Image 2.
Member State users will be able to use CTIS BI to run faster, bespoke queries.

CTIS User Support Service

Before raising a ticket to the CTIS User Support Service, users are advised to review the information available on the Support page of the CTIS website. The page includes links to training and supporting materials on how to use CTIS, questions and answers, and information on website outages, system releases, and lists of known issues.

In cases where the user query is not addressed in the Support page, users can raise a ticket with the User Support Service. Below instructions aim to support users in providing clear feedback to enable quick resolution of any issues.

CTIS User Support Service (cont'd)

Step 1 – Select the most appropriate option:

- **Request a service:** when a standard service, e.g. a password reset, is required.
- **Report an issue:** when prevented from working by a problem with software/systems.
- **Ask a question:** when information is needed on specific topic.

Step 2 – Under the Summary field, provide the title of the incident. Be specific and highlight any deadlines.

Step 3 – Under the Description box, provide a detailed description of the issue, including:

- Who you are: sponsor user (e.g. pharmaceutical industry, CRO, academia) or Member State user (NCA, ethics committee, etc.)
- Role
- Trial number/RFI number
- Location (country)
- Username
- Description of steps taken

Step 4 – Under Attachments, upload any relevant screenshots.

EMA is monitoring tickets daily and continuously working on strengthening the CTIS User Support Service to provide quicker, better and more efficient support to CTIS users, to address issues raised in a shorter time period and ensure that disruptions to CTIS use are limited. EMA welcomes users' feedback on their experience with the service desk via the available survey, which can be found in the automatic email sent to users to confirm their ticket has been closed.

CTIS Training

Training material update

A new version of the Sponsor Handbook has been published, including changes in most sections of the document. New content includes information on the Marketing Authorisation Holder (MAH) user group, on timelines and on transition trials. In addition, the sections related to EMA Account Management (IAM) system (user registration, user management) were updated to reflect the recent changes on IAM. A more detailed description of the recent changes can be found in the 'Document evolution' section of the Sponsor Handbook.

New training material has been added to Module 03 of the CTIS training material catalogue. The Step-by-Step guide describes how users can search for organisations, retrieve them from OMS/CTIS, and insert them in their trials in CTIS, as well as how they can create organisations (i.e. third parties, clinical trial sites, etc.) locally in CTIS.

Training environment update

Sponsors may express their interest in accessing the CTIS training environment via the open survey (Survey 4.0). This survey collects information and contact details of representative individuals, the organisations that they represent and their planning regarding the use of CTIS. These details serve to identify the needs and intention for use of CTIS and support decisions on granting access to the CTIS Training Environment. Once granted, access will expire after a limited time period (6 months) to allow as many sponsors as possible to benefit from the training environment.

Personal data in document properties

When uploading documents in CTIS, personal information may be contained in the document properties. It is the responsibility of sponsor or Member States users to ensure that personal information is removed from the document properties before submitting any data to CTIS.

Users are encouraged to review the training documentation and in particular the Guide on CTIS Common features of module 02, which includes instructions on removing personal information from document properties.

Under the Joint Controllership Arrangement (JCA) for CTIS, users share responsibility in protecting personal data when uploading data and documents during the trial life cycle. For further information on the JCA, users may consult the related Q&A document.

Training Material on data protection

Users are encouraged to consult the EMA training material on data protection:

- Module 12 of the online training programme "Data Protection in CTIS"
- Question 2.5 of the FAQ on Module 10 "Create, submit and withdraw a clinical trial"
- Q&A document providing preliminary guidance to CTIS users on how to protect personal data and commercially confidential information (CCI) in CTIS

A dedicated section on Transparency, with useful links to reference materials, has been added to the CTIS website: Guidance and Q&As. Further information on the protection of personal data and CCI in CTIS is also available on the EMA website.

CTIS Events

EMA and the EMRN continue to provide training events and information sessions to support CTIS users. All EMA-run events are live broadcast and a video recording is made available after each session on the respective event pages found here.

On 20 January 2023, EMA held a public CTIS event on "Readiness for mandatory use of the Clinical Trials Regulation from 31 January 2023". The event was broadcast to over 1900 viewers and a recording is available on the dedicated event page.

EMA continues with the regular **CTIS bitesize talks** where sponsor users can learn from CTIS experts about a specific CTIS functionality and have their questions answered live. CTIS users can submit and upvote questions in advance as well as live during the events via Slido. All video recordings are published on the respective event pages found here. The next CTIS Bitesize talk on Document and personal data in CTIS is planned for 23 February 2023. CTIS users can already submit their questions via Slido with the event code #bt23feb.

Further dates have been announced for the **CTIS walk-in clinics**, which provide sponsor users with the opportunity to raise questions about any CTIS functionality and receive advice from CTIS experts. CTIS users can submit and upvote questions in advance as well as during the live sessions via Slido as described on the event pages, where also the event recordings are available. The first sessions for 2023 took place on 18 January and 16 February, and the recordings will be available shortly on the respective event pages.

The **Sponsor end user training programme** continues, and the next event dates are:

- 2-5 May 2023
- 27–30 June 2023

ACT-EU

PA2 EC report on sponsor survey

The CTR has applied from 31 January 2022, and CTIS has been live from that date. During the 1st year of the transitional period stakeholders were able to gain some initial experience on the new rules, on how these are implemented and on the use of CTIS.

Lead by the European Commission DG SANTE, an EU survey was conducted between 18 July and 9 September 2022 to collect the views of sponsor associations and sponsors that had submitted a clinical trial application under the CTR, with the aim of identifying critical hurdles perceived or experienced when submitting a clinical trial application under the CTR. A report summarising the responses to the survey and the processes implemented by the Agency, the Member States and the European Commission to provide solutions to the problems raised can be found here.

Building on the results of this survey, a Q&A document has been created to provide preliminary guidance to CTIS users on how to protect personal data and commercially confidential information (CCI) in CTIS.

As part of ACT EU, a follow-up survey will be conducted in 2023 to continue monitoring the implementation of the CTR and CTIS use and to inform improvements in the work of the European Medicines Regulatory Network on clinical trials.

PA3 multistakeholder platform & public consultation

A public consultation on the development of a multi-stakeholder platform to promote collaboration for improving clinical trials in the EU, has been launched. A concept paper outlining the proposal for the creation of the platform has been published together with the public consultation.

This platform will enable regular dialogue between all EU stakeholders on clinical trials, and facilitate the evolution of the clinical trials environment by helping to identify key advances in methodologies, technology and science. The platform will serve as a neutral space for the discussion of challenges and the development of practical solutions to enable and drive change. It is envisaged that there will be several phases of development before reaching its final design.

Image 3.
A public consultation on the development of a multi-stakeholder platform will remain open until 3 March 2023.

The objective is to gauge interest in the platform, get feedback on priority topics for discussion, and provide comments on the proposal. The multi-stakeholder platform will have its kick-off meeting in Q2 2023.

The public consultation can be accessed here and will remain open until 3 March 2023 at midnight CET.

PA9 Junior PhV assessor training

With the implementation of the CTR, the clinical trials pharmacovigilance (PhV) landscape is changing significantly through the establishment of clinical trial safety monitoring, where Member States will work together to improve trial safety by means of a coordinated work-sharing assessment. The work is directly connected with the activities of the EU4Health Joint Action Safety Assessment Cooperation and Facilitated Conduct of Clinical Trials (SAFE CT), an initiative to facilitate a smooth transition by enabling cooperation, providing funding for necessary resources and developing skills through training.

On 30-31 January 2023 EMA hosted the annual SAFE-CT Yearly Safety Assessor event, as part of the activities of ACT EU's priority action 9 on safety monitoring. During this 2-day event, which was well attended by PhV assessors from across the EU, the importance of safety monitoring as a scientific and procedural continuum in clinical trials was expanded on. The event also focused on safety in paediatric clinical trials, and had dedicated workshops with case studies on the assessment of annual safety reports and suspected unexpected serious adverse reactions (SUSARs).

It is anticipated that training of PhV assessors will continue with two additional SAFT-CT events planned for 2024 and 2025.

Image 4.
PhV assessors from across the EU attended the 2-day SAFE-CT event hosted by EMA.

PA10 training strategy paper published

The regulatory system needs rapid access to appropriate expertise to ensure adequate, fit-for-purpose and effective regulation so the latest scientific and technological knowledge can be built into medicines development where it benefits public health. This requires close collaboration on an international level with academics, research centres and infrastructures to ensure that such expertise is present or can be built in the ongoing dialogue between regulators and developers.

As part of the ACT EU 2022-2026 workplan a clinical trials curriculum, with a particular focus on building capacity in all aspects of drug development and regulatory science, will be delivered to address this need. The curriculum aims to increase scientific and regulatory knowledge and maintain and further improve the quality of clinical trials in the EU, their assessment and supervision during the trial life cycle. It will also train sponsors and investigators on new methodologies and provide guidance on specific topics. This work will bring together knowledge from various stakeholders within the EU, therefore contributing to further alignment in the assessment of clinical trials in the European Union.

A paper presenting the high-level objectives and strategy to develop the training curriculum has been published here.

General Updates

Big Data Steering Group: Annual report 2022

The joint HMA-EMA Big Data Steering Group (BDSG) has published a report on its 2022 activities. Significant progress in the transformation to data-driven regulation continued in 2022, in line with the Network Strategy to 2025 and second BDSG workplan 2021-2023. Among the key BDSG achievements were the creation of DARWIN EU, real-world generation pilots with EMA committees, and launch of the CHMP clinical trials raw data pilot.

Image 5.
The Big Data Steering Group's Annual Report for 2022 details progress towards data-driven regulation.

Quick guide on CTR and revised Q&A on IMPD-Q by the European Commission

In January 2023 the European Commission published a Quick guide on the rules and procedures of the EU Clinical Trial Regulation drawn up by the Clinical Trials Coordination and Advisory Group (CTAG). The guide, available under 'Chapter V – Additional document' of EudraLex - Volume 10 (europa.eu), provides a useful overview for sponsors who wish to conduct clinical trials (national and multinational) in the European Union (EU) / European Economic Area (EEA) or have ongoing clinical trials in this region.

An updated version of the "Questions & Answers" document on the Clinical Trials Regulation (EU) No 536/2014 was published by the European Commission in February 2023. This document is a helpful tool, answering many frequently asked questions posed by sponsors, with the aim to provide general guidance on the implementation of the CTR. The latest Q&A version includes further guidance on how a third party, other than the sponsor, can submit the quality section of the Investigational Medicinal Product Dossier, namely the IMPD-Q, in CTIS. CTIS users are recommended to consult the Q&As while preparing their clinical trial application dossiers to ensure the best possible alignment with CTR requirements.

Publication of the Query Management Working Group Q&A

The Questions and Answers document prepared by the Query Management Working Group on CTIS and the CTR has been published on the EMA website.

The Q&A provides answers by the Working Group to questions that were raised by sponsor associations. To help the user, the questions are grouped by topics, and the answers include references to useful sources for a better understanding of the regulation and the use of CTIS.

European Medicines Agency

Domenico Scarlattilaan 6 ● 1083 HS Amsterdam ● The Netherlands
Telephone +31(0)88 781 6000
Subscribe ct.newslettersubscriptions@ema.europa.eu

An agency of the European Union