EUROPEAN COMMISSION
JOINT RESEARCH CENTRE

Institute for Health and Consumer Protection (Ispra)
Validation of Alternative Methods

Ispra, 5th October 2011
IHCP/I03/JK/bw Ares(2011) 1055928

Ministerio de Medio Ambiente y Medio
Rural y Marino
Paseo de la Infanta Isabel, 1
28014 Madrid
Spain

Dear Sir or Madam,

Directive 2010/63/EU on the protection of animals used for scientific purposes formally established the European Center for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM), hosted by the European Commission's Joint Reserch Centre as the European Union Reference Laboratory (EURL) for Alternatives to Animal Testing. In support to this EURL, the Directive also requests that the Member States identify laboratories suitably qualified to carry out validation studies. As ECVAM is, *inter alia,* responsible for coordinating the validation of alternative approaches at the European Union level, it herewith invites Member States to provide the coordinates of laboratories that should become part of a network of laboratories for the validation of alternative methods. Member States are not limited by the number of laboratories they would like to put forward.

ECVAM will establish an inventory of the nominated laboratories and will invite on a case by case basis those laboratories with the appropriate expertise and experience to participate in or to carry out validation studies. We expect a high interest and contribution from the assigned National expert laboratories. If several laboratories are interested and capable to provide the requested contribution, those that can cover the biggest share of their own cost will be preferred. In return, and to the extent possible, ECVAM will provide and make available the test chemicals to the participating laboratories and support the training of the participating laboratory personnel in the specific method.

According to internationally agreed validation principles (OECD TG 34), validation data should be generated whenever possible under GLP (good laboratory practices), as also defined by the OECD. It is therefore preferable that suitable laboratories are GLP certified or at least operate under similar quality standards.

Joint Research Centre · I-21027 Ispra (VA), Italy · TP 580
European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM)
Institute for Health and Consumer Protection
http://ecvam.jrc.ec.europa.eu http://ihcp.jrc.ec.europa.eu
Telephone: direct line (+39) 0332 786256, Telefax: (+39) 0332 786297
E-mail Internet: JRC-ECVAM-NETVAL@ec.europa.eu

To coordinate validation studies, experience with the validation of alternative methods would be preferable. However, a good track record of managing multi centre studies could be sufficient if combined with the adequate scientific technical expertise. ECVAM will then make sure that the validated methods are going through the ECVAM process for peer review via an ESAC opinion and receive an ECVAM recommendation.

A questionnaire is attached to this letter that aims to collect basic information on the nominated laboratories and points of contact.

The information collected will be used to establish a database that finally will contain profiles for all network members. Whenever a validation study is planned, suitable test facilities can be identified from the database and invited to offer their services for a specific test method. As we would like to work with the nominated laboratories as soon as possible, we would appreciate receiving their feed back before 15th November 2011. However, additional laboratories can send-in their questionnaires at any point in time to be added to the inventory. ECVAM plans to publish a regularly updated list of the registered laboratories on its website.

Looking forward to receiving the coordinates of the identified suitable laboratories and the duly completed questionnaires, I remain,

Yours

Joachim Kreysa
European Commission,
Joint Research Centre
Institute of Health and Consumer Protection
Validation of Alternative Methods / ECVAM

Copy: PARERE single point of contacts

Annex

Scientific / technical requirements that a laboratory should meet to be suitable for participating or carrying out a validation study according to the standards required for a formal, ECVAM coordinated validation of alternative testing methods.

Two or more of the following technical/scientific competences are needed for participating in a validation study:

- Staff qualified to perform technical assignments in the conduct of *in vitro* cell culture studies;
- Well established quality control systems, OECD GLP will be used as a priority criterion but similar Quality Management Systems are acceptable, too;
- Well-equipped tissue culture facilities;
- Experience with different cell based test systems (e.g. primary human and other mammalian cell lines, established cell lines), reconstructed human tissue models and/or organotypic models;
- Analytical expertise using state-of-the-art technologies (e.g. high performance liquid chromatography, liquid chromatography–mass spectrometry, inductively coupled plasma-mass spectrometry), measurement of metabolic stability, solubility, protein binding, etc;
- Expertise in molecular biology and omics-based technologies (e.g. transcriptomics, metabolomics, genomics ;)
- Other endpoint detection systems (e.g. flow cytometry, high content image analysis)
- Any other technical capacity relevant for toxicity testing, including automation to perform cell culturing/handling and/or testing.
- Computational chemistry/toxicology and modelling (e.g. PBTK, Simulation Modelling, sensitivity analysis)

To carry out, i.e. to manage a validation study, a laboratory should have sufficient relevant scientific expertise and skills required for the method at hand and must be able to

- set-up and manage a validation management group;
- develop together with that group a project plan;
- ensure adequate data generation including a multi centre trial or ring test;
- carry out adequate data analysis,
- compile the validation report in accordance with a standard defined by ECVAM.

Demonstrated experience in validation studies, preferably related to toxicology and alternative testing methods, and access to bio-statistical and computational chemistry and modelling competence, and experience in the coordination of multi-partner projects are all essential qualifications for laboratories that could be invited to carry out validation studies.

Joint Research Centre · I-21027 Ispra (VA), Italy · TP 580
European Centre for the Validation of Alternative Methods (ECVAM)
Institute for Health and Consumer Protection
http://ecvam.jrc.ec.europa.eu http://ihcp.jrc.ec.europa.eu
Telephone: direct line (+39) 0332 786256, Telefax: (+39) 0332 786297
E-mail Internet: JRC-ECVAM-NETVAL@ec.europa.eu

LABORATORY	
Name:	
Address:	
Postal code:	
Town:	
Country:	
CONTACT PERSON	
Name and Surname:	
Title:	
Function:	
Phone number:	
E-mail:	
RELEVANT COMPETENCES	
Do you have a well-equipped cell culture facility? Please give here a short summary description (max 200 words):	YES/NO
Are you included in the list of GLP compliant test facilities[1]? If not, please describe your quality management system (e.g. ISO, GCCP)	YES/NO
Please indicate the size of your facility by 1) Staff: Number of Permanent/Non permanent: Seniority Scientist Statistician Technician Admin > 5 Years < 5 Years 2) Number of laboratory rooms in your test facility : 3) Any other parameter you find suitable (please explain):	___/___ _____
Do you have experience with animal cell-based systems? *(If yes, please list them here, indicating the number of years of experience and the last year when your laboratory worked with them)*	YES/NO
Do you have experience with human cell based systems? *(If yes, please list them here, indicating the number of years of experience and the last year when your laboratory worked with them)*	YES/NO
Do you have experience with organotypic cultures? *(If yes, please list them here, indicating the number of years of experience and the last year when your laboratory worked with them)*	YES/NO
Do you have analytical facilities? *(If yes, please list the analytical equipment currently available or planned to be*	YES/NO

[1] A list of inspected test facitilities in several EU member countries can be found at the following DG enterprise website: http://ec.europa.eu/enterprise/sectors/chemicals/documents/classification/laboratory-practice/test-facilities_en.htm

purchased in the coming 2 years)	
Do you have expertise with omics-based technologies? *(If yes, please list them here, indicating the number of years of experience and the last year when your laboratory worked with them)*	YES/NO
How many years of practical experience has your laboratory in the application of *in vitro* methods? *(Please list the methods you worked with in the last 10 years)*	Years: _____
Do you have experience with the coordination of multi-partner projects? *(If yes, please list those you coordinated in the last 5 years, indicating the subject, the number of partners and the total budget)*	YES/NO
Do you have experience with validation studies (as coordinator or participating laboratory)? *(If yes, please list those you coordinated or participated in during the last 5 years, indicating the subject, the number of participant laboratories, the total budget, and your contribution)*	YES/NO
Do you have (access to) bio-statistical competence? *(If yes, please indicate the number of bio-statisticians you can access and their experience, number of years, relating to validation studies)*	YES/NO
Do you have (access to) expertise in computational Chemistry/toxicology and/or modelling (e.g. PBTK, Dynamic Simulation, Sensitivity analysis) (If yes, please describe briefly the type and degree of expertise and experience.)	YES/NO
Please indicate any other relevant technical capacity you have within your facility or which you have direct access to:	
In case your laboratory would be invited to participate in, or manage, a validation study, would you be in a position to contribute to your overall cost of the study; either from your own or other sources (private or public), either "in kind" or financially? *(If YES, please indicate how you could contribute and specify any conditions that should be met (such as being informed of a potential request XX months before the study starts in order to be able to acquire additional resources))*	YES/NO

Please send the completed questionnaire, as word file, to JRC-ECVAM-NETVAL@ec.europa.eu