DESCRIPTION AND OPERATION OF RESEARCH ACTIVITY OF SEIMC-GESIDA FOUNDATION

March 2008

Contents

1. INTRODUCTION

The Articles of Association of the Spanish Clinical Trials Agency (AEC) of the AIDS Study Group (GESIDA) of the Spanish Society of Infectious Diseases and Clinical Microbiology (SEIMC) were drafted in 1999 to provide regulations for general operation and organization. These regulations remain in force today. However, changes in the legal framework governing the development of clinical research make it necessary to redefine the regulations and introduce new ones. The SEIMC-GESIDA Foundation (hereinafter the Foundation) includes among its functions those performed by the AEC to date. This document updates these regulations and confirms their approval by the Executive Committees of the respective Study Groups and by the Management Committee of the Foundation and revokes any previously modified regulations.

2. OBJECTIVES

The primary objective of the Foundation is to promote scientific investigation in the field of infectious diseases and clinical microbiology.

Therefore, the Foundation offers its members and the various Study Groups of SEIMC a series of support services to enable the groups to undertake scientific projects.

3. STUDIES

Definitions

SEIMC Study/Study Group (SEIMC-GE-X) (eg, GESITRA, GESIDA)

A SEIMC study is defined as any cooperative study carried out within a SEIMC Study Group and in which participation of the Foundation involves methodological-scientific development and/or quality control.

Most of the study investigators (>50%) must be members of SEIMC.

- Studies in which the Foundation has only a supporting role for administrative tasks (eg, providing information for members) will not be considered SEIMC studies.
- Depending on its characteristics, a study can be offered to the membership of the Study Groups of SEIMC **(Open or General)** or to a specific group of centers **(Closed or Restricted)**, as is the case with projects of the Spanish Foundation for AIDS Prevention and Research (FIPSE), the Spanish Health Research Fund (FIS), and specific independent initiatives.

Coordinator of SEIMC-GE-X: One or several members of SEIMC who lead and share the intellectual authorship of the study proposed to the Scientific Committee of the Foundation. Once approved, the project will be coordinated in collaboration with the Foundation.

Sponsor: Individual, company, institution, or organization that is responsible for the initiation, management, and/or financing of a clinical trial (as defined in Royal Decree 223/2004 and Circular 15/2002).

The Foundation can act as sponsor at the request of the Study Coordinator, providing that the study is approved by the Scientific Committee and ratified by the Management Committee.

Responsibilities of the Coordinator of a SEIMC-GE-X study (see form for collaboration with the Foundation – Appendix I)

1. Decisions on the scope of the study.
2. Cooperation with the Foundation to periodically inform the participating investigators of the progress of the study and of all scientific documents generated.

3. Submission to the Foundation of drafts of those manuscripts that are to be sent for publication. When possible, the Foundation should also have access to abstracts sent to scientific meetings).
4. Presentation to the Foundation of the original documents of draft manuscripts so that they can be made available to any member who requests them.

** In those studies where the Foundation has a relatively active participation and/or acts as sponsor, the Foundation will distribute them among the investigators and inform the Coordinator-Sponsor of the progress of the study and of any reports and publications of studies whose statistical analysis and drafting are undertaken by the Foundation.

5. To reach a consensus with the Foundation on the policy for authorship and publication before the study begins.
6. If a study is carried out within one of the SEIMC Study Groups, SEIMC Study Group X (GE-X) will figure after the authors' names. Participating members and hospitals that are not considered authors will appear in an appendix.

The Coordinator will co-manage the study with the Foundation. The Coordinator will provide scientific assessment and take decisions on the protocol and performance of the study when requested. The Coordinator will be available to address issues related to the study (eg, personal consultations from investigators at the participating sites, supervision of replies to requests for clarification from ethics committees, signatures) and negotiate the budget with the funding body.
The system for coding studies is as follows:
1) Abbreviations used to identify the type of study:
EC: clinical trials
EM: multicenter studies
E: neither EC nor EM

2) Study Group (eg, **GESITRA**, **GESIDA**). If the study in question is an independent activity that does not belong to any of the study groups, it will be coded as **SEIMC**.

3) Study Group number: assigned consecutively (eg, SEIMC-001, SEIMC-002, GESIDA-001, GESIDA-002)

4) Year: the last 2 digits identify the year the study was approved (eg, 2008=**08**, 2009=**09**).

For example, **EC-GESITRA-001-08** would identify the first clinical trial of GESITRA approved in 2008.

4. PROPOSALS

The coordinators can present proposals for studies to the Foundation in 2 ways:

A. As summarized protocols (initial idea or outline)
B. As full protocols

In both cases, a standard application form must be completed (see Appendix II) to provide basic information on the project before evaluation by the Scientific Committee. It is also important to show whether the study is an independent initiative or is to be performed by one of the Study Groups of SEIMC.

5. PROCESS FOR EVALUATION OF FOUNDATION PROJECTS

The Coordinator will contact the Foundation to present the study and will state whether the study is to be performed by a specific SEIMC Study Group or whether it is an independent initiative (see Appendix III).

As soon as the proposal is received, the Coordinator(s) will be contacted and an initial meeting will be held with the Foundation when possible.

The objective of this meeting will be to specify the basic concept of the study (if it has not already been defined) and the role of the Foundation in initiation and performance.

After the meeting, the project will be presented to the Scientific Committee, which will evaluate whether the project fits with the Study Group's objectives and whether it can be performed in the Study Group's setting.

If the Scientific Committee gives a favorable opinion, the Executive Committee of the relevant Study Group will be informed and must decide whether or not it will accept the study. If the Scientific Committee gives an unfavorable opinion, this decision will be considered definitive. The study can also be approved on condition that the

investigating team modifies the protocol according to the scientific-methodological report of the Foundation (see Appendix III for the study evaluation circuit).

The Coordinator will be informed of the resolution in all cases. If the resolution is favorable, a working plan will be designed between the Coordinator and the Foundation so that the Foundation can act as sponsor by providing, if necessary, technical and administrative support to complete the design of the study or by supervising initiation, monitoring, follow-up, and finalization.

In the case of independent initiatives, the Foundation undertakes to inform the Coordinator regularly about the progress of the study.

The Foundation will periodically inform the Executive Committees of groups with ongoing studies about proposals received and their progress once they have been approved.

In any case, once the approval of the Executive Committee of a Study Group has been given, the Management Committee of the Foundation must ratify the decision before a project can begin under the auspices of the Foundation.

6. SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE

6.1. Committee Members

The Scientific Committee of the Foundation will comprise the following:

a) The President, the Secretary, and the Study Coordinator (member) of the Executive Committee of GESIDA.
b) The President of the Executive Committee of SEIMC or the President's representative.
c) The Coordinator of the SEIMC Study Group.
d) A member at large of the Executive Committee of SEIMC.
e) Two representatives of the National AIDS Plan of the Ministry of Health, Social Services and Equality (Secretary General and another member of the National AIDS Plan), with the right to vote in evaluations of a GESIDA study
f) A representative elected by the Executive Committee of the Study Group of the

study proposed. At each meeting, a representative will be called for each GESIDA Study Group evaluating proposals for studies to be performed in the setting of a SEIMC Study Group. The representative will only have voting rights in the evaluation of his/her study.

g) A representative of the Foundation (without the right to vote).

Depending on specific requirements, 2 additional members of the Foundation will have the right to participate (but not to vote).

Subject to the agreement of the Scientific Committee, additional parties with the right to attend (but not vote at) a meeting include expert advisors to the committee, representatives of non-governmental organizations, and members of pharmaceutical companies, diagnostic technology companies, and other types of company. Participation of these groups will be limited to those points for which their attendance is required.

The Scientific Committee will be headed by the President of GESIDA/SEIMC, and a representative of the Foundation will act as recording secretary.

6.2. Functions of the Scientific Committee

The Committee will evaluate the budgetary, scientific, and methodological aspects of the studies proposed, as well as their relevance and applicability within the scope of the different Study Groups of the SEIMC (GE-X). The following aspects will be taken into account:

6.2.1. Suitability of the study design with respect to its objectives.

6.2.2. Scientific efficiency of the study: possibility of reaching valid conclusions with the design and procedures proposed and with the least possible exposure of subjects.

6.2.3. Justification of the expected risks and discomfort with respect to the expected benefits for the subjects and society as a whole.

6.2.4. Feasibility and possibility of performing the study successfully: realistic sample

size and objectives and appropriate infrastructure (staff, caseload, and population attended).

6.2.5. Scientific and current relevance of the study.

6.2.6. Suitability of the participating investigators (in terms of experience and ability to perform the study). Care responsibilities and previous commitments with other research protocols will be taken into account.

6.2.7. Study budget: the budget will be adjusted to the requirements and costs generated by the study.

Once the study has been evaluated, the Scientific Committee will inform the Executive Committee of the Study Group of its decision. Approval may depend on the introduction of specific changes in the study by the Coordinator. Negative appraisals cannot be revoked by the Executive Committee of the Study Groups. Favorable evaluations must be endorsed by the Executive Committee of the relevant Study Group. Finally, the Executive Committee of the Foundation will ratify the approval.

In order not to delay the procedure, the Scientific Committee shall be in constant contact with its members. The decisions taken during these interim periods will be ratified during the meetings of the Scientific Committee.

At each meeting, the Scientific Committee will also evaluate the progress of the research projects managed by the Foundation, particularly those in which the Foundation is the sponsor.

The Committee reserves the right to recommend closure of the study, irrespective of the opinion of the funding body and of the interests of the Study Coordinator, in 2 specific situations:

1) If recruitment is particularly slow (less than 30% of patients enrolled at the end of the recruitment period stipulated in the protocol), even when reasonable measures to improve it have been taken.
2) If the scientific objectives of the study are considered obsolete as a result of new relevant scientific information and/or when it is not considered ethical to

recruit additional patients or maintain those who have already been recruited in a study whose hypothesis is no longer scientifically valid.

7. LOCATION AND FUNCTIONS

7.1. Location and staff

The Foundation is located in Madrid at premises with appropriate fixtures and fittings and infrastructure.

Staff will be hired according to operational needs. The Foundation can consult with clinicians and other specialist staff with training and experience in investigational studies (clinical trials or other) and in all phases and aspects of such studies (monitoring, administrative processing, initiation, protocol design/development, data management, statistical analysis, and publication of results, as well as financial management). The Foundation will also hire administrative staff as necessary.

7.2. Functions

The Foundation will provide technical and administrative support to the Scientific Committee and to the Coordinators of the different ongoing studies. The Foundation will be responsible for the registration, development, and review (economic, methodological, and scientific) of projects, initiation and monitoring of approved studies, and analysis and evaluation of the final results, as well as scientific publications or reports arising from the studies. The Foundation may also act as sponsor, if so requested. **Appendix II** provides details of those aspects in which the Foundation can provide support during a study.

If a study is published or presented at a scientific meeting, then the Acknowledgments section must show that the study was performed with the technical support of the Foundation.

8. SPONSORS

Pharmaceutical companies, diagnostic technology companies, and other types of

company can finance studies by signing a contract for collaboration with the Foundation and attending meetings of the Scientific Committee, when invited to do so.

Trial funding will also be accepted from other public and private bodies (European Union, Foundations, and grants from organizations such as FIS and FIPSE), as well as from other public and private benefactors.

9. MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET

The budget of the Foundation varies annually depending on activity. The budget for studies will be managed by the Foundation.

The Foundation will monitor accounting and present accounts to the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees.

Appendix I

Responsibilities of the Coordinator of a SEIMC-GE-X study

1. Decisions on the scope of the study.
2. Cooperation with the Foundation in periodically informing the participating investigators of the progress of the study and of all scientific documents generated.
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Signed by
Study Coordinator
Executive Director of the Foundation

Appendix II

Title of the protocol:

Study Coordinator:

Scope of the study:

☐**Open or General** ☐**Closed or Restricted (specify sites):**

☐**SEIMC Study Group (specify if applicable)_____**

Foundation code (to be completed by the Foundation)

Type of study:

☐ **Clinical trial** ☐ **Double-blind** ☐ **Randomized**
☐ **Multicenter**
☐ **International (participation of other countries)**
☐ **Observational**
☐ **Prospective**
☐ **Retrospective**
☐ **Cohort**
☐ **Post-authorization**
☐ **Case-Control**
☐ **Other** **Specify……**

Total estimated number of patients ☐

Total estimated number of centers ☐

Summary:

FUNDING SOURCES:

☐ FIPSE
☐ FIS
☐ PHARMACEUTICAL INDUSTRY Specify company……
☐ OTHER (Specify) ……
☐ I request the assistance of the Foundation to prepare a budget for the proposal

DETAILED BUDGET

Areas in which assistance is requested:

1. SCIENTIFIC-METHODOLOGICAL SUPPORT

□ Protocol design or revision
□ Preparation of budget
□ Evaluation of reference list as well as the background and rationale of the study
□ Drafting or revision of the objectives and evaluation of the material and methods (eg, study population, sample, selection criteria, study variables, measurements, statistical analysis).
□ Timeline
□ Review of CRFs
□ Review of investigator brochure
□ Recording of adverse events
□ Review or drafting of the protocol format according to current legal requirements

Clinical trials

□ Review of informed consent documents and patient information sheets
□ Data management (database design, data entry)
□ Statistical analysis
□ Preparation of publications/communications
□ Preparation of periodic safety reports and final study report

2. LOGISTIC SUPPORT AND STUDY DEVELOPMENT

□ I need the Foundation to sponsor the study

□ Publication/distribution of the study synopsis among partners and subsequent information for those who wish to participate.

□ Initiation

□ Distribution of CRFs

□ Coordination/monitoring in participating hospitals and data quality control

□ Centralization of CRFs and data collected

□ Authorization process (ethics committees, Spanish Agency for Medicines and Health Care Products [AEMPS], Autonomous Communities). Application for EudraCT number in the case of clinical trials.

□ Pharmacovigilance: collection of information on adverse events and reporting of adverse events to the health authorities

□ Financial management/accounting

Appendix III

CIRCUIT FOR EVALUATION OF PROPOSALS FROM THE SCIENTIFIC COMMITTEE