

30th September 2019

European Reference Networks (ERNs) are opening now to new members: call for applications is open until 30 of November 2019

The healthcare providers in Europe have two months from today to join existing ERNs to apply to become a member of one of the 24 Networks. The call is an opportunity to enlarge the geographical coverage of the existing Networks, particularly from those Member States that are currently less represented. Thanks to the call, new diseases will also be taken into account, enlarging the range of possible conditions and patients to be treated in the framework of the current Networks.

The applicants can find all the relevant information on [a dedicated webpage](#), and shall submit their application through a [specific IT tool provided on this website](#). There are two manuals published on the website that provide [a guidance to the applicants on the use of the on-line application form](#) and on the [assessment and the application process](#). [FAQs](#) are available to answer to the most frequent concerns.

Applicants are requested to read additional documentation. The [“ERN Assessment manual for applicants: operational criteria for the assessment of Healthcare Providers”](#) describes the conditions for a successful application according to Commission Delegated Decision 2014/286/EU and the [Commission Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2019/1269 of 26 July 2019](#). The purpose of the operational criteria is to provide a common framework to assess Healthcare Providers’ compliance with this legislation. The [“Specific criteria”](#) contain an overview of the scope, criteria and thresholds of the diseases covered by each of the 24 ERNs that applicants are required to fulfil.

The 24 European Reference Networks were established in 2017, following a call for applications published in 2016. More than 950 clinical units, hosted in around 300 hospitals, have become members of these Networks. However, the geographical coverage of the Networks shows a certain unbalance between the Western and Eastern part of Europe, whereas the participation of smaller countries appears to be more limited or in certain cases absent. The call for new members to join existing Networks aims to overcome these gaps, offering the possibility to the underrepresented Member States to designate new members for the existing Networks. At the same time, some Networks will have the possibility to expand the scope of their network by adding additional conditions, and thus offering the possibility to more patients to find support.

The assessment programme set up to select the members of the ERNs was developed in consultation with the Member States and key stakeholders since 2015, and has recently been updated with the [Commission Implementing Decision \(EU\) 2019/1269 of 26 July 2019](#) amending Implementing Decision 2014/287/EU. The assessment programme is based on a peer review assessment model. It provides a standardised, transparent, and consistent method for assessing all Healthcare Providers (HCPs) under a common regulatory framework. The assessment programme is anchored in best practices and is inspired by existing methods used by other recognised assessment bodies in the European Union (EU) and at global level.

More information: https://ec.europa.eu/health/ern/consultations/2019_call_membership_en