



# **10<sup>th</sup> Joint Call EuroQol Working Groups**

## **September 2020**

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with the WGs



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## 1. Introduction

The EuroQol Research Foundation (henceforth “Foundation”) is inviting applications for funding by its competitive research funding programs. The Foundation aims to serve the public interest by supporting scientific research and development of instruments which describe and value health without an aim for profit.

The Foundation intends to fund high quality research that is of scientific and strategic interest to the EuroQol Group and its members. WGs have been set up to support the research agenda outlined by the Executive Committee (“Exec) that primarily focuses on the measurement and valuation of health. The WGs are appointed by the Exec to foster research within their remit, which can be found in the Working Groups document (Appendix 1). Proposals that seek to address one or more specific aims of the WGs will be considered for funding, but strategic priorities will influence decisions.

For this call, the WGs have reviewed coverage of their aims by the current research portfolio and identified priority areas. The targeted calls below result from that priority check. Addressing these topics will help the WGs to make progress towards their stated aims. However, submissions beyond the listed themes are also welcome. If you have an excellent idea for a research project, we invite you to seek funding for it is through the current call.

The deadline for submissions is **October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020** at 23:59 CET.

## 2. Scope of this call

### 2.1. Descriptive systems

For this round of funding, the Descriptive System Working Group (DSWG) calls for proposals contributing to five broad research themes:

- Testing the coverage and validity of the existing EQ-5D instruments in different populations.
- Assessing the recall period in clinical populations and the use of innovative methods for measuring health fluctuations over time.
- Producing evidence on the international acceptability, relevance, and face validity of existing bolt-ons
- Comparing methodological approaches for the psychometric assessment of existing EQ-5D instruments.
- Investigating questions of relevance to both the DSWG and the Version Management Committee (VMC)

Research teams are encouraged to suggest novel methodological approaches to use for these studies. Further information is provided below:

#### ***2.1.1. Testing the coverage and validity of existing EQ-5D Instruments in different populations***

We call for proposals in two main areas, namely coverage and validity. All types of validity (e.g., face, content, and construct) are of interest. Examples of populations include, but are not limited to, different cultural, demographic, and disease groups. Proposals conducting literature reviews, and using both qualitative and quantitative methods are welcome.

##### *Reviews of instrument coverage and validity*

There has been a significant amount of DSWG research focused on testing the coverage and validity of EQ-5D instruments internationally. This has been done by investigating the relevance of the five items, as well as the areas of QoL that are important to people. There is also work in this area conducted outside of the EuroQol Research Foundation.

We are therefore calling for proposals conducting syntheses or reviews of current findings from the studies in different populations investigating instrument coverage and validity, to draw conclusions and establish where further development is required. This will include EuroQol funded work and wider publications. Projects in this area can involve collaboration with the DSWG to identify studies and provide syntheses of findings to inform future research calls.

*Generating new evidence investigating instrument coverage and validity:*

We are interested in proposals investigating the validity and appropriateness of EQ-5D instruments in different populations. This includes, but is not limited to, research on different cultural, demographic, and disease groups. We call for proposals:

- Assessing the cultural appropriateness of the EQ-5D and its validity for use as a common measure across demographic and disease groups. This work could involve primary or secondary data collection and could employ quantitative and/or qualitative methods. There is also the opportunity to work with the VMC on this issue, in particular using the cognitive debriefing reports they have available (see Section 5).
- Conducting further primary research to assess the validity and psychometric performance of the EQ-5D across populations and disease-specific groups in comparison to other measures. This includes assessing the performance of the instruments in measuring multi-morbidities.
- The validity and relevance of the descriptive system as a measure for use in health crises in comparison to other measures. This could include, for example, measuring health and broader quality of life relating to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Note: In proposals submitted under this theme, it is essential to delineate whether the objective is to assess domains, items, or attributes in different populations. A domain refers to the concept that you wish to measure or describe. An item is a measure of a domain (e.g., a question, a cognitive task). An attribute is a description of a domain (e.g., adjectival statement, vignette). A domain may be measured using multiple items and described using various attributes; however, each of the five EQ-5D-5L domains has one item and one attribute. Any assessment of domains, items, or attributes must account for context, such the disease, language, and setting. A domain/item/attribute may be appropriate and validated in one setting or population, but inappropriate and invalid in another.

### ***2.1.2. Assessing recall period in clinical populations and the use of innovative methods for measuring health fluctuations over time***

Many acute diseases and conditions cause fluctuations in health over time. Some conditions, such as infectious diseases (e.g., flu, episodic conditions), epilepsy, and ‘event’ like conditions (e.g., stroke), have a severe impact for a short time and different illness progressions after. Even chronic conditions, which may be progressive or stable over time (e.g., angina) show substantial fluctuations. This poses challenges for the measurement of quality of life and computation of QALYs.

Currently, there are few ongoing methodological studies investigating how the recall period of EQ-5D instruments might be modified using different recall periods. These studies have been conducted in respiratory, infective and autoimmune diseases, but other clinical conditions may benefit from modified time frames, such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, etc. The selection of a candidate set of appropriate recall periods relies on the availability of comparative evidence across clinical populations. For this reason, research investigating the most relevant recall period in different clinical populations is invited.

Moreover, using a modified recall period represents only one option for measuring fluctuations over time. One alternative may be to experiment with repeated measurements (e.g., longitudinal data, diaries) using qualitative methods to investigate how patients experience their illness and how they respond to the EQ-5D instruments. Another may be to modify instructions to improve the instrument self-completion. The DSWG calls for research that may address these gaps using innovative methods.

Proposals in this area should consider the ongoing work previously funded and suggest extensions to this in populations not yet tested. Please contact Brendan Mulhern ([Brendan.mulhern@chere.uts.edu.au](mailto:Brendan.mulhern@chere.uts.edu.au)) or Aureliano Finch ([finch@euroqol.org](mailto:finch@euroqol.org)) to discuss this theme further.

### ***2.1.3. Producing evidence on the international acceptability, relevance, and face validity of existing bolt-ons***

The DSWG is currently overseeing a program of research aimed at developing bolt-on dimensions, items, and attributes. The majority of the developmental work has been conducted in a small set of countries. Yet, questions remain on the relevance and applicability

of the bolt-ons internationally. The question of relevance and applicability is threefold. First, it is necessary to understand whether existing candidate bolt-ons domains are relevant in different cultures and contexts. Second, it is important to understand whether the way bolt-ons are phrased and translated (for example in the wording used and the examples provided) are applicable around the world. Finally, we need to understand the psychometric properties of the bolt-ons internationally (see also Section 4).

To provide two examples, ‘interpersonal relationships’ has been published as a culture specific bolt on in Thailand (Kangwanrattanakul et al 2018). It can be hypothesised that interpersonal relationships are relevant around the world (point 1 above), but the phrasing used in in the Thai study may not be applicable around the world (point 2). If the phrasing is not applicable, how should it be adapted for international relevance? As a second example, ‘cognition’ is a bolt on that has received plenty of attention (e.g. Krabbe et al, 1999), and cognitive disorders are a universal health concern. However, there is a lack of evidence about the extent to which the complex terminology and examples used to describe cognition are understood and in populations and conditions likely to report disorders of cognition.

The DSWG invites proposals investigating different aspects of the relevance, applicability and psychometric properties of bolt-ons. This work could focus on bolt-ons that have been published, or are in development. However, applicants must clearly justify why they have chosen to investigate particular bolt-on(s), and the populations, countries and/or settings included in the proposal. They should also clearly state the benefits that the group will receive from producing evidence in these areas. Given the focus of this research, applicants could consider building collaborations with other members internationally to allow for suitable comparisons between countries and languages.

#### ***2.1.4. Comparing methodological approaches for the psychometric assessment of existing EQ-5D instruments.***

Researchers use many methodological approaches to understand the validity and psychometric performance of instruments. However, little research is available on how common methods can and should be used, individually or comparatively, such as classical test theory, factor analysis, structural equation modelling, item response theory. The influence of methodological decisions on the findings is also unclear. Without this methodological evidence, it is not possible to compare the EuroQol family of instruments and its counterparts. Conducting this research on existing instruments also provides evidence on how to assess

experimental instruments and supports the further their development (e.g., bolt-ons, EQ-HWB).

We call for proposals to investigate these issues. Examples of these proposals are and are not limited to, reviews of methods for the conduct of psychometric studies with existing EQ-5D instruments and counterpart instruments, using both primary and secondary data sources. These comparisons may also include assessments of instrument validity, as outlined in Section 1.2.

#### ***2.1.5. Investigating questions of relevance to both the DSWG and the Version Management Committee (VMC)***

There are a range of research topics of interest to both the DSWG and VMC, and the groups are working together to build collaborative projects involving the broader membership that tackle joint aims. Members are encouraged to submit proposals investigating these issues. Please discuss your research with the chairs of the DSWG and the VMC, who can further support the development of collaborative proposals. Topic areas of interest are as follows:

##### *Descriptive system equivalence research:*

The existence of multiple modes of administration for the EQ-5D family of instruments, and the potential for multiple modes to be used in trials and other studies, raises questions of measurement equivalence, and also the appropriate mode to use in different populations. For example, an Interviewer Administered version has been recently approved and establish equivalence between versions is of interest in order to guide users as to the choice of which form of administration should be utilized.

Therefore the DSWG, in collaboration with the VMC, calls for proposals to compare the feasibility, reliability and other psychometric properties of the interviewer and self report versions of the EQ-5D. We are interested in mixed methods proposals to tackle this issue. Please also note that a similar call for equivalence research into the EQ-5D-Y instruments is highlighted by the Younger Populations Working Group. Collaborative work investigating the equivalence of both adult and child versions could be considered.

##### *Interpretation of the descriptive system:*

We are interested in proposals that investigate how the EuroQol family of instruments are interpreted by different populations. For example, are the instruments interpreted in the

context of health, health related quality of life, or general QoL? This work could use qualitative methods to understand this issue.

*Analysis of cognitive debriefing reports:*

The VMC has a database of cognitive debriefing reports that may be of interest in investigating descriptive system related issues, and in particular how it is interpreted in different languages and cultures (see also Section 1 above). Further work on these will be led by the VMC, with input from the DSWG. Interested parties should also review the request for proposals circulated by the VMC.

**General information:**

The DSWG recognizes the importance of conducting research related to COVID-19. While this RFP does not include a specific COVID-related theme, studies investigating the effect of COVID-19 on fluctuations in health, interpreting evidence from existing instruments, and using EQ-5D instruments for monitoring the pandemic, and potential future health crises, are encouraged.

To discuss potential proposal submissions or for further information about any of the research areas listed, please contact Brendan Mulhern ([Brendan.mulhern@chere.uts.edu.au](mailto:Brendan.mulhern@chere.uts.edu.au)). For discussion of projects relating to both the DSWG and VMC, please also contact Jennifer Jelsma ([Jennifer.jelsma@uct.ac.za](mailto:Jennifer.jelsma@uct.ac.za)).

**References:**

Kangwanrattanakul K, Gross CR, Sunantiway M, Thavorncharoensap M. (2018). Adding two culture-specific 'bolt-on' dimensions on the Thai version of EQ-5D-5L: an exploratory study in patients with diabetes. *Expert Review of Pharmacoeconomics & Outcomes Research*, 19(3): 321-329.

Krabbe, PF, Stouthard ME, Essink-Bot ML, Bonsel GJ. (1999). The effect of adding a cognitive dimension to the EuroQol multiattribute health-status classification system. *Journal of Clinical Epidemiology*, 52(4): 293-301.

## 2.2. Valuation

The EuroQol Valuation Working Group (VWG) has one of the most challenging and broad remits, reflecting the importance of valuation methodology to all our instruments. The VWG is charged with multiple aims across a variety of areas that include:

- Investigation of how our existing valuation approaches may be further refined;
- Investigation of new approaches to valuing health;
- Examining the basis/rationale for value sets for patient groups; and
- Collaboration with other WGs or approved groups that work on conceptual and practical issues concerned with valuation of EQ-5D technologies

We invite researchers to submit proposals related to these four main aims of the VWG. Additionally for this call, the members of the VWG have identified three priority areas.

First, the ongoing pandemic has created major challenges for our health valuation studies, since our EQ-VT protocol has only been used in context of face-to-face interviews. Many teams have put their valuation studies on hold or deferred data collection because of the pandemic. Remote interviewing has been proposed as an alternative. Unfortunately, we do not know how well this works or if mode of administration affects data in an unintended way. Research that helps to fill this gap is urgently needed to inform decisions about whether and how to continue or start data collection. One way to address this question can involve randomization of respondents to F2F or remote administration of valuation tasks, which may potentially be possible in some locations.

Second, valuation study teams also face the challenge that preferences may have shifted because of the pandemic. This presents study teams that paused data collection during the pandemic with questions about the possibility to aggregate pre/post pandemic values and which of the two have greater long term validity. For study teams that are planning data collection in the near future, the challenges are: whether preferences will change as the pandemic situation changes; how this could be monitored during and beyond the time period covered by the study; and how to establish whether any shift in preferences is great enough to warrant new data collection. If you are able to undertake research that can show whether or not a preference shift has occurred, we invite you to submit a proposal about it, and would like to prioritise work which will report findings in a timeframe to help inform EuroQol policy in a timely way.

Third, the previous issue relates to broader questions about the life cycle of value sets. We have been inclined to think of value sets as permanent entities, but an alternative view is that value sets should have an expected life cycle with anticipated updates or replacements that reflect gradual changes in society, health preferences, and -if relevant- improved methods. How often value sets should be updated is a question without any definite answer. This raises the question how we can tell whether an existing value set can still be considered valid?

Another particular area of VWG work has been the development of a stand-alone DCE protocol. In that document, presented at the September 2020 Virtual Meeting, a number of areas of specific research are highlighted as requiring further work. These include (but are not limited to) standardized code for (1) analyzing DCE data using a range of linear and non-linear approaches, and (2) updating designs with non-zero priors to conduct non-linear analyses.

Finally, we continue to invite you to submit addressing valuation of health states that are considered worse than dead. Using cTTO, for instance, we find that the obtained negative scores do not vary much. We seek to understand why this is the case and whether the findings are a product of people's preferences or indicate a limitation of the method. Broader work on valuation of worse than dead is also welcome.

The VWG welcomes research proposals using a variety of different methodological approaches, but the priority is for projects that would provide practical guidance for the EuroQoL Research Foundation in the above areas.

## 2.3. Large Scale Applications

The LSA WG aims to support the use of EQ-5D as a health outcome measure in population health assessment, in studying health inequalities, and as a PROM in routine outcome measurement within health systems. LSA research topics may involve the development, implementation and use of large data sets that include the EQ-5D, but may also involve an application of the EQ-5D in a setting with a wide scope.

The WG is interested in both methodological and applied research relating to the use of EQ-5D in assessing population health, studying health inequalities, and in measuring local and system-wide performance. Note that research topics could overlap with research interest or priorities of other WGs such as the DSWG and the E&OWG. We especially welcome innovative research proposals.

### 2.3.1. *The use of EQ-5D in population health assessment*

This research topic covers datasets that attempt to measure the health of general population that include EQ-5D data<sup>1</sup>. These data typically also include information on the presence of conditions and general background variables (age, gender, socio-economic characteristics).

We are especially interested in research proposals, preferably involving more than one country, in the following areas:

#### *Measuring population health and examining its determinants*

This includes areas of study such as the burden of disease, changes in population health status (due to e.g. disasters or COVID-19), population risk factor models (e.g. including vulnerability), and population norms. As well as descriptive studies, we are interested in factors that determine population health status, including demographic, cultural and epidemiological factors, and how these impact on health, as measured by the EQ-5D, over geographical regions and times.

#### *Studying health inequalities*

We are interested in studies that measure inequalities in health and health care using the EQ-5D, including the relationship of inequalities to social and individual determinants of health,

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<sup>1</sup> Note that these may include data resulting from valuation studies, although for some purposes these datasets may be considered not large enough

and specific policies (local, national). This includes the relation of health inequalities to health care access inequalities and the impact of external factors like the COVID-19 pandemic and social policies. This may also include unintentional and intentional policy factors for inequality reduction. If EQ-5D is contrasted with other measures of morbidity, properties of EQ-5D might be explored in this context.

### ***2.3.2. The use of EQ-5D as a Patient Reported Outcome Measure (PROM) in routine outcome measurement***

Many health systems and organizations around the world are using the EQ-5D as a patient-reported outcome measure (PROM), as a routine outcome measure for various purposes such as enhancing patient centred care, monitoring, evaluating and improving quality of care, and incorporating patient-reported outcomes into value-based care. The EQ-5D is currently being used alongside disease-specific PROMs in routine outcome measurement within patient registries and health organizations in Sweden and Canada, respectively. Many other countries are using the EQ-5D in similar applications at a smaller scale.

The use of EQ-5D as a PROM for these purposes is under-studied. Very little evidence exists on the application of the EQ-5D for these purposes and its usefulness in improving patient management, patient-clinical communication, patient-centred care, and health outcomes. Given the escalating interest in PROMs measurement around the world, especially the work that is driven by the OECD, we believe that the EQ-5D could be the generic PROM of choice that could be adopted for such usages to standardize patient-reported outcome measurement. For that, the LSAWG supports research that examines various aspects of the use of EQ-5D as a PROM including the following:

#### *Implementing systems for collecting, analysing and reporting EQ-5D as a PROM*

This includes exploring best approaches of collecting EQ-5D data in PROMs programs, and examining issues in implementing PROMs systems, such as:

- The challenges of the outcome measurement itself: what devices work best, can different instruments be implemented simultaneously, can doctors/nurses do proxy measurements if needed, what is the effect of feedback information to the patient on survey compliance, how do you manage language versions or proxy support?
- The challenges of reporting and communicating EQ-5D information to users in a way that is - demonstrable - instrumental to that user (dashboard graphics etc.)

### *Examining the applications of EQ-5D as a PROM*

There are many potential applications of EQ-5D as a PROM; our focus is on its use in three areas: quality control, performance management, and individual patient decision making. Our interest is in exploring ways of using EQ-5D data in each of these applications; e.g., how can EQ-5D data be analysed and reported in comparing performance of healthcare providers or to inform quality improvement initiatives? Can EQ-5D data be used to inform clinical management, and how? Can EQ-5D data be used to support patient decision making around treatment options (e.g., patient-decision aids), and how?

### *Examining the impact of EQ-5D/PROMs*

There is lack of information about the impact that EQ-5D/PROMs have on outcomes, such as evidence that they have resulted in changes in, for example, clinical practice, hospital performance and the health of patient populations. Demonstrating such impact is challenging, so we are especially interested in innovative ways (e.g., pragmatic cluster RCTs) to examine the effectiveness and/or cost-effectiveness of using EQ-5D as a PROM in various clinical areas.

Note: It is essential that the proposed research is primarily about use of the EQ-5D, rather than including the EQ-5D as an incidental component of a PROMs program or simply as an example. We are interested in how the EQ-5D can be used in combination with other data collected within a PROMs program, including other PROMs and Patient Reported Experience Measures (PREMs).

### **2.3.3. Methodological advancements**

This includes research involving retrospective measurement<sup>2</sup>, individual vs. household determinants<sup>3</sup>, health trajectories (e.g. the 'Landmark method'), the use of change variables vs. difference scores, response style measurement and adjustment, equivalence studies on related concepts (e.g. healthy days, DALYs), and case-mix adjustment in the context of comparing population health or health care performance.

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<sup>2</sup> Retrospective measurement of EQ-5D has been applied to create pseudo-longitudinal data, relevant when pre-data is lacking (e.g. with event like conditions such as stroke or injuries). This method may be applied but the method itself may also be methodologically studied.

<sup>3</sup> Specific for population data

While many research proposals will involve some data collection by the investigators, we also support those who use existing data sources and strongly support projects which collaborate with the EuroQol Foundation's collaborative program agreements currently in Sweden and Canada.

For advice or guidance in developing your research proposal, please feel free to contact the co-chairs of the LSA WG, the Health Inequality SIG or members from the Canadian APERSU program, and the Swedish PROMs program (info listed at the end of this document).

## 2.4. EQ-5D in Children

### 2.4.1. *Validation of the EQ-5D-Y-5L*

As in earlier calls, the Younger Populations Working Group (YPWG) calls again for proposals to carry out validation studies for the newly developed, extended version of the EQ-5D-Y in non-English speaking countries. Over recent years, a YPWG study team has developed an extended 5L version of the EQ-5D-Y. There are currently a few validation studies underway, mainly using the English version, but we are interested in receiving further proposals to test the measurement properties of the extended version (e.g. its sensitivity, validity, feasibility) in populations of children and adolescents in non-English speaking countries. We would particularly welcome proposals that aim to:

- Test the psychometric properties and performance of the extended EQ-5D-Y-5L in disease areas that cover the whole range of possible health impairments
- Compare the EQ-5D-Y-3L to the extended EQ-5D-Y-5L and therefore help to show whether instrument validity and sensitivity are improved in the extended version
- Propose studies with the following characteristics: longitudinal, variety of diseases, variety of severity levels, lower costs e.g. by co-funding by other funding sources

Further, it will be relevant to conduct reviews, secondary data analysis and – if needed and not too expensive – studies that aim for primary data collection (also in English-speaking countries) that compare the EQ-5D-Y instruments (-3L and/or -5L) with other child-specific instruments to gain information on the dimensions, items and the psychometric performance of the EQ-5D-Y instruments. Especially, comparisons of EQ-5D-Y and CHU9D are very welcome.

Note: if your study will be conducted in a country, where no EQ-5D-Y-5L translation is available yet, please be aware that the Office needs some time (at least 6-9 months) to produce a new language version of EQ-5D-Y-5L to support research. This should be considered when planning a project. Besides, you need to incorporate the costs for the translation process into the budget of your proposal. Further, currently all EQ-5D-Y-5L versions are beta versions. If the English source version changes, amendments to the language versions might be necessary as well.

### **2.4.2. Valuation of EQ-5D-Y-3L**

A valuation protocol for the EQ-5D-Y has been agreed. The YPWG welcomes proposals for EQ-5D-Y-3L valuation studies. If EuroQol members are interested in conducting a national valuation study for the EQ-5D-Y-3L, they should contact Elly Stolk at the Office (stolk@euroqol.org). If a large number of applications are received, the YPWG and the Office will prioritise the requests. Requests for funding for valuation studies should also include a further (explorative) research question, in addition to the standard protocol. Candidate topics for consideration as research questions include:

- Framing/Wording of the valuation tasks which require respondents to take a ‘child health perspective’ (e.g. descriptor term, “a hypothetical child”, “a child you know”, “you as a child”, etc.)
- Whether and how the age of the child/adolescent described within the task affects valuations
- Impact of respondent background characteristics on the valuation of younger people’s health
- Impact of time/duration on the valuation of child health states
- Whether people’s valuation of child health states (vs. adult health states) reflects their wider views about how health care resources should be prioritized
- People’s priorities for children vs. adults
- Whether and how adult preferences for children and adolescent preferences differ
- Feasibility of TTO to obtain adolescent preferences

### **2.4.3. Conceptual work on youth valuation**

The YPWG would like to invite proposals for conceptual work, e.g. a conceptual paper, about the implications of the common finding of the first valuation studies that the value range of EQ-5D-Y is narrower than the value range of EQ-5D (adult version). These findings likely reflect that for adult and children, people calibrate their time trade-offs differently (i.e. for the same quality of life improvement, they would sacrifice greater proportion of remaining lifespan in adults than in children). What does this mean for the comparability of TTO values of adult and child health states? If a child and an adult both report a health state that has been valued at 0.7, do they have the same quality of life? What are the consequences for cost-effectiveness analysis and the use of that evidence in decision making? Is it possible to compare or aggregate QALY gains incurred in different age groups?

#### ***2.4.4. Application of EQ-5D-Y (Y-3L/Y-5L)***

Based on PubMed data, EQ-5D-Y seems to be used relatively rarely. The YPWG would like to encourage expanded use. It would be important to learn more about the usefulness and usability of EQ-5D-Y (Y-3L and/or Y-5L) in specific clinical areas/conditions. Studies of the most prevalent conditions are likely to be prioritised, however, studies of other relevant conditions would also be welcomed.

Further, in line with the research initiatives for adults, the use of the youth instruments in routine clinical practice, e.g. primary care, registers should also be a focus for research. Therefore, the YPWG calls for research on the usefulness and usability of EQ-5D-Y (Y-3L &/or Y-5L) as an outcome measure in routine clinical practice.

#### ***2.4.5. Testing an interviewer-administered version of the EQ-5D-Y***

The EQ-5D-Y Interviewer Administered (IA) version has now been adopted as an approved version by the Executive Committee. There is still much that is not known regarding the comparative performance of the self-administered and the IA EQ-5D-Y versions. In order to guide users as to the choice of which form of administration should be utilized, the YPWG, in collaboration with the Version Management Committee (VMC) and the Descriptive System Working Group (DSWG), calls for proposals to compare the feasibility, reliability and other psychometric properties of the two forms of administration in younger and older children, both with and without health conditions. It would also be of interest to compare the results of one on one with Group administered responses (as in a class room setting) using the Self-complete versions with one group and the IA script combined with individual self-complete by the children.

## 2.5. Education and outreach

The EuroQol Education and Outreach Working Group has a mandate that supports part of the EuroQol mission unrelated to Research & Development but is vital in sustaining the EuroQol membership and its goal: education and outreach.

EuroQol members may submit plans related to any topic relevant to the EuroQol mission, those activities may be:

- organizing educational meetings
- design of courses (face to face or online) or educational materials aimed to improve EuroQol use and dissemination.
- support to present a workshop or short course at a conference.

To receive funding for meetings or collaboration efforts, a deliverable should be clearly defined, such as a research proposal or a publication. Funding applications received for education and outreach initiatives will be prioritized based on the strategic relevance of reaching out to the targeted population, the suggested topic, and the overall efficiency of the recommended educational or outreach approach.

### 3. Submission Guidelines

#### 3.1. Available budget

The total budget available for this financial year (July 1st, 2020 – June 30th, 2021) is estimated at € 4M, roughly the same budget as last year. This estimate is based on projections and may be changed later. For the current call a budget of €2.5M - €3M will be made available, but the Foundation reserves the right not to distribute all the funds available for this round depending on the number and quality of proposals received. The Foundation expressly invites researchers to make the best possible use of the research funding options presented in this call.

#### 3.2. What we fund

This call invites applications for various types of project grants: fast track proposals for small projects, regular research applications, proposals for educational or regional meetings, and topical research applications for larger projects. Details about fast track proposals and topical research proposals are provided below. The attached budget guidelines specify how the budgets should be presented. Please note that the budget guidelines have recently been updated: the maximum daily rates have been increased.

Note, you can only apply for PhD scholarships/fellowships when they are announced, which is not the case in the current call. The current call offers support for specific projects, and grants are tied to specific, project-based outcomes.

*Fast track proposals:* The maximum amount for a fast-track proposal is €25K. Fast track proposals qualify for a lighter review procedure.

*Topical research program proposals:* Members are invited to submit proposals for larger projects, possibly of a longer duration (i.e. 2-4 years), either as a coherent series of studies, or one very large study, to an intended maximum of €150K. Requests for larger budget can be made, but a strong motivation would be needed and it is recommend to look for co-funding from another organization instead. Interested members are encouraged to contact the relevant WG Chair to ensure alignment with ongoing- and planned research.

### **3.3. Who can submit?**

In this round, the EuroQol research foundation accepts proposals that are submitted by research teams or individual researchers affiliated to different institutions/organisations (Universities, NGOs, companies, etc.). The Principle investigator does not need to be a member, but at least one EuroQol member has to be involved in the project (at least) as co-investigator.

All researchers are strongly encouraged to contact the WG Chair to discuss plans for proposals, to ensure alignment with ongoing and planned research, and alignment with the research objectives of the WG. If you would like input or have questions about the preparation of your proposal, please email the relevant WG contact below, or for general questions, contact Elly Stolk at [stolk@euroqol.org](mailto:stolk@euroqol.org).

### **3.4. Submission procedure**

All proposals reports will need to be submitted via the EuroQol Projects Submission Portal: <https://euroqol-proposals.grantplatform.com/>. You will first need to register to create a personal account. Then you can start working on your submission. Progress will be saved, and you update your submission right until the submission deadline (even if you have submitted it already). The deadline for submissions is October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2020 at 23:59 CET.

At registration, please make sure to accept receiving broadcast emails, and notifications from the system in order to facilitate communication.

### **3.5. Review procedure**

The Exec will follow its standard procedures and criteria to make decisions about funding, except for fast track proposals. Fast track proposals will be added to the batch of proposals received for the call and will be discussed at the review meeting of the Executive Committee (i.e. no 48-hr review process). WGs will support the decision making process by reviewing applications. The obtained review reports may be used to decide on the order in which proposals will be discussed and the amount of time allotted to each proposal at the review meeting of the Executive Committee. Funding applications will be judged by their overall strategic relevance, alignment with current research priorities and scientific quality.

### 3.6. Timelines

After the deadline,

- the Scientific team leader will check whether your proposal meets the call's eligibility criteria.
- experts will review all the eligible proposals.
- your proposal will be discussed by the Exec in December 2020
- applicants will normally receive further information about the decision of the Exec within three weeks after the Exec meetings.

### 3.7. Further information

For further information, you can contact Elly Stolk (EuroQol Scientific Team Leader) the relevant working group chairs and Office scientist who support that WG, or any other members of that WG. The primary contacts of each WG for questions about this call are:

Descriptive system	Brendan Mulhern	<a href="mailto:Brendan.Mulhern@chere.uts.edu.au">Brendan.Mulhern@chere.uts.edu.au</a>
	John Brazier	<a href="mailto:j.e.brazier@sheffield.ac.uk">j.e.brazier@sheffield.ac.uk</a>
	Aureliano Finch	<a href="mailto:Finch@euroqol.org">Finch@euroqol.org</a>
Valuation	Richard Norman	<a href="mailto:richard.norman@curtin.edu.au">richard.norman@curtin.edu.au</a>
	Elly Stolk	<a href="mailto:stolk@euroqol.org">stolk@euroqol.org</a>
Large Scale Applications	Gouke Bonsel	<a href="mailto:bonsel@euroqol.org">bonsel@euroqol.org</a>
	Bas Janssen	<a href="mailto:janssen@euroqol.org">janssen@euroqol.org</a>
EQ-5D in Children	Wolfgang Greiner	<a href="mailto:wolfgang.greiner@uni-bielefeld.de">wolfgang.greiner@uni-bielefeld.de</a>
	Elly Stolk	<a href="mailto:stolk@euroqol.org">stolk@euroqol.org</a>
Education and Outreach	Elly Stolk	<a href="mailto:stolk@euroqol.org">stolk@euroqol.org</a>

If you are interested to seek collaboration or get access to the data which may become available as part of the agreements with researchers/authorities in Sweden and Alberta, Canada, please contact the local contact persons (copying the WG chair):

Emelie Heintz (Sweden)	<a href="mailto:emeliejanssen@euroqol.org">emeliejanssen@euroqol.org</a>
Jeffrey Johnson (Alberta)	<a href="mailto:jeffreyj@ualberta.ca">jeffreyj@ualberta.ca</a>
Arto Ohinmaa (Alberta)	<a href="mailto:arto.ohinmaa@ualberta.ca">arto.ohinmaa@ualberta.ca</a>

## 4. Appendices

- Working Group (WG)s aims
- Guidance for applicants
- Budget guidelines



**Working Group (WG)s aims**

*By the EuroQol Executive committee*

*Last update: 16-2-2018*



*In this document, informed by the Strategic Research Priorities and WGs Review documents, we describe the current scope of each WG. The purpose of this section is to explain why and how the Working Group (WG) structure has been introduced, what the current objectives are, and how WGs will work. The WGs will be generating Requests for Proposals (RFP), which will be calls for targeted research, to which any EuroQol Group members may respond. These will represent important new opportunities for members of the EuroQol Group to obtain funding for research.*

## **1. Background to Working Groups as an Initiative**

- The continued success of the EuroQol Group and non-profit status requires that our revenues and the substantial reserves be invested in research and development.
- The Executive Committee has a responsibility for establishing the scientific direction of the EuroQol Group, and in promoting and funding a research programme consistent with the overall scientific strategy.
- A few years ago the Executive Committee decided to introduce a new structure, by introducing WGs, each to be charged with clearly defined, specific objectives relating to the scientific agenda of the EuroQol Group.
- The WGs were set up to represent the principal means by which we channel ideas and proposals to the Executive Committee for consideration for research funding.
- The WG structure matches the research priorities the Executive Committee and the Board have jointly defined in the Strategic Research Priorities.
- WG Chairs will report progress towards the stated aims of a WG annually to the Executive. Informed by progress towards stated aims and strategic priorities, the WG structure or objectives states for WGs can be revised by the Executive Committee.
- The performance of WGs will be reviewed on a periodic basis (e.g., every 2 years).
- Overall, the WG structure has proved to be an effective and productive source of research deliverables for the EuroQol organization.

## **2. Implementation of the WG structure**

- WGs Chairs and members will be selected by the Executive Committee. An appeal for nominations from the membership be made for WG Membership can be part of the selection procedure.
- Although WG Chairs may independently reach out and contact a potential member directly to nominate him/herself for a WG position, EuroQol members are encouraged to nominate themselves. Those EuroQol members who are interested in working on a particular WG should express their interest through the Business Office. Subsequently, the WG Chairs will submit a list



with the proposed WG members from the list of nominees to the Executive Committee for their feedback and to finalize the Work Group teams. Membership in more than one WG is permissible.

- The membership of each WG will be revisited at least annually to ensure a collaborative and productive team-based approach. EuroQol members may express their interest to join a WG at any time to the Business Office.
- Our goal is to engage *all* members of the EuroQol Group in the research activities being coordinated by the WGs. Note that the mandate of each WG is not to conduct research, but to coordinate and facilitate it. The WGs are encouraged, but not required to, establish a Special Interest Group (SIG), which comprises EuroQol Group members with a demonstrable research interest in the relevant area. The SIGs will provide a wider network of researchers with which the WG can liaise, seek input from and keep informed about the RFPs being developed. SIG members will be able to share with the WG any information or topic that has relevance for its research agenda. EuroQol Group members who are interested in being a member of a given SIG should contact the relevant WG Chair, explaining their expertise and research activities in the area of work. For reasons of efficiency, the number of persons participating in a SIG may be limited. A current example of a SIG lies within the Children WG.
- From time to time, a Taskforce of Program Team (PT) will be initiated, charged with a specific aim. The PT differs from the SIG by the fact that it is an ad-hoc team to conduct specific studies that generate evidence on strategically important research questions in a short period of time. If considered necessary to realise their objectives, a WG can propose the need for an PT to the Executive Committee. This approach has proven to be very effective in getting a lot of work done in a short period of time. A taskforce or PT reports to, and works in close cooperation with, the WG. The taskforce or PT will be dissolved once the objectives have been achieved. A WG can send out nomination calls for Taskforce or PT membership. After receiving a proposal by the WG the Executive Committee will formally appoint the members. Recent examples of a Taskforce was the 3L/5L Taskforce charged with investigating the consequences of transitioning from 3L to 5L. An older example was the team that conducted a series of studies to improve the TTO module of EQ-VT, under supervision of the Valuation Methodology WG.
- Lastly, we consider it essential to promote and support novel, innovative research, whether it is covered by the Strategic Research Priorities or not. Proposals for innovative research are welcome and can be submitted at any time. They will be reviewed directly by the Executive Committee.

### **3. How can members of the EuroQol Group find out more about the activities of the WGs?**

Information about the progress of each WG and calls for proposals will be posted on the members' area of the website and updates will be emailed to all EuroQol group members.



EuroQol Group members are encouraged to email the WG chairs if they are wondering which WG would be best aligned with a research idea or proposal. If in doubt, please contact the Scientific Team Leader, Elly Stolk (stolk@euroqol.org), or the Executive Director Bernhard Slaap (slaap@euroqol.org), for guidance or feedback.

#### 4. Summary of WGs

The WG structure currently includes five WGs:

Working Group	Aim
Descriptive Systems WG	This WG focuses on exploring the conceptual basis for generic preference-based HRQL measures.
Valuation WG	Focus on valuation methods. However, the activities have been extended to include international initiatives related to prospective valuation studies and international initiatives using data collected from valuation studies.
EQ-5D for Children WG	Validation and valuation of the EQ-5D-Y versions
Large Scale Applications WG	Charged with the aim to support clinical and population based initiatives
Education and Outreach WG	As part of the broader mission of the EuroQol group, this WG leads initiatives to educate members, and the broader scientific community/ policy maker to promote better understanding of the uses of EQ-5D and its underlying science.

#### 5. WG Principles

- The WGs are intended to be relatively small, **focused** groups, with specific objectives to be agreed with the Executive Committee.
- Unless otherwise stated, the WGs will provide a progress report and future plans on an annual basis, and will under a formal review after 2 years, but the Executive Committee reserves the right to revise the terms, membership, and viability of each WG at any time.
- The WGs vary in terms of scope, timelines and budgets.



- The WGs will be **responsible for leading and driving forward research** and development that falls within scope of their mandate. Through Requests for Proposals (RFPs) and Program Announcements (PAs) developed by the WG with input from the Executive Committee, each WG will **actively create opportunities to involve others with relevant expertise in the EuroQol Group wherever possible**. Members of WGs can also apply, but the WG is not expected to lead the research as a team.
- A PA encourages research on a given topic but is largely generic, such as new methods to value health or the development of apps for the EQ-5D, where the specific aims are composed by the investigator. In contrast, an RFP is directive, eliciting “proposal bids” from members for a proposal on a specific topic where the aim is stated in the RFP, e.g. to develop a EQ-Y instrument for children <5 years of age (this example is strictly illustrative).
- The WGs are **accountable to the Executive Committee**. Each WG Chair will keep the Executive periodically updated regarding the team’s status and progress. Additionally, a EuroQol Office scientist will serve as ‘liaison’ to facilitate communication between the EuroQol office and the WG. The Office scientists are not automatically considered as WG members but can nominate themselves to become a formal WG Member in a manner consistent with other members.
- To further ensure good communication, the Executive Director and Chair of the Executive Committee, or their designee, should in principle have access to WG meetings as needed.
- In the remainder of this document, we provide details on the remit of each WG, provide justification as it relates to the 2015 strategic research priorities, and list ideas about the scope of activities of each WG. These aims may be revised by the WGs over time with approval from the Executive Committee as time progresses.

Linkage between the Strategic Research Priorities and the new WGs:

	Strategic Research Priorities	New WGs
1.	Explore the conceptual basis for generic preference-based HRQL measures	1. Descriptive Systems WG
2.	Investigate new approaches to valuing health (not necessarily associated with the conventional QALY paradigm).	2. Valuation WG
3.	Examine large scale health systems applications for EQ products (e.g., in Routine Outcome Measurement)	3. EQ-5D Large Scale Applications WG
4.a	Support the development and dissemination of EQ-5D-5L value sets in key regions.	2. Valuation Methodology WG
4.b	Explore valuation research in specific patient groups	2. Valuation Methodology WG
5.	EQ-5D-Y: refine descriptive systems, valuation studies	4. EQ-5D in Children WG
	(Broader Strategic Priority: related to Mission statement)	5. Application Development WG
	(Broader Strategic Priority: related to Mission statement)	6. Education and Outreach WG



## 6. Details of each proposed Working Group.

### A. WG 1: Descriptive Systems Working Group

- i. Aim 1: to explore the conceptual basis for generic preference-based HRQL measures (i.e., descriptive and measurement work)
- ii. Aim 2: Investigate the conceptual basis and develop a framework to rationalize the development of various bolt-ons and bolt-offs

*Rationale:* At the Strategic meeting in March 2014 it was decided by the joint Board and Executive Committee that a top priority for the EuroQol Group is the explore the conceptual basis for generic preference-based HRQL measures. Although the need for another generic preference-based measure of HRQL is not self-evident, the expertise and interest within the group is well-suited to support an initiative guided by scientific frameworks that explores whether a new initiative should be pursued, such as an entirely reconceptualised generic health state classifier system. Much progress has been made in the field in the 25 years since the EuroQol Group was initiated, and there was consensus among the Executive and Board that there was opportunity to explore and evaluate the conceptual basis for generic measures of health, including the EQ-5D. There is also a need for conceptual clarity on future work related to bolt-on initiatives, such as a conceptual basis to guide decision-making related to extensions of the descriptive system. However, it is also conceivable that the EQ-5D is a well-designed and validated measure suited for many different applications and will remain viable and widely used in the far future. This WG will promote research that explores the current and future needs for generic preference-based HRQL measures, and help to evaluate whether alternative descriptive systems should be pursued. The WG will use PAs to encourage EQ members to think about proposing topical research *program* proposals, besides regular research *project* proposals, as their primary objective requires both broader and deeper work, which typically takes more than 1 year.

### B. WG 2: Valuation Working Group

- i. Aim 1: To initiate RFPs and PAs that investigate new approaches to valuing health (including approaches within scope of the QALY framework, as well as methods not necessarily associated with the conventional QALY paradigm).
- ii. Aim 2: Support the development and dissemination of EQ-5D-5L value sets in key countries. To stimulate interest in producing EQ-5D (3L and 5L) value sets in key countries across the world and assist the Executive in prioritising value sets requesting support.
- iii. Aim 3: To support methodological research examining the basis/rationale for value sets for patient groups.
- iv. Aim 4: To provide scientific guidance and support for existing protocols related to valuation studies.



- v. Aim 5: To collaborate with other WGs or approved groups that work on conceptual and practical issues concerned with valuation of EQ-5D technologies.
- vi. Aim 6: To appraise the methodological reporting rigor of published value sets for approval by the Executive that the Business Office can post as guidance for users/user support.
- vii. Aim 7: To provide scientific guidance and support for valuation of bolt-on studies.

*Rationale:* This WG has one of the most challenging and broad remits, reflecting the importance of valuation methodology to all our instruments. As a consequence, clear communication lines are needed with the other WGs involved in valuation particularly the Descriptive Systems WG. We would expect this team to work closely with the **EQ-5D in Children WG**. Work on this team also continues on improving our standard valuation protocol EQ-VT.

It is possible that a wide range of countries will be interested in developing value sets for the EQ-5D-5L (and also the 3L) in the future. One task of this WG is to identify countries where HTA systems are sufficiently allowed and/or where there may be a need for a 5L value set in the foreseeable future. The WG should aim to get value set studies started in these countries. This could be done by RFP, initially among EQ members.

With a series of 5L value sets conducted, the focus for this WG has been extended. Reporting standards of 5L value set studies have been developed through the EuroQol Research Group (Checklist for Reporting Valuation Studies of the EQ-5D: CREATE) and this WG will appraise the quality of reports of valuation studies using that checklist and indicate whether the EQ-VT protocol was followed. This appraisal will help the Executive Committee provide guidance to the Business Office on how help users and provide user support. Another aim of this WG is to promote secondary analyses of pooled data across different 5L value set studies that facilitate insights into the protocol and methods used in those studies, such as generalizability of issues across countries.

Lastly, we want to encourage the use of our 3L and 5L valuation protocols and EQ-VT, with associated technical, IT and translation issues. This WG will also promote research and collaboration on (pooled) secondary data from international value sets that could inform study design and methods related to future valuation EQ-5D studies. As an aside, undertaking value set studies is complex and costly. Coordinating these studies across different countries requires considerable logistical and technical skills. The Office EQ-VT Support Team conducts this more operational side of value set studies.



### **C. WG 3: Large Scale Applications Working Group**

- i. Aim 1: To initiate RFPs and PAs that promote and examine large-scale health systems applications for EQ products (e.g., in Routine Outcome Measurement)
- ii. Aim 2: To stimulate methodological and applied research relating to the use of EQ-5D in measuring provider/health care system performance.
  1. Methodological research in health care system applications that include, but not limited to, measurement properties, data collection, presentation formats, communication strategies, etc.
  2. Applied research in health care system would include, but not limited to, evaluation of specific interventions or programs, case-mix adjustment, relationship etc.
- iii. Aim 3: To focus on beyond health care applications (i.e, not to just focus on health applications like PROMS)
- iv. Aim 4: To stimulate methodological and applied research relating to the use of EQ-5D in assessing populations.
  1. Methodological research in population health applications would include, but not limited to, measurement properties, data collection, presentation formats, etc.
  2. Applied research in population health applications would include, but not limited to, evaluation of population health interventions, assessing disparities in health status across jurisdictions or sub-populations, etc.
- v. Aim 5: To explore the development and use of new and existing EQ-5D products for large-scale health applications in conjunction with the Business Office and Application Development WG.

*Rationale:* Recent years have seen the introduction of routine collection of EQ-5D data across the whole health care systems, via 'PROMs'-type programmes (eg. the English NHS; Alberta Health Services) and in large patient registries (eg in Sweden). In terms of sheer numbers of observations, these sorts of uses of EQ-5D probably now dominate the use of the instrument.

We need to ensure that these uses of our instrument are supported by the appropriate business practices, relevant scientific developments and ensure we capitalize on the opportunities these uses of the instrument present as 'laboratories' for research. Interested EuroQol Group members can send a request for invitation to participate in the SIG to the WG Chair.

Additionally, the EuroQol WG will investigate how a generic instrument could be used in beyond health care applications.



#### **D. WG 4: EQ-5D in Children Working Group**

- i. Aim 1: To develop EQ-5D instruments suitable for use in children of various age ranges. This includes the validation of the EQ-5D-Y in younger age groups (using the proxy version).
- ii. Aim 2: To promote research to explore the validity of the EQ-5D-Y as a measure of health status in children.
- iii. Aim 3: To work closely with WG on Valuation Methodology in developing a work programme for the valuation of EQ-5D-Y states.
- iv. Aim 4: To promote research in the field of application studies. This might include studies comparing EQ-5D-Y to other instruments as well as doing some basic research in paediatric disease areas in need.
- v. Aim 5: To update the user guide for the 5-level Youth version.

*Rationale:* While we now have an EQ-5D-Y, there remains important work to be done to further develop and establish an evidence base to support the use of EQ-5D-Y as a measure of health status in children of various ages; and to develop a 5L version of the EQ-5D-Y. We would also expect this WG to liaise closely with the **Valuation Methodology WG** regarding the valuation of EQ-5D-Y. Interested EuroQol Group members can send a request for invitation to participate in the SIG to the WG Chair.

#### **E. WG 6: Education and Outreach Working Group**

- i. Aim 1: Organize semi-annual meetings that would educate interested EuroQol members on specific topics related to research and application of EQ-5D and other elements of the EuroQol Research Foundation Mission.
- ii. Aim 2: Organize and promote regional meetings of researchers, decision makers and users interested in EQ-5D outside Europe and North America.
- iii. Aim 3: Propose additional educational and uptake initiatives to the Executive Committee that could be supported by the Foundation.

This new WG will have a mandate that supports part of the EuroQol mission unrelated to R&D but is vital sustaining the membership and its goal: i.e education and outreach. Two initiatives are proposed: for members, a second meeting with an educational focus would be initiated, perhaps staggered 6 months from the scientific plenary. The focus would be on providing educational sessions and workshops that help members gain a greater understanding of the EQ Group's ongoing research agenda and encourage involvement in research initiatives.

A second initiative, related to outreach, would be to set up regional meetings of researchers and others interested in EQ-5D outside Europe and North America. There appears to be an increasing mass of researchers using EQ-5D in Asia, and to a lesser extent in South America. Given the costs involved and the limited access to the yearly Plenary Meeting, there would appear to be a justification for setting up regional meetings to facilitate exchange of ideas, experiences and results



between researchers and those with an interest in using the instrument (government, insurers, etc) from the same region. Involvement of core EQ members from that region would be encouraged.

Finally, educational and outreach initiatives could be proposed by the WG for consideration by the Executive Committee.

**If you would like more information on any aspect of the WGs, please contact:**

**Bernhard Slaap, Executive Director: [slaap@euroqol.org](mailto:slaap@euroqol.org)**

**Elly Stolk, Scientific Team Leader: [stolk@euroqol.org](mailto:stolk@euroqol.org)**

**Jan Busschbach, Chair of the Executive Committee: [j.vanbusschbach@erasmusmc.nl](mailto:j.vanbusschbach@erasmusmc.nl)**

## Guidance for applicants: Procedures for research funding applications

1. The EuroQol Research Foundation will fund high quality research that is of scientific and strategic interest to the EuroQol Group and its members.
2. Proposals should be submitted to the EQ Office using the EuroQol Project Submission Portal (<https://euroqol-proposals.grantplatform.com/>). A link to the portal is provided on the members' area of the website. Please review the [Proposal Budget Guidelines](#) before submitting a proposal. Please download the latest forms from the website, as these forms are updated periodically.
3. For clarity, applicants should ensure that when they refer to EuroQol instruments they use the correct terms – see [EQ-5D Nomenclature](#).
4. Unless stated otherwise in a Request for Proposals, the lead applicant must be a member of the EuroQol Group, in principle.
5. Applications for funding can be submitted at any time. Any proposal targeting one of the specified [aims for the WGs](#) is consistent with the overall scientific strategy and thus will be considered for funding.
6. Twice a year the Executive Committee (Exec) issues a Request for Proposals, highlighting the current research priorities. These will be circulated by email and posted on the members' area on the website. Funding will be awarded on a competitive basis.
7. Proposals are reviewed every quarter in March, June, September and December. Please note that:
  - a. High priority proposals, earmarked as such by the Exec Chair, will be reviewed at the earliest possible Exec meeting.
  - b. Fast track proposals, with a budget of €25,000 or less, see below, will normally be reviewed within two weeks, unless issues are noted during the review. Note that the regular process will be followed for fast track proposals submitted within two weeks before an Exec meeting where proposals will be reviewed.

If you have any questions on the review process or submission deadlines you can send an email to the [Executive Director](#) or to the [Scientific Team Leader](#).
8. The **regular proposal review process** is as follows:
  - a. Two Exec reviewers will independently review each proposal.
  - b. The relevant Working Group (WG) will also review each proposal. The WG Chair may delegate the reviewing task to a WG member or to another researcher with special expertise on the topic. However, the Exec wants to be assured that this review represents the considered view of the WG.
  - c. When proposals are received on a topic that falls outside the immediate remit of the WGs (e.g. 'innovative' proposals), the scientific team leader chooses the reviewers.

- d. All reviews will be completed online using the EuroQol Project Submission Portal, where reviewers can view the proposal and rate or leave comments pertaining to the following criteria: *Strategic and scientific importance; Approach/study; Design/methods: Feasibility; Budget, timelines and deliverables; Data protection and protection of human subjects*. Next, the scores and/or comments are shared with all members of the Exec to decide on the proposal.
9. The Exec Chair may install a triage committee to facilitate the decision making on all proposals. This will be announced in the Request for proposals, together with a description of the triage process. The triage committee will consider the proposals and their reviews and make a triage decision based on the reviewer comments when a clear picture emerges from the review reports. These triage decisions need to be ratified by the full Exec. If there are important concerns raised by any member of the Exec about any triage-decision, the proposal will be deferred for discussion at the next Exec meeting. If the review reports do not provide a strong basis for a decision, the proposal no triage decision will be made and the proposal is moved to the discussion with the full Exec.
  - a. The WG Chair may be invited to join the Exec meeting when proposals are discussed that are in the WGs remit, to ensure informed decision making by the Exec. If the WG Chair is unable to attend the meeting and the Executive Committee decision conflicts with the recommendation of the WG, then the final decision by the Executive Committee may be postponed until the WG Chair can be consulted.
  - b. Any person who has a conflict of interest will be excluded from being involved in any part of the reviewing and decision-making process regarding funding.
10. The **fast track review process** is as follows:
  - a. Applicants should use the regular approach to submit their proposal, via the [EuroQol Project Submission Portal](#), see point 2.
  - b. Where proposals seek a budget of €25,000 or less, a review will be sought from just one member of the Exec. One or more additional reviews can be requested from the Working Groups, at the discretion of the (Deputy) Exec Chair.
  - c. Fast track proposals received for an open call are moved through the process at the same speed as regular proposals. Fast track proposals received in the interval between open calls will be reviewed immediately. The Chair-, or the Deputy Chair of the Exec will consider that review and will send a recommended decision via email, along with the proposal and the review, to members of the Exec with request to respond to within 48 hours in case of concerns.
  - d. If there are important concerns raised by any member of the Exec about the Chair's recommended decision, the proposal will be deferred for discussion at the next Exec meeting. If not, the applicant will be informed of the Exec decision to fund/ not to fund the proposal.
  - e. The fast track proposal scope extends beyond small scale research projects: members can also submit plans for organising educational meetings around topic relevant to the EuroQol mission, or to convene a meeting to develop grant proposals by members that wish to collaborate.

- f. To receive funding for meetings or collaboration, a deliverable should be defined, such as a research proposal or a publication. Proposals can range from a request for support to present an EQ-5D related workshop or symposium at a conference, to a stipend for staying at some other institution for a couple of months that will result in a publication or deliverable of scientific or strategic relevance to the Group. If such proposals have a budget of more than €25,000 these should be submitted as a regular proposal. Note that regular oral- or poster presentations at conferences are not in scope: the proposed activity should be more outreaching than just an oral- or poster presentation.
11. **Executive Committee decisions** on proposals will be either:
    - a. Funding awarded;
    - b. Funding awarded, subject to satisfactory revisions and clarifications (confirmed by Chair's action, on the basis of reviewers' recommendations; and reported to the following Executive Committee meeting);
    - c. Invited to revise and re-submit for consideration by the Executive Committee at its next meeting;
    - d. Funding declined.
  12. Applicants will normally receive feedback within three weeks after the Executive Committee meetings. Reviewers' comments will be anonymized when fed back to principal investigators by the EQ Office.
  13. Abstracts of applications that are awarded funding will be published on the public website.
  14. When funding is awarded, the Executive Director, or the Scientific Team Leader, will follow-up with a letter confirming Executive Committee approval. Half the budget will be transferred to the applicant(s) at the start of the project, once all signatures are in place on the approval letter. Co-applicants may invoice separately. The Principle Investigator (PI) should be copied in, as the PI is responsible for the study budget.
  15. If funding is refused, the Executive Director, or the Scientific Team Leader, will follow-up with a rejection notification mail that includes the reasons. To appeal a decision, you must write a letter to the Executive Director or the Scientific Team Leader asking to have the decision reconsidered and motivate this request.
  16. **Once a project is completed**, the process is as follows:
    - a. As specified in the Executive Committee approval letter, at the completion of the project, a final report should be submitted, using the Research Project Final Report Form on the EuroQol Project Submission Portal (<https://euroqol-proposals.grantplatform.com/>), together with the original proposal, all deliverables described in the proposal and all reviewer reports, if applicable.
    - b. For symposia and workshops the Workshop and Symposia Report Form should be submitted using the portal, together with the original proposal, information on the number of attendees and their evaluation of the presentation/workshop. A Workshop and Symposia Attendee Evaluation Form can be found [here](#).

- c. The final report will be reviewed by the relevant WG. The WG Chair may delegate the reviewing task to a WG member or to a member of the EQ Group with special expertise on the topic. However, the Exec wants to be assured that this review represents the considered view of the WG.
- d. In case of a final report on an 'innovative' proposal, or any other proposal outside the scope of the WGs, the Exec Chair, together with the Scientific Team Leader from the EQ Office, will identify a member of the EQ Group with relevant expertise and invite this member to review the report.
- e. The final report review will be completed online using the EuroQoI Project Submission Portal, where reviewers can view and rate the report and offer a recommendation (Sign-off, or Revise and Resubmit). Reviewers are asked to comment on: *Was the work completed as planned? Is the reporting up to standard? Are there strategic implications?* Next, the scores and/or comments are shared with all members of the Exec to decide whether the report can be signed off.
- f. The final report and its review will not be discussed at length in the Exec, unless any Exec member wants to discuss it. Once the Exec signs off on the final report the remaining budget will be transferred.
- g. Final project reports will be published on the members' website and an abstract of the final report will be published on the public website, unless the Exec and the project team agree otherwise.
- h. If the funding applicants fail to deliver output of sufficient quality in a timely way, payment of the second budget instalment may be withheld and, in some circumstances, the first instalment may be required to be repaid. Failure to deliver output will be taken into account in consideration of future applications.

Lastly, the Executive Committee reserves the right to deviate from these guidelines when required by circumstances.

If you have any questions about applying for funding, please contact the [Executive Director](#) or the [Scientific Team Leader](#).

## Proposal Budget Guidelines (annex to 01 Guidance for applicants.pdf)

Knut Stavem & Bernhard Slaap

The Executive Committee studies budgets in applications in detail. The guidelines below are provided to ensure a smooth review process.

In **section 18, Proposed budget**, in the Research Proposal Application Form, or in the **Budget proposal** section of the Workshop and Symposia Application Form, you are requested to provide a breakdown of the proposed budget.

Please split up your study budget in the following categories:

- Personnel costs
- Data acquisition costs
- Material costs and other preparation costs
- Dissemination costs

If you are **applying for a workshop or a symposium**, please also provide details about:

- Honoraria, including preparation time
- Venue costs and entrances fees
- Travel costs and expected costs for hotel costs and meals

### ***Personnel costs***

Personnel costs are typically the largest cost constituents in proposal budgets. These can be budgeted for the preparation of the study or workshop, data acquisition and data analysis. Try to estimate the numbers of hours/days that will be spent on the project to the best of your knowledge. Please apply appropriate local hourly or daily rates when calculating personnel costs, but note that these should not exceed the EuroQol Group Foundation's 3 categories for **maximum daily rates**, i.e.:

- (1) €110.00 per hour/ €880 per day, including overheads, for **senior researchers**, e.g. for investigators with leadership roles, who are at least associate professor level: experienced researchers with PhDs and a substantial publication list.
- (2) €85.00 per hour/€680 per day, including overheads, for **less experienced researchers**, e.g. post-docs.
- (3) €45.00 per hour/€360 per day for **students and office staff**.

Please note that the Executive Committee expects applicants to use the 3 categories for budgeting personnel costs. Applicants must provide a justification if they choose to budget research staff at higher daily rates that described above. Furthermore, a justification should be provided for any team member budgeted at the maximum daily rate. At the discretion of the Executive Committee, the budget for personnel costs will be approved, or a lower budget proposed.

EQ Office staff members can participate in EQ-funded studies. Please discuss your plans with the Scientific Team Leader or the Executive Director prior to submitting such a proposal.

When EQ Office staff is participating in your project, please insert a line item under Personnel costs titled 'EQ Office Staff' to specify their hours, using €110.00 per hour/ €880 per day. In **section 9, Budget requested from EuroQol**, specify this amount separately. The total amount will determine if the fast-track review process can be followed (requested budget  $\leq$  €15.000).

Under the category of **Data acquisition costs** it is acceptable to have the following costs as line items:

- Respondent's fees and travel costs
- Interviewer costs and their travel costs
- Office/room rent for data acquisition outside the University
- If an agency/ outside company is used, please provide a copy of their invoice/ cost proposal

As a rule, it is not acceptable to request funding for buying computer hardware or software to be used for data acquisition. Renting computer hardware for a study is acceptable.

For EQ-VT studies please add €25.000 for EQ-VT costs (software development, training, support etc.). Upon approval by the Exec this will be provided as in-kind support. In **section 9, Budget requested from EuroQol**, specify this amount separately as in-kind support.

Under the category of **Material costs and other preparation costs** it is acceptable to have the following costs as line items:

- Secretarial support, stationary, telephone costs etc. (usually not more than 5 % of total budget).
- Processing costs for human subject protection/ethics approval, if applicable

It is not acceptable to request funding for computer hardware or software to be used for data analysis or manuscript writing.

Under the category of **Dissemination costs** it is acceptable to budget for one researcher to attend an international congress to present the results of the study. Allowable costs include:

- (1) An economy class airline ticket
- (2) Meeting registration fee.

The applicant is required to seek funding from other sources for other dissemination costs, such as board and living, hours spent away the office, co-presenters of the study results etc. As a rule, costs of publishing e.g. in open access journals, are not reimbursed, although exceptions are possible for strategic important studies.

Please contact [Bernhard Slaap](#) if you have any comments, questions or suggestions on Research Proposal budgeting.