

Annex 8

Quality systems requirements for national good manufacturing practice inspectorates

Background	101
1. Introduction	102
2. Glossary	102
3. Administrative structure	103
4. Terms of reference	104
5. Organizational structure	104
6. Inspection personnel	106
7. Documentation	107
8. Records	109
9. Inspection procedures	109
10. Inspection facilities required	112
11. Quality manual	113
12. Confidentiality	114
13. Publications	115
14. Appeals	115
15. Internal audit and periodic review	116
16. Complaints	117
17. Recalls	117
References	118

Background

Following the provisional guidelines on the inspection of pharmaceutical manufacturers (1), the WHO Expert Committee on Specifications for Pharmaceutical Preparations acknowledged that additional guidelines concerning national inspectorates would be of value in strengthening the implementation of good manufacturing practices (GMP) (2) and enhancing mutual recognition among inspectorates.

A trend has recently become apparent in WHO Member States for non-commercial institutions, such as certification bodies, testing

laboratories, etc., to introduce quality systems principles in their internal operations. The same principles are also being applied by governmental pharmaceutical inspectorates and drug control laboratories.

The Pharmaceutical Inspection Convention (PIC) has published a document (3), with the objective of adapting the standards of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) of the 9000 series and related norms (4–8) to the activities of the GMP inspectorates of Member States. It is based on European Standard EN 45012, *General criteria for certification bodies operating quality systems certification* (9), but has been modified for this particular purpose.

1. Introduction

These requirements are applicable to quality systems for the operation of inspection services within competent authorities concerned with GMP inspections. It is intended that each inspection service should use these requirements as the basis for developing its own quality system.

The establishment and operation of a quality system is an essential element in the mutual recognition of national GMP inspections. The willingness to accept national inspections is significantly enhanced when it is known that the GMP inspectorate of the competent authority follows uniform procedures incorporating quality system principles. The quality system should include all the activities involved in the inspection.

2. Glossary

authorized person

A person (among key personnel of a manufacturing establishment) responsible for the release of batches of finished products for sale (10).

quality audit

An examination and assessment of all or part of a quality system with the specific purpose of improving it. A quality audit is usually conducted by outside or independent specialists or a team designated by the management for this purpose. Such audits may also be extended to suppliers and contractors (2).

quality manual

A handbook that describes the various elements of the system for assuring the quality of the test results generated by a laboratory (see section 11).

quality system

An appropriate infrastructure, encompassing the organizational structure, procedures, processes and resources necessary to ensure adequate confidence that a product (or service) will satisfy given requirements for quality (2).

standard operating procedure (SOP)

An authorized written procedure giving instructions for performing operations not necessarily specific to a given product or material but of a more general nature (e.g. equipment operation, maintenance and cleaning; validation; cleaning of premises and environmental control; sampling and inspection). Certain SOPs may be used to supplement product-specific master and batch production documentation (2).

3. Administrative structure

3.1 The structure, membership and operation of the GMP inspectorate should be such that impartiality is safeguarded.

3.2 The national inspection services are responsible for ensuring that the requirements of the relevant national legislation are satisfied.

3.3 All personnel employed or used by the GMP inspectorate, including outside inspectors or subcontracted personnel, should not be subject to any commercial, financial or other pressures which might affect their judgement. They should not be under the control of pharmaceutical manufacturers, and must be assessed and licensed.

3.4 The system for obtaining fees should not improperly influence the inspection procedure.

Recommended procedure

The administrative structure, membership, operation and legal status of the GMP inspectorate should be described in the quality manual (see section 11).

The quality manual should show how all personnel working for the GMP inspectorate, including subcontracted staff or advisers, and persons serving on committees providing advice, can maintain their impartiality. The GMP inspectorate should ensure that such persons:

- (a) are not subject to any commercial, financial or other pressures which might influence their judgement;
- (b) are not improperly influenced in their inspection of pharmaceutical manufacturers or persons assessed;
- (c) have not been involved in the design or maintenance of inspected facilities by way of any consultancy service or commercial arrangement.

The remuneration of GMP inspectorate personnel engaged in inspection activities should not depend on the result of such activities or on the granting of a marketing authorization.

Only in exceptional cases may GMP inspectorates provide advisory or consultancy services. Where the GMP inspectorate does provide such services, it should develop a code of conduct or defined policy which clearly distinguishes between the process of inspection and that of providing an advisory or consultancy service to clients. This service should be of benefit to all of industry, and not solely to individual manufacturers.

4. **Terms of reference**

4.1 The functions of the GMP inspectorate should be clearly defined and should cover:

- (a) legal responsibilities;
- (b) the formulation of policies;
- (c) an overview of the implementation of its policies;
- (d) an overview of its finances;
- (e) as required, the setting-up of committees to which defined activities are delegated.

Recommended procedure

The terms of reference, legal responsibilities and functions of the GMP inspectorate and the way in which policy guidelines are established should be documented in the quality manual.

For any committee established to advise the GMP inspectorate or the chief inspector, the following details should be included:

- (a) its role and function;
- (b) the procedure for selecting and appointing the members (the names of the chairperson, secretary and members, their current appointments and the interests, if any, which they represent on the committee, should be available);
- (c) the rules of procedure.

5. **Organizational structure**

5.1 The GMP inspectorate should have an organization that enables it to maintain the capability to perform its technical functions satisfactorily.

5.2 The GMP inspectorate should have:

- (a) documentation clearly identifying its legal status;
- (b) an organizational chart showing clearly the responsibility and reporting structure of the inspectorate and, in particular, the relationship between its inspection and authorization (licensing) functions;
- (c) a description of the means by which the inspectorate obtains financial support;
- (d) a description of the relationship between the GMP inspectorate and other departments within the drug regulatory authority and other government agencies, where they operate as separate bodies.

5.3 The GMP inspectorate should have and make available a formal statement explaining how the results of inspections are taken into account in granting and maintaining authorizations (licences).

5.4 The senior management of the GMP inspectorate should make a formal commitment to the recommended principles by ensuring that the quality policy of the inspectorate is documented, relevant to the objectives, and implemented.

5.5 The responsibility, authority and reporting structure of the GMP inspectorate should be clearly defined and documented (see above) and should be supported by written job descriptions for each member of staff.

5.6 An appropriately experienced, responsible and qualified person (2) should be nominated to carry out the quality assurance function, including implementing and maintaining the quality system. This person should have direct access to senior management. If necessary, this task may be assigned to more than one person.

5.7 The GMP inspectorate should have sufficient resources at all levels to enable it to attain its objectives effectively and efficiently. Senior management should ensure that all personnel are competent to carry out their assigned duties. They should receive appropriate training that should be documented and its effectiveness assessed.

5.8 Periodic management reviews of the quality system should be conducted and documented; records of these reviews should be retained for a specified period of time.

Recommended procedure

The above-mentioned recommendations are intended to ensure a reasonable level of transparency, both nationally and internationally.

The organizational chart, source(s) of finance, legal status of the GMP inspectorate and its relationship with the drug regulatory authority and other government agencies should be documented in the quality manual, together with a description of the quality system.

6. **Inspection personnel**

6.1 The personnel of the GMP inspectorate should be competent to perform the functions that they undertake.

6.2 The GMP inspectorate should maintain information on the relevant qualifications, training and experience of each inspector. Records of training and experience should be kept up to date.

6.3 Personnel should have clear, documented instructions specifying their duties and responsibilities. These instructions should be kept up to date.

6.4 When work is subcontracted to an external body or use is made of experts, the inspectorate should ensure that the personnel employed meet the relevant requirements of the quality system. The liability of third party inspectors should be clearly defined in the contract or agreement.

6.5 The GMP inspectorate should possess the required personnel, expertise and other resources to perform inspections of manufacturers and wholesale distributors to determine whether they comply with the principles and guidelines of current good practices and with the relevant legislation.

6.6 The staff responsible for inspections should have appropriate qualifications, training, experience and knowledge of the inspection process. They should have the ability to make professional judgments as to the conformity of the inspected party with the requirements of good practices and the relevant legislation and be able to make an appropriate risk assessment. Knowledge of current technology is essential, including computerized systems and information technology.

6.7 The GMP inspectorate should establish a documented system for recruiting and training its personnel. The training received and the training needs of each member of staff should be regularly reviewed, and individual training records should be maintained.

Recommended procedure

The credibility of the GMP inspection process will depend to a large degree on the technical competence and integrity of the inspectors. The quality manual should provide up-to-date details of the names,

qualifications, experience and terms of reference (job description and duties to be performed) of each member of staff engaged in the GMP inspection process (see also section 10).

Formal arrangements should exist for personnel training, and details of these arrangements should be documented. Training undertaken by each member of staff engaged in GMP inspections should be documented (see also “Recommended procedure” in section 10).

A documented procedure for selecting the members of an inspection team and deciding on its size should be available. The inspection team may include a person or persons with specialist knowledge and/or experience of a particular area of technology.

If an inspection is carried out on behalf of the GMP inspectorate by an external body or person, the GMP inspectorate should ensure that the external personnel satisfy the relevant requirements contained in these recommendations.

GMP inspectors working with or advising the GMP inspectorate should:

- (a) be academically qualified in a recognized scientific/technological discipline related to pharmaceuticals (normally pharmacy, chemistry or microbiology); direct personal experience of pharmaceutical manufacture or control is not a requirement but would be considered as a valuable asset for an inspector;
- (b) have satisfactorily completed a recognized training course on auditing quality management systems;
- (c) undergo at least 10 days of training per year (e.g. courses, symposia, conferences, etc.);
- (d) have a competent working knowledge of the WHO guidelines on GMP for pharmaceutical products (2) and/or the GMP inspection procedures of the relevant national regulatory authority;
- (e) have undergone appropriate training in the current procedures and techniques of GMP inspections before conducting an inspection alone;
- (f) have the necessary personal qualities of integrity, tact and character to perform the duties of a GMP inspector.

7. Documentation

7.1 The GMP inspectorate should maintain a system for the control of all documentation relating to GMP inspections of manufacturers and recommendations relating to authorization holders, and should ensure that:

- (a) the current versions of the appropriate documentation are available at all relevant locations;
- (b) all revised documents or amendments to documents are correctly authorized and processed in a manner which ensures that they are introduced without delay;
- (c) superseded documents are removed from use throughout the GMP inspectorate and elsewhere in the organization and its agencies, but are retained for a defined period of time.

7.2 The GMP inspectorate should ensure that all of its activities are described in SOPs that clearly describe the responsibilities, policy and actions. These should include, but not be limited to, training (introduction, GMP and task-related), inspections, reporting after inspections, handling of complaints, licensing (issue, suspension, revocation), certification, documentation control, planning and handling of appeals.

7.3 Proper and accessible records should be maintained of the activities carried out, including training, as well as the assessment of inspectors after training, the preparation of inspection reports, the handling of complaints, and the drawing-up of authorized checklists (where in use) and other related documents.

7.4 Reports should be prepared on all inspections performed. They should be prepared in the approved format, and signed and dated by the relevant inspector.

7.5 The documentation system should ensure that any changes to documents are made in a controlled manner and are properly authorized. There should be a means of identifying changes in individual documents.

Recommended procedure

The following information should be included or referred to in the quality manual:

- (a) a list of all the documents used;
- (b) for each document, the name(s) or position(s) of the person(s) responsible for authorizing its issue and any subsequent amendments or changes;
- (c) a description of the system whereby relevant documents and subsequent amendments are made available at the appropriate location from the point of view of the functioning of the inspection process;

- (d) the method by which amendments and changes are made, so that documents are speedily updated, changes recorded and superseded documents promptly withdrawn and archived.

8. **Records**

8.1 The GMP inspectorate should maintain a system of records to suit its particular method of operation and circumstances. It must comply with the relevant obligations under national legislation and demonstrate that the quality system is operating satisfactorily.

8.2 Records should be available which demonstrate that all the relevant procedures have been followed in the performance of each GMP inspection, including the initial inspection, the recommendation for issue of a marketing authorization, routine inspections and corrective action.

8.3 All records should be safely stored for an adequate period, and held under conditions that guarantee their security and confidentiality, unless otherwise required by the national legislation.

Recommended procedure

The quality manual should describe or refer to separate SOPs which describe the system adopted by the GMP inspectorate for maintaining its records. The manual should include blank specimen copies of the various checklists, certificates and reports used during the inspection process and describe the way in which these are processed, stored and archived, and/or disposed of.

The procedures for recommending to the authorization holder the issue, suspension or revocation of marketing authorizations should be described.

Documented staff instructions on security and on the use and handling of inspection reports should be identified and described in accordance with the confidentiality requirements specified in national legislation. Information as to who should have access to confidential information should be given and such access should be controlled.

Records associated with inspection activities should be retained for a minimum period of three full inspection cycles or for 6 years, whichever is the longer.

9. **Inspection procedures**

9.1 The GMP inspectorate should have the required resources (financial, human, facilities and others) and documented procedures to enable the inspection of manufacturing operations to be carried out

in accordance with the requirements of the WHO guidelines on GMP (2) and/or the national GMP guidelines.

9.2 The GMP inspectorate should require the manufacturer to have documented procedures in accordance with a quality management system, and complying with the WHO guidelines on GMP (2) and/or the national GMP guidelines.

9.3 The GMP inspectorate should perform regular inspections of the manufacturing premises, procedures and quality systems of authorization holders at least once every 2 years in accordance with a written inspection programme. Written inspection reports should be prepared and sent to the national regulatory authority to keep it informed of the outcome of such inspections.

9.4 The planning of inspections of manufacturers and the assessment of compliance with the planning regarding the performance of the different types of inspections should be documented. The types of inspections should include as a minimum routine inspections, specific inspections, follow-up inspections and concise inspections.

9.5 The activity of the GMP inspectorate should be described, indicating how it relates to the system(s) for granting manufacturers' and product authorizations.

9.6 The activities relating to post-marketing surveillance and product testing should be described. The description should also cover the process of handling non-conforming products (e.g. substandard or counterfeit products).

9.7 The procedure for operations in support of a surveillance sampling programme should be documented.

9.8 The GMP inspectorate should have the documented procedures and resources to enable the inspection of manufacturing and wholesale distribution operations to be carried out in accordance with the official guidelines and national legislation. A formal inspection plan should be followed. All instructions, standards or written procedures, worksheets, checklists and reference data relevant to the work of the GMP inspectorate should be kept up to date and be readily available to staff.

9.9 A chief inspector should be appointed to coordinate inspection activities if more than one inspector is involved in an inspection. The lead inspector, who should be selected by all the participating inspectors, should normally prepare the inspection report.

9.10 Observations and/or data obtained in the course of inspections should be recorded in a timely manner to prevent loss of relevant information.

9.11 Completed inspections should be reviewed to ensure that the requirements have been met.

Recommended procedure

The procedures covering initial inspections of new applicants for marketing authorizations and ongoing inspections of authorization holders should be documented.

Manufacturers should be inspected at least every 1 or 2 years, although new authorization holders should be inspected more frequently until inspectors are confident that the manufacturers are complying with the WHO guidelines on GMP and/or the national GMP guidelines. The frequency of inspection should not normally fall below once every 2 years as lack of continuity may give rise to a reduced awareness of current GMP or allow significant deficiencies to develop.

The time available for undertaking inspections should be adequate to enable sufficient investigations and enquiries to be made to give confidence in the findings of the inspection.

The report to the authorization holders following GMP inspections should include as a minimum:

- (a) the name and location of the manufacturing site(s);
- (b) the date(s) of the inspection(s);
- (c) the reason for the inspection and the product categories and manufacturing areas inspected;
- (d) the suitability of key personnel, including the authorized person;
- (e) observations, failures to comply with the WHO guidelines on GMP and/or the national GMP guidelines, and the recommended frequency of reinspection;
- (f) a recommendation on the issue/continuation, suspension or revocation of the marketing authorization.

The GMP inspectorate should have the power, under the national or regional legislation or other arrangements, to require reinspection of a manufacturer's premises if there are changes in personnel, facilities, internal organization or scope of activity, or if analysis of a complaint or any other information indicates that the manufacturer is failing to comply with the requirements of the WHO guidelines on GMP and/or the national GMP guidelines, or with the conditions imposed by the marketing authorization.

10. **Inspection facilities required**

10.1 The inspection service should have the required facilities in terms of staff, expertise, equipment and other resources to perform inspections of manufacturers to determine compliance with the requirements of the WHO guidelines on GMP and/or the national GMP guidelines. This does not preclude the use of external resources, when necessary, provided that the requirements as described for “subcontracting” are met (see section 3.3).

10.2 If inspections are carried out on behalf of the GMP inspectorate by an external body or person, the GMP inspectorate should ensure that this body or person satisfies the requirements specified in section 3.3. A properly documented agreement covering these arrangements, including confidentiality aspects and the declaration of any conflict of interests, should be drawn up.

Recommended procedure

A sufficient number of competent personnel should support the GMP inspectorate, whether employed or contracted for the functions that they undertake.

The quality manual should describe the procedures for the management of the GMP inspectors and of the necessary records. A record should be kept for each individual employed to carry out GMP inspections (whether an employee or under contract), which should include the following information:

- (a) the name;
- (b) the designated area of responsibility within the declared scope of the GMP inspectorate;
- (c) the educational qualifications;
- (d) the professional qualifications, where relevant to the activities of the GMP inspectorate;
- (e) the work experience;
- (f) details of the GMP inspector training received, supported by documentary evidence of course attendance and assessment results.

Where an external body or person carries out a GMP inspection, the quality manual should describe the process adopted by the GMP inspectorate to comply with the above-mentioned requirements.

Whenever an external body or person is used to carry out any function on behalf of a GMP inspectorate, the GMP inspectorate should

have documented evidence to demonstrate that the external body or person concerned is competent to do so.

Staff members authorized to carry out audits of external bodies or persons should be identified.

Documented agreements with all external bodies or persons should be available for scrutiny.

A register of all external bodies or persons employed by the GMP inspectorate should be maintained. The register should include:

- (a) the name of the external body or person;
- (b) the legal status of the external body and details of any relationship with a parent company, group of companies or any other organization of which the external body or person is part, with specific reference to possible conflicts of interest;
- (c) the names and qualifications of all personnel engaged in GMP inspection work for the GMP inspectorate.

11. **Quality manual**

11.1 The GMP inspectorate should define and document its policy and objectives for, and commitment to, quality in a quality manual. It should ensure that this policy is understood, implemented and maintained at all levels in the organization.

11.2 The information contained in the quality manual and procedures should include at least:

- (a) a quality policy statement;
- (b) a brief description of the legal status of the GMP inspectorate (see section 4.1(a));
- (c) a code of ethics and conduct relating to GMP inspection activities;
- (d) a description of the organization of the GMP inspectorate, including details of any governing board, its constitution, terms of reference and rules of procedure (see section 5.2(b));
- (e) the names, qualifications, experience and terms of reference of the senior staff and other GMP inspection personnel, both internal and external (see sections 6 and 10);
- (f) details of training arrangements for inspection personnel (see sections 6 and 10);
- (g) an organizational chart showing the responsibility and reporting structure of the inspectorate and the allocation of functions

- stemming from the person in charge of the GMP inspectorate (see section 5.2(b));
- (h) details of the documented procedures for inspecting manufacturers under the WHO guidelines on GMP and/or the national GMP guidelines (see section 8);
 - (i) details of the documented procedures for recommendations to the authorization holder for the issue, suspension or revocation of marketing authorizations (see sections 7.2 and 8.1);
 - (j) a list of any subcontractors used for GMP inspections and details of the documented procedures for assessing and monitoring their competence (see section 6);
 - (k) details of appeals procedures (see section 14);
 - (l) a procedure for ensuring that complaints made to the GMP inspectorate are investigated so that any shortcomings of the authorization holders are revealed (see section 16);
 - (m) a list of those staff members responsible for investigating complaints and those with the authority to take remedial action (see section 16);
 - (n) details of internal quality audits (see section 15);
 - (o) details of testing of samples (see sections 9.6–9.8);
 - (p) the control of non-conforming products (see section 9.6).

Recommended procedure

In order to keep the quality manual brief, reference may be made to other documents and/or procedures contained in other manuals.

12. Confidentiality

12.1 The GMP inspectorate should have adequate arrangements to ensure confidentiality of the information obtained in the course of its inspection activities at all levels of its organization, including committees.

12.2 The exchange of inspection reports between countries should be described. The format and content of reports should be specified.

Recommended procedure

The quality manual should describe how the GMP inspectorate discharges its responsibility for ensuring that all communications between itself and the companies inspected are kept confidential. The following are necessary:

- (a) instructions to personnel on confidentiality;
- (b) a written undertaking by all personnel not to divulge to third parties any information gained about any business affairs of clients;
- (c) the inclusion of provisions in all subcontracts to maintain confidentiality;
- (d) provisions to ensure the physical security of all documents and records relating to inspection activities.

13. **Publications**

13.1 The GMP inspectorate should produce and update, as necessary, a list of authorization holders, together with an outline of the scope of the marketing authorization issued to each manufacturer. The extent to which this list will be distributed should be specified.

13.2 An outline of the inspection and marketing authorization system should be available in published form.

13.3 Other publications, such as GMP guidelines and other guidelines and information brochures, should be available to industry and other interested parties, as appropriate.

Recommended procedure

The quality manual should list the publications issued by the authorization holder and GMP inspectorate. The following information should also be provided:

- (a) the name of the person responsible for compiling and updating each publication;
- (b) the frequency with which each publication is updated;
- (c) how the publications are distributed and to whom;
- (d) the procedure for issuing amendments.

14. **Appeals**

14.1 The GMP inspectorate should have procedures for the consideration of appeals against its decisions.

Recommended procedure

Appeals procedures should be established by the GMP inspectorate and should include:

- (a) the method by which an appeal may be lodged;
- (b) the method by which an impartial appeals panel, independent of the activity under review, is selected;

- (c) the names and positions of the members of the GMP inspectorate to whom appeals are referred, and the procedure for handling them;
- (d) a register of all appeals and their outcome.

15. **Internal audit and periodic review**

15.1 The GMP inspectorate should implement a system of planned and documented internal audits and periodic reviews of its compliance with the criteria of these guidelines.

15.2 There should be procedures for corrective and preventive action whenever faults are detected in the quality system, or in the performance of inspections and the general performance of the inspection service.

15.3 The management of the inspectorate should periodically review the quality system for its continuing suitability and effectiveness.

15.4 Inspectors should be evaluated before being allowed to perform inspections. Periodic reviews should also be undertaken to examine the performance of individual inspectors in order to ensure consistency among them, and in the operations and procedures of the GMP inspectorate.

15.5 A record of all audits and reviews should be kept and should include the findings, conclusions, recommendations and follow-up action. These records should be retained for a specified period of time.

Recommended procedure

Internal periodic review procedures should be documented. The review procedure should include internal audits by staff competent to ensure that all formulated procedures are adhered to. Based on the results of these audits, management must ensure that the GMP inspection system remains effective and that inspections conducted by different inspectors arrive at similar conclusions when the same operation is inspected under the same conditions.

Internal audit procedures should state:

- (a) the names or positions of staff members authorized to conduct internal audits;
- (b) what is to be examined and how often (a schedule for the examination of the whole organization over a given period should be drawn up);

- (c) how the audit will be conducted;
- (d) to whom the results will be reported;
- (e) who will initiate any corrective action.

Management reviews should take account of the results of internal audits and should include:

- (a) consideration of the overall operation of the GMP inspectorate;
- (b) uncovering defects or irregularities in the operation of the GMP inspection system;
- (c) ensuring that action has been taken to effectively correct defects revealed in previous reviews and audits.

Periodic audit by an experienced person or persons from another national regulatory authority is a useful means of providing an independent review of the GMP inspectorate's operations and procedures.

16. **Complaints**

16.1 The GMP inspectorate should have documented procedures for dealing with complaints arising from its activities.

16.2 A record should be maintained of all complaints received and the actions taken by the GMP inspectorate. These records should be retained for a specified period of time.

Recommended procedure

The GMP inspectorate should require each authorization holder to keep a record of all complaints received, as well as remedial actions relating to the manufacturing activities and products covered by the marketing authorization.

The GMP inspectorate should have a procedure for recording and investigating complaints received about its inspection activities. The procedure should include a list of those staff members responsible for investigating complaints and those with the authority to take remedial action.

17. **Recalls**

17.1 The GMP inspectorate should have a documented procedure for dealing with recalls and withdrawals of products from the market.

17.2 Records should be maintained of all recalls and withdrawals registered and dealt with by the inspectorate.

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