

ERN ReCONNET

Supporting Partners Policy

In recognition of the collaborative nature of ERN ReCONNET and the added value represented by the engagement of multiple stakeholders to accomplish its mission, the Network may appoint Supporting Partners (SPs).

SPs may include medical or scientific societies (national, European, or international), high-level expertise healthcare providers or individual experts, or other relevant organizations*. In addition, Supporting Patient Partners may also be appointed by ERN ReCONNET.

SPs are appointed on the basis of their expertise and added value they voluntarily wish to bring to the Network. They may be located within or outside the European Union.

SPs must not have any direct or indirect commercial or employment relationship with the European Commission, or with Full Members (FMs) or Affiliated Partners (APs) of ERN ReCONNET.

SPs may contribute to the Network in various forms, including scientific advice, contribution to the organisation of education, training and dissemination activities, participation in guideline and/or tools development, or collaboration in research and clinical activities.

They may also propose new collaborative initiatives, subject to the approval of the Strategic Board.

SPs shall have no voting rights and are not eligible for leadership positions within the Network.

The appointment of an SP may take place either by direct request of the SP or upon invitation by ERN ReCONNET.

Appointments require a decision of the Strategic Board, and shall be formalised through a written agreement.

The list of Supporting Partners shall be maintained by the Coordination Team.

Appointments are subject to periodic review and may be terminated in cases of conflict of interest, inactivity, or withdrawal.

** Please note that patient organisations are not included in this call, as a different dedicated procedure is in place within ERN ReCONNET for their involvement.*

Procedure on the Appointment and Management of the ERN ReCONNET Supporting Partners (SPs)

1. Purpose

This procedure defines the process for the identification, appointment, monitoring, and termination of Supporting Partners (SPs) within ERN ReCONNET, in accordance with Article 7 of the Governance Statutes.

2. Scope

The procedure applies to all Supporting Partners, including medical or scientific societies, healthcare providers, individual experts, non-profit organizations. A different procedure is in place for the Supporting Patient Partners.

3. Process Steps

- Expression of Interest or Invitation

SPs may be identified in two ways:

- a) Direct Request: An organization/individual submits a written expression of interest (EOI) to the ERN ReCONNET Coordination Team.
- b) Invitation: The Strategic Board (SB) or Coordination Team may identify and invite potential SPs based on expertise and relevance.

- Documentation Required

The interested SP shall submit:

- A completed Expression of Interest form and a CV (in the case of individual experts).
- A short description of expertise, activities, and relevance to ERN ReCONNET.
- A declaration of absence of conflict of interest.

- Assessment

- The Coordination Team conducts a preliminary review of eligibility and completeness of documentation.
- The Strategic Board evaluates the application/invitation against:
 - relevance of expertise,
 - potential added value to ERN ReCONNET,
 - absence of conflict of interest.

- Decision

- The SB makes a formal decision by simple majority.
- Approved SPs are recorded in the minutes of the SB meeting.
- The decision is communicated in writing to the applicant/invitee.

- Formalisation

- Following SB approval, a Written Agreement is prepared and signed by both ERN ReCONNET and the SP.
- The agreement outlines scope and the terms of the collaboration.

- Registration and Publication

- The Coordination Team maintains an Official List of Supporting Partners, including names, organizations, and roles.

- Periodic Review

- SP appointments are subject to review every 3 years, or earlier if requested by the SB.
- The review assesses:
 - level of engagement and contribution,
 - continued relevance of expertise,
 - absence of conflicts of interest.

- Termination

- An appointment may be terminated by decision of the SB in cases of:
 - conflict of interest,
 - inactivity after request of collaboration (no contribution for 12 months),
 - withdrawal (by written request of the SP),
 - other justified reasons (e.g., reputational risk).
- The termination is recorded in SB minutes, communicated in writing, and reflected in the list.

4. Roles and Responsibilities

- Coordination Team: manages documentation, maintains list, prepares agreements, conducts preliminary review.
- Strategic Board: evaluates applications, makes decisions, approves new initiatives by SPs, and decides on termination.
- SPs: provide voluntary expertise, respect confidentiality, and comply with ERN ReCONNET governance rules.