Quality Management Procedures for the Communication with the Applicants for Drug Registration Application (Interim)

Chapter I   General Provisions

Article 1  In order to further facilitate the communication of Center for Drug Evaluation (hereinafter referred to as CDE) with the applicants for drug registration application (hereinafter referred to as the applicants), enhance the openness and transparency therein, streamline the related management works, and improve the level and quality of the management and decision-making for drug technical review, we hereby develop this Procedures.

Article 2  CDE’s communication with the applicants generally can be divided into the following patterns:

(A) Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication;
(B) Query-Based Communication;
(C) Q & A-Based Communication;
(D) Open-Day Communication.

Article 3  On the basis of summing up previous communication experiences of CDE with the applicants and related CDE procedures documents, and taking into account the status of China’s drug review and drug R&D, the Procedures is developed in the principle of enhancing the communication quality and efficiency, and serving for drug R & D innovation and technical review.

Article 4  The Procedures has elaborated the patterns, organization procedures and requirements for communication between the CDE and the applicants, for any discrepancies of previous CDE procedure documents with this Procedures, the provisions of this Procedures shall prevail.
Chapter II Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication

Article 5 In Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication, either party of CDE or the applicants can make an appointment in advance and in specific way.

Article 6 Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication aims to encourage innovation and address the supply of drugs urgently needed in clinical practice. It applies to the following circumstances: when the applicants encounter critical or major technical problems in the key stages of drug R&D and need to communicate with CDE; or when CDE needs to communicate with the applicants to improve the quality & efficiency and reduce the risks of decision-making in the drug technical review process.

Article 7 To ensure the quality and efficiency of communication, the proposing party shall make an appointment sufficiently in advance, so that the other party can get fully prepared for preliminary research, information collection, analysis and evaluation etc.

Article 8 Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication can be proposed via the corresponding Section of the CDE Website, official correspondence, telephone, e-mail and other means.

Article 9 Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication is generally held in a conference, including face-to-face meetings, video and telephone conferences.

Article 10 Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication applications can be divided into the following five types according to the research progress and the different stages of registration application.

(A) Pre-IND application - applied at the stage where non-clinical studies have been basically completed, but the clinical study has not yet been applied;

(B) IND application - applied at the stage where clinical study application has been submitted;

(C) End of phase I Application - applied at the stage where clinical study has been approved, and phase I clinical study has been completed;
(D) End of phase II Application - applied at the stage where clinical study has been approved, and phase II clinical study has been completed;

(E) NDA Application - applied at the stage where clinical study has been completed, and production registration has been applied.

**Article 11** The organization and management of Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication, according to different types of the appointment application, are regulated as follows:

(A) For the "A, C, D" (i.e., the Pre-IND, the End of phase I and the End of phase II) applications as stated in Article 10, the Office of Management and Communication, in conjunction with the relevant Review Offices, shall provide preliminary opinions for decision-making; after the approval of CDE leadership, the responsible offices shall take charge of the organization and convening of meetings, working out the meeting minutes and other related works.

(B) The "B, E" (i.e., the IND and NDA) applications as stated in Article 10, i.e., the communication applications for the drug applications under CDE reviewing, according to the review report circulating and decision-making pathway and authorized pathway in the review process, shall be reviewed and approved by specific authorized signatory in conjunction with the opinions of relevant Review Offices. The organization and convening of meetings, the meeting minutes drafting and other related works shall be taken charge of by the chief review reporting offices of the drug application.

(C) The responsible offices for communication meetings shall be classified according to the different patterns of appointment applications as follows:

1. The "A, B, C" (i.e., the Pre-IND, the IND, the End of phase I) applications as stated in Article 10 shall be handled by the Office of Pharmacology & Toxicology, the related clinical review offices of corresponding indications and pharmaceutical science office shall be actively cooperated.

2. The "D, E" (i.e., the End of phase II and NDA) applications as stated in Article 10 shall be handled by the clinical review offices of
corresponding indications, the Office of Pharmacology & Toxicology and Office of Pharmaceutical Science shall be actively cooperated.

Article 12 In order to ensure the quality and efficiency of the Appointment-Based Communication meeting, the Two-Way Communication requires the proposing party to conduct adequate research, evidence collection, analysis and evaluation, etc. and to clarify the issues to be discussed, the material needed, the indispensable attendees and other premises before the meeting, prior to applying for the appointment. The specific requirements are as follows in accordance with whether a drug application applied for appointment communication is under CDE review:

(A) Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication for a drug application under CDE review ---- Applicants’ proposal

1. The applicants can apply for communication in a timely manner in light of the review progress and sequence of drug application publicized by the CDE website (www.cde.org.cn). The applicants should provide detailed research information according to the overall research and evaluation of the specific drug applied, clarify the issues to be discussed and the responsibilities and titles of the attendees, and submit these information to CDE via the "Applicants’ Window" Section of CDE Website, or in official documents.

2. Upon receipt of the applicants’ appointment applications, the chief review reporting office responsible for the specific drug application, in consideration of review plan, replies to the applicants via the "Applicants’ Window" in about one month before the beginning of the review. Upon approval, the communication meeting shall be convened in about a week before the beginning of the drug application review.

3. The reasons for disapproval of communication meetings shall be clearly stated in the reply to the applicants. The approval of communication meetings shall be conveyed to the applicants with detailed description of the issues to be discussed, the materials to be submitted, the demands for the attendees of both parties, and the time schedule and venue of the meeting, etc.

4. The specific office in charge shall be responsible for notifying/
informing CDE participants, related project managers and director and deputy directors of the Office of Management and Communication, and competent CDE leaders etc. of the relevant meeting schedules and requirements via mails/SMS.

(B) Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication for drug applications under review ---- proposed by CDE

1. According to the CDE decision-making pathway, in the decision-making process of the technical review, the discipline chief reviewers, chief reviewer reporter, office directors and CDE leaders can apply for communication in different stages of discipline review, comprehensive review of the chief reviewer reporter or technical review.

2. The communication application should clarify the issues to be discussed, the materials to be submitted, and the demands for the attendees of the both parties, the time schedule and venue of the meeting and other information, which are to be submitted via CDE conference system, and shall be implemented by related review offices after approved by appropriate review procedures.

3. The specific offices in charge shall organize and arrange the communication meeting as soon as possible upon CDE approval, and feedback the issues to be discussed, the materials to be submitted, the demands for the attendees of both parties, time schedule and venue of the meeting and related matters to the applicants through the "Applicants' Window"; and shall be responsible for notifying/informing CDE participants, related project managers and director and deputy directors of the Office of Management and Communication and competent CDE leaders etc. of the relevant meeting schedules and requirements via mails/SMS.

(C) Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication for drug applications NOT under CDE review.

1. Under such cases, the communication is generally proposed by the applicants.

2. The applicants should provide detailed research information according to the overall research and evaluation of the specific drug applied, to clarify the issues to be discussed, the responsibilities and
titles of the attendees, and submit these information to CDE via the "Applicants' Window" Section of CDE Website, or in official documents.

3. The applicants should make an appointment sufficiently in advance, so that relevant CDE personnel can hold adequate discussion and research on the study data submitted by the applicants, so as to ensure the quality and efficiency of communication.

4. Upon receipt of the applicants' appointment applications, the responsible office shall reply to the applicants via the "Applicants' Window" within 2 months according to CDE instructions. Upon approval, the communication meeting shall be convened within one month after the reply to the applicants.

5. The requirements for the contents of the reply to applicants and notifying / informing the relevant CDE staff are identical with the corresponding provision of “Two-Way Appointment-Based Communication of drug applications under review” in this Procedures.

(D) The specific offices in charge are responsible for good preparations of communication meeting; they shall hold adequate communication with the applicants during the meeting, the consensus on the issues to be discussed should be researched, and / or the logic of the analysis and the evidence and opinions etc. presented should be understand mutually, so as to ensure the quality and efficiency of communication.

(E) After communication meeting, the specific offices in charge shall work out the meeting minutes, which should accurately reflect the procedures, major issues and the status of expected goals realization of the meetings.

The meeting minutes of drug application under CDE review shall be drafted by discipline chief reviewer / chief reviewer reporter, and submitted along with the technical review report to the director of corresponding review office. The minutes involving major decision issues should be reported in accordance with the “Procedures for Review Decision Making Pathways (Interim) of CDE”. The evidence material adopted in the meeting process and the meeting information etc. can be brought into the next stage of review consultation meetings or deficiency notice; and if
necessary, can be received and archived after corresponding approval procedures in accordance with relevant CDE procedures.

The meeting minutes of drug application not under CDE review shall be jointly drafted by the applicants and personnel designated by the organizing office of the meeting, and confirmed by signatures (for CDE, the director of the organizing office) or seals of both parties after opinion-soliciting and basic consensus reached, and shall be handed out as a feedback to the attendees of both parties.

The meeting minutes shall be established and saved in the CDE conference system along with the communication application, relevant instructions, meeting schedules and other information for CDE’s reference and use in the follow-up research and review of related drug applications, and also can be publicized to the public regularly regarding the contents of the Meeting Minutes.

(F) The specific offices in charge shall, in line with the meeting discussions, propose the handling suggestions for the related drug application in a timely manner. The important conclusive information of the meeting minutes should be reflected in the technical review report.

Chapter III Query-Based Communication

Article 13 In Query-Based Communication, the applicants can have access to the required information via CDE website (www.cde.org.cn).

Article 14 CDE Website provides information related to drug registration and review to enable the applicants’ inquiry in a timely and user friendly manner. The specific information categories for query are as follows:

1. News category information: including the daily work updates, news focus, highlights and other information.

2. Technical guidance information: including related laws and regulations, technical requirements, electronic publications, guidance and other information.

3. Public information of CDE: including CDE functions, organization
and human resources, etc.; public notification of accepted drug applications and task sequences under review, the reviewers, the review plan, review progress, comments and conclusions of the review and other information; innovative drug review summary, the answers for common questions and other information; and the application, approval, organization and implementation of CDE’s communication with the applicants etc.

4. Database information: including the database of marketed drugs, database of the labeling (insert sheets) of marketed drugs, database of commonly used excipients, adverse drug reaction reports and other information.

5. Communication information: including the organization of CDE Open-Days and seminars, meetings and other information.

Article 15 The applicants can avail of CDE Website to surf the news, the public notification of review plans & task sequences, electronic publications, guidance, innovative drug review summary, the answers to common questions, as well as the public information related to the daily work and special work of CDE.

Article 16 In order to ensure the safety of the applicants’ registration information and enhance the openness of applicants-related information at the same time, CDE shall provide more open and abundant drug technical review & evaluation information on the basis of real-name verification between CDE and the applicants. A more convenient and efficient CDE- Applicant two-way communication can be established by Applicants’ Window.

Article 17 Through the "Applicants’ Window", CDE can publicize the specific review progress of the drug registration applications, reviewers, review reports, review conclusions and other information.

Article 18 Through the "Applicants’ Window", the applicants can submit electronic documents related to the drug registration application, such as the study summary, the production processes, quality standards, labeling and even the technical information that are crucial in the technical review process.
Article 19 CDE website should utilize advanced and appropriate search engines to provide full-text search service & functions, and also timely update the information of the website, improve and perfect the website features, to facilitate the applicants’ timely and quick inquiry and accesses to the accurate and relevant information catering to their needs.

Article 20 While surfing the CDE website, the applicants could as well propose suggestions for CDE’s continuous improvements of website functions to better serve the majority of applicants.

Chapter IV Q & A-Based Communication

Article 21 In Q & A-Based Communication, the applicants communicate with CDE on general technical issues through CDE website Information Feedback, telephone, e-mail and other ways. This pattern of communication usually does not touch upon major decision making issues in the technical review process. Being a two-way communication model between CDE and the applicants, Q & A-Based Communication includes applicants’ inquiry and CDE inquiry.

Article 22 Applicants inquiry is the inquiries made by the applicants to CDE. Applicants can propose question through the CDE website (hereinafter referred to as the “Network”) or by telephone.

(A) Network Q&A:

1. CDE website provides the “Information Feedback” section for the applicants to realize network inquiry.

2. While receiving the applicants’ questions from the Information Feedback, CDE website will give prompts to the applicants to check relevant information such as the answers for common questions and electronic publications prior to network inquiries, in order to avoid repeated inquiries or questions on similar problems.

3. CDE performs unified management on the messages in the “Information Feedback” sent by the applicants. In light of the specific question coming through the Information Feedback, the Office of Management and Communication shall designate related offices or personnel to answer via
internet or telephone within one week. The answers are required to be put on record and regularly classified. The common questions extracted from the records are to be incorporated into the Section of Answer for the Common Question in the website, thus the constant enrichment of this Section shall facilitate the applicants’ inquiries and information sharing, thereby improving the communication efficiency and quality.

(B) Telephone Q & A:

1. To accept the applicants’ telephone inquiries, CDE opened a hotline (010-68537257) manned during 9:00 -11:30 Am, and 1:30-4:30 pm in working days, and automated voice prompts during the rest of the time.

2. To ensure the quality of telephone Q&A, the call will be recorded; after the call, you will be prompted to evaluate the quality of service.

3. While accepting the applicants’ telephone inquiries, relevant CDE staff shall work under the “First Inquiry Accountability System” to provide explicit and accurate answers to the inquired issues; evasions and perfunctory answers are not allowed; the inquired issues that cannot be accurately replied while answering the phone are to be recorded and promptly answered to the applicants after the correct reply is obtained.

4. The applicants should refrain from making telephone inquiries for the following information:

   (1) The progress information for the review of related drug applications;

   (2) Major or critical information for decision-making in the technical review process;

   (3) Information that may involve the technical secrets of the applicants;

   (4) Other information that should not be disclosed.

5. Relevant CDE management and review personnel shall answer for the applicants’ telephone inquiries during 3:00-4:30 pm on each working day.

6. The applicants should evaluate the quality of telephone Q&A service, and propose reasonable suggestion, so that CDE can continuously improve
the work level and service quality.

**Article 23** CDE inquiry refers to the inquiries made by the CDE to the applicants. In the process of management or review of drug application, when verifications or communications are necessary to be made with the drug registration applicants, relevant CDE management or review personnel can make CDE inquiries on the basic information of the applied project and non-significant decision making information involved in the production process, quality standards, or labeling, etc.

**Article 24** Relevant CDE staff can only raise inquiries on drug applications within their respective review responsibilities to the corresponding applicants.

**Article 25** CDE inquiry recommends to give priority to network system (Applicants’ Window), which is supplemented by telephone inquiries to the applicants. Before proposing an inquiry, CDE staff should first inform the applicants of his/her own name, the affiliation of review offices, duties, contents and purposes of the inquiry etc.

1. After proposing an inquiry, the relevant CDE staff should pay close attention to the applicants’ reply, if necessary, they can call the applicants to confirm whether the inquiries are received or not, and to remind the applicants to give timely feedback; related inquiries and replies should be reflected in the review report of the corresponding drug applications, to ensure the completeness of the evidence information for technical review.

2. If CDE inquiries are made by telephone, the related personnel should also timely make phone call records in the network system, and reflect the relevant situation in the technical review report, to ensure the completeness of the evidence information for technical review.

**Article 26** The applicants have the right and obligation to verify the “identity” of the inquiring CDE staff, when in doubt, they can refuse Q & A-Based Communication. For the convenience of relevant review issues of the applied drug, it is advisable for the applicants to adopt the other communication methods, such as the applicants’ inquiry pattern, to communicate after confirming the other party is indeed the CDE review
Chapter V Open-Day Communication

Article 27 Open-Day Communication refers to the vis-a-vis communication between CDE and the applicants through prescribed patterns, such as the Consultation Day and Open Day activities.

Article 28 The Open-Day is an activity organized by CDE to invite on regular basis the public, the media and the applicants, through online appointment and registration, to visit CDE and exchange information. The Open Day is one of the effective ways to enhance the openness and transparency of technical review, and one of the platforms to promote CDE’s popularity and communication with the public.

Article 29 CDE accepts the inquiries of the applicants and answers their related questions on every Wednesday of working days during 8:45 - 12:00 am, and 1:30-4:30 pm in the CDE Consultation Hall. Since the consultation in the Consultation Day are extemporaneous Q & A without appointment, its advisory quality and efficiency is nowhere near the other consultation patterns mentioned in this Procedures, therefore it is not encouraged by CDE. After implementing this Procedure for some time, CDE will organize the assessments of the demand for relevant communication, thus gradually reducing the Consultation-Day hours, and continuously improving the quality and efficiency of other communication patterns.

Chapter VI Supplementary Provisions

Article 30 CDE Human Resources & Information Office, in conjunction with the Research & Evaluation Office and the Office of Management and Communication, shall perform quantitative evaluation on the contents involved in this Procedures, and conduct regular examination and assessment on the communication with the applicants, so as to continuously improve and enhance the Service Consciousness of the CDE staff, thereby improve their quality of service.

Article 31 All CDE staff shall abide by and implement this Procedure.
Article 32 This Procedures shall enter into force as of the date of release.

Disclaimer:
This document is for reference only. For any dispute, the Chinese version shall prevail.