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# **Guidance for Industry Q1A(R2) Stability Testing of New Drug Substances and Products**

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Food and Drug Administration  
Center for Drug Evaluation and Research (CDER)  
Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER)**

**November 2003  
ICH**

**Revision 2**

# Guidance for Industry

## Q1A(R2) Stability Testing of New Drug Substances and Products

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*Contains Nonbinding Recommendations*

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## **Guidance for Industry<sup>1</sup>**

### **Q1A(R2) Stability Testing of New Drug Substances and Products**

This guidance represents the Food and Drug Administration's (FDA's) current thinking on this topic. It does not create or confer any rights for or on any person and does not operate to bind FDA or the public. You can use an alternative approach if the approach satisfies the requirements of the applicable statutes and regulations. If you want to discuss an alternative approach, contact the FDA staff responsible for implementing this guidance. If you cannot identify the appropriate FDA staff, call the appropriate number listed on the title page of this guidance.

#### **I. INTRODUCTION (1)<sup>2</sup>**

This guidance is the second revision of *Q1A Stability Testing of New Drug Substances and Products*, which was first published in September 1994 and revised in August 2001. The purpose of this revision is to harmonize the intermediate storage condition for zones I and II with the long-term condition for zones III and IV recommended in the ICH guidance *Q1F Stability Data Package for Registration Applications in Climatic Zones III and IV*. The changes made in this second revision are listed in the attachment to this guidance.

##### **A. Objectives of the Guidance (1.1)**

This guidance is intended to define what stability data package for a new drug substance or drug product is sufficient for a registration application within the three regions of the European Union (EU), Japan, and the United States. It does not seek to address the testing for registration in or export to other areas of the world. The guidance exemplifies the core stability data package for new drug substances and products, but leaves sufficient flexibility to encompass the variety of different practical situations that may be encountered due to specific scientific considerations and characteristics of the materials being evaluated. Alternative approaches can be used when there are scientifically justifiable reasons.

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<sup>1</sup> This guidance was developed within the Expert Working Group (Quality) of the International Conference on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH) and has been subject to consultation by the regulatory parties, in accordance with the ICH process. This document was endorsed by the ICH Steering Committee at *Step 4* of the ICH process, February 2003. At *Step 4* of the process, the final draft is recommended for adoption to the regulatory bodies of the European Union, Japan, and the United States.

<sup>2</sup> Arabic numbers reflect the organizational breakdown in the document endorsed by the ICH Steering Committee at *Step 4* of the ICH process.

## *Contains Nonbinding Recommendations*

### **B. Scope of the Guidance (1.2)**

The guidance addresses the information to be submitted in registration applications for new molecular entities and associated drug products. This guidance does not currently seek to cover the information to be submitted for abbreviated or abridged applications, variations, or clinical trial applications.

Specific details of the sampling and testing for particular dosage forms in their proposed container closures are not covered in this guidance.

Further guidance on new dosage forms and on biotechnological/biological products can be found in ICH guidances *Q1C Stability Testing for New Dosage Forms* and *Q5C Quality of Biotechnological Products: Stability Testing of Biotechnological/Biological Products*, respectively.

### **C. General Principles (1.3)**

The purpose of stability testing is to provide evidence on how the quality of a drug substance or drug product varies with time under the influence of a variety of environmental factors, such as temperature, humidity, and light, and to establish a retest period for the drug substance or a shelf life for the drug product and recommended storage conditions.

The choice of test conditions defined in this guidance is based on an analysis of the effects of climatic conditions in the three regions of the EU, Japan, and the United States. The mean kinetic temperature in any part of the world can be derived from climatic data, and the world can be divided into four climatic zones, I-IV. This guidance addresses climatic zones I and II. The principle has been established that stability information generated in any one of the three regions of the EU, Japan, and the United States would be mutually acceptable to the other two regions, provided the information is consistent with this guidance and the labeling is in accord with national/regional requirements.

FDA's guidance documents, including this guidance, do not establish legally enforceable responsibilities. Instead, guidances describe the Agency's current thinking on a topic and should be viewed only as recommendations, unless specific regulatory or statutory requirements are cited. The use of the word *should* in Agency guidances means that something is suggested or recommended, but not required.

## **II. GUIDANCE (2)**

### **A. Drug Substance (2.1)**

#### *1. General (2.1.1)*

Information on the stability of the drug substance is an integral part of the systematic approach to stability evaluation.

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