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Category: Study conduct-All studies (Government funded/NGO funded/Regulatory)

Title: Preparing for Monitoring and audit visit for any study(Government/Academic/Regulatory)

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1. Table of Contents

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1. Purpose:

This standard operating procedure (SOP) describes the responsibilities of the PI and study team in its preparation for a monitoring and audit visit.

2. Scope:

This SOP is limited to the responsibilities of the study team in its preparation for a monitoring and audit visit.

3. Responsibilities:

Principal investigator, Co-investigator, Study Coordinator or any other appropriately qualified staff in the team, as delegated by the Principal Investigator, will be responsible for implementation of this SOP.

4. Applicable rules, regulations and guidelines

- National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical and Health Research involving Human Participants (2017), https://ethics.ncdirindia.org/ICMR_Ethical_Guidelines.aspx, last accessed on 04th April 2026.
- New Drugs and Clinical Trials Rules (2019), https://cdsco.gov.in/opencms/opencms/en/Acts-and-rules/New-Drugs/, last accessed on 1st Jan 2026.
- ICH HARMONISED GUIDELINE GOOD CLINICAL PRACTICE (GCP) E6(R3),

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https://database.ich.org/sites/default/files/ICH_E6%28R3%29_DraftGuideline_2023_0519.pdf, last accessed on 1st Jan 2026.

- India GCP guidelines (Draft, September 2024), https://ethics.ncdirindia.org/asset/pdf/Indian_GCP_guideline.pdf, last accessed on 1st Jan 2026.
- National Ethical Guidelines for Biomedical Research Involving Children.https://ethics.ncdirindia.org//asset/pdf/National_Ethical_Guidelines_for_BioMedical_Research_Involving_Children.pdf last accessed on 1st Jan 2026.
- Standard-Operating-Procedures of Institutional Ethics Committee, Seth GS Medical College and KEM Hospital, Mumbai https://www.kem.edu/wpcontent/uploads/2025/03/SOPs_V7_effective_from_9th_Dec_2024_Seth_GSMC_&_KEMH_Mumbai.pdf V7-effective-from-9th-Dec-2024_.pdf (last accessed 3rd April, 2026)

5. Refences to other SOPs:

- SOP No. 18/06: Archiving

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6. Detailed instructions

1. The purpose of study monitoring/audit is to verify that:

- The rights, safety and well-being of human participants by any agency are protected
- Reported data are accurate, complete and verifiable
- The study is conducted in compliance with the protocol and applicable guidelines and regulations.

2. PI must permit monitoring and audit by IEC members, regulators and/ or sponsors at all times that is asked by the authorities or independent auditors appointed by these agencies.
3. At the same time the PI and study team should ensure that no document (original or copy) which allows the identification of a participant in the study is shared with the auditors/monitors unless insisted upon by regulators and IEC members. Sponsors representatives should at no time be given access documents that permit dentification of a participant.
4. The PI and team should be available throughout the monitoring.
5. The study coordinator should ensure availability of a suitable location for monitoring.
6. The study coordinator must ensure that all relevant documents of the study (including but not limited to the following) are available for the monitor viz.

- Trial master file(s) also called Site Master File.

  A Trial Master File (TMF) is a comprehensive collection of essential documents—in paper or electronic (eTMF) format—that proves a clinical trial was conducted in compliance with regulatory requirements, GCP guidelines, and the protocol.

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- Case Report Forms and source notes

  Case Report Forms (CRFs) are paper or electronic documents designed to record all protocol-required information for each trial subject, used for sponsor reporting.

- Participant Informed Consent Forms

  Informed Consent Form (ICF) is a documented, signed, and dated process whereby a participant voluntarily confirms their willingness to participate in a trial after being informed of all relevant aspects

- Participant's medical files
- Documents related to the Investigational product
- Documents related to the sample collection, storage and shipment
- All documentation related to AE/SAEs
- Documentation or correspondence with Institutional Ethics Committee

7. Study coordinator should ensure that all documentation (including lab reports) is complete including PI signatures, 2 days (unless it is a surprise audit or monitoring) prior to monitoring/audit. Signature of the PI should be obtained in real time.
8. The study coordinator should confirm the identity of monitors upon arrival by checking their identity cards.
9. Measures to ensure site preparedness for a monitoring visit or an audit are mentioned in Appendix 1 and 2.

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10. Documentation of the audit/monitoring to be file on Trial MasterFile (TMF).

7. Appendices

Appendix 1: Preparedness for monitoring by the sponsor [1]

	How to ensure site preparedness
Pre-Study monitoring/ visit	• Keep the SOPs of the site ready and ensure that all SOPs are current and valid • Keep the IEC SOPs / URL where they can be found ready • Ensure that all instruments relevant to the study e.g. refrigerators, centrifuges, ECG machine, weighing balance, BP apparatus, height measurement apparatus [as applicable to the study] are calibrated and the calibration certificates are ready for inspection by the monitor • Ensure documentation for controlled access (Audio-Video consenting area, pharmacy room, document archival area, clinical pharmacology unit /outpatient department etc.) for all study areas is available for examination by monitor. • Ensure documentation for updated emergency tray and all requisite instrumentation calibration and functioning (for example ECG, defibrillator, ventilator) so that these can be checked and verified by the monitor • Ask for a report of the pre-study visit

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Site – initiation visit	• Prepare specific questions related to operational aspects of the study which can be discussed with the sponsor at the time of the site initiation • Ensure that the entire team is present on the day of the site initiation • Confirm supplies received [investigational product (IP), Trial master file (TMF), laboratory kits etc.] from the sponsor/ CRO • Ensure that any deficiencies identified during the pre-study visit have been addressed • Ask for a report of the site initiation visit report. When received, file in the Trial Master File
Routine monitoring visit	• Confirm a clear understanding among the team members of individual roles and responsibilities • Ensure that all study team members are available • Ensure a quiet area is available for the monitoring • Ensure proper documentation of Case Report Form (CRF) including signatures, updated TMF and other study related logs • Arrange all case sheets, CRFs and TMFs clearly and sequentially • Ensure that all documents are returned to their original place after monitoring. • Enquire regarding findings at the end of the visit • Ensure that medical records and files are kept in a locked room, if monitoring lasts for multiple days • Discuss the findings in a formal interview and resolve as many findings as possible

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	• Tentative dates for the next visit may be discussed • File the monitoring report/ follow up reports sent by the monitor in the TMF
Close out visit	• Ensure that all study team members are available • Make necessary arrangements for retrieval of study related documents • Provide secure area for archiving documents for a specific period as per sponsor's SOP • In the case of hard copies, confirm that all case report forms are retrieved and submitted to sponsor and copies archived. • Ensure that all extra CRFs, study supplies and laboratory kits returned to the sponsor/CRO • Ensure that all biological samples have been shipped or back-up samples are destroyed as per site SOP and protocol • Make sure that the final report provided by the monitor is placed in the TMF. All the electronic data should be archived as mentioned in the protocol and as per sponsor policy • Send a copy of the final monitoring report to the IEC and close the study with Ethics Committee

Appendix2: Site Preparedness for a sponsor or a regulatory audit

How to ensure preparedness

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- Ensure a secure room and study team availability on the day of audit
- Ensure that the TMF is updated per site IEC & SOP
- Ensure participant screening /enrollment log and the duty delegation log are up to date
- Keep the initial IEC approval letter in the TMF and latest amendment approvals if changes have been made to the study
- Ensure that all correspondence (signed/dated applications, responses, e-mails) to and from the IEC and sponsor are signed with date/ date stamp and filed.
- Ensure re-consenting [if applicable] has been completed and documented
- Make sure protocol deviation /violation report have been submitted to the IEC and the IEC correspondence is filed in the TMF as per IEC SOP.
- Ensure all IEC correspondence of SAE report(s), if any, are available in the TMF
- Ensure data collection, source documents and IP accountability log for each participant are up to date
- Ensure that samples collection, storage and shipment logs are updated
- Make sure that the audit log is up to date in case the site was audited previously
- Keep all study hard copies in a cupboard with restricted access
- Ensure that access to electronic study records and files are password protected

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1. Ravi R, Bose D, Gogtay NJ, Thatte UM. Investigator preparedness for monitoring and audits. Perspect Clin Res 2018;9:95-8

8. Glossary

Definition of Monitoring:

The act of overseeing the progress of a clinical trial, and of ensuring that it is conducted, recorded, and reported in accordance with the protocol, standard operating procedures (SOPs), GCP, and the applicable regulatory requirement(s). ICH E6 (R3) EWG Draft Guidelines dated 19th April, 2021.

Definition of Audit:

An audit is a systematic and independent examination of trial related activities and documents to determine whether the evaluated trial related activities were conducted, and the data were recorded, analyzed and accurately reported according to the protocol, sponsor's SOPs, GCP, and the applicable regulatory requirement(s). ICH E6(R3) EWG Draft Guidelines dated 19th April, 2021.

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