Quick Reference Glossary

Instructions: Confused by all the jargon in regulatory affairs? This Quick Reference Glossary is a one stop shop for definitions of frequently used terms that you may come across in your regulatory work.

Active Pharmaceutical Ingredient (API)	A raw material, intermediate or an API that is used in the production of an API and that is incorporated as a significant structural fragment into the structure of the API. An API starting material can be an article of commerce, a material purchased from one or more suppliers under contract or commercial agreement or produced in-house.[1]
Adverse Drug Reaction (ADR)	A response to a medicine which is noxious and unintended, and which occurs at doses normally used in man.[2]
Adverse Event (AE)	Any untoward medical occurrence that may present during treatment with a medicine but which does not necessarily have a causal relationship with this treatment.[3]
Apostille	An apostille certifies a document by affixing a seal to the document itself or to a separate sheet and attaches that to the document. When both the origin and destination countries are members of the 1961 Hague Convention,[4] the country where the document originates can approve and certify it as an authentic copy of the original. In this case, apostille is the only certification needed. To apostille a document in the U.S., you send it to the U.S. State Department. The process for apostille outside of the U.S. varies by country, but typically it is conducted by a government agency or office.
Authentication	The process by which the authenticity of a document is confirmed, either via a Notary Public, apostille, or legalization.

1 https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/content/glossary
2 https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/67378/WHO_EDM_QSM_2002.2.pdf?sequence=1
3 https://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/handle/10665/67378/WHO_EDM_QSM_2002.2.pdf?sequence=1
4 https://www.hcch.net/en/states/hcch-members

Bioavailability/ Bioequivalence (BA/BE)	Bioavailability (BA) means the rate and extent to which the active ingredient or active moiety is absorbed from a drug product and becomes available at the site of action. BA data provide an estimate of the fraction of the drug absorbed, as well as provide information related to the pharmacokinetics of the drug. Bioequivalence (BE) means the absence of a significant difference in the rate and extent to which the active ingredient or active moiety in pharmaceutical equivalents or pharmaceutical alternatives become available at the site of drug action when administered at the same molar dose under similar conditions in an appropriately designed study. Studies to establish BE between two products are important for certain formulation or manufacturing changes occurring during the drug development and post-approval stages. In BE studies, the exposure profile of a test drug product is compared to that of a reference drug product.[5]
Certificate of Analysis (CoA)	The list of test procedures applied to a particular sample with the results obtained and the acceptance criteria applied. The CoA indicates whether or not the sample complies with the specification.[6]
Certificate of Free Sale (CFS)	Document that certifies a product can be exported from the country of origin. You may also hear it referred to as a "Certificate for Export" or a "Certificate to Foreign Governments."
Certificate of Pharmaceutical Product (CPP)	A document issued by the National Regulatory Agency (NRA) from the exporting country that conforms to the format established by the World Health Organization (WHO).[7] It establishes the details of the applicant as well as the status of the pharmaceutical product status in the exporting country.
Combination product	A product comprised of two or more regulated components (i.e., drug/ device, biologic/device, drug/biologic, or drug/device/biologic) that are physically, chemically, or otherwise combined or mixed and produced as a single entity.[8]

5 https://www.fda.gov/files/drugs/published/Bioavailability-and-Bioequivalence-Studies-Submitted-in-NDAs-or-INDs-%E2%80%94-General-Considerations.pdf
6 https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/content/glossary
7 https://www.who.int/teams/regulation-prequalification/regulation-and-safety/rss/certification-scheme/model-certificate-of-a-pharmaceutical-product
8 https://www.fda.gov/combination-products/about-combination-products/frequently-asked-questions-about-combination-products#CP

Common Technical Document (CTD)	An agreement to assemble all the quality, safety and efficacy information in a common format organized into five modules. Module 1 (Administrative Information) is region specific and Modules 2 (Common Technical Document Summaries), 3 (Quality), 4 (Nonclinical Study Reports) and 5 (Clinical Study Reports) are intended to be common for all regions. This method was developed under the International Council for Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH).
Dossier	A collection of documents that contain all technical data (administrative, quality, nonclinical, and clinical) of a pharmaceutical product according to the local NRA's formatting requirements. The dossier is submitted to an NRA for evaluation and approval.
Drug Master File (DMF)	A document issued by a manufacturer to provide confidential detailed information about facilities, processes, or articles used in the manufacturing, processing, packaging, and storing of one or more human drugs.
Electronic Common Technical Document (eCTD)	The electronic Common Technical Document (eCTD) allows for the electronic submission of the CTD from applicant to regulator.
Excipient	According to the European Pharmacopoeia (Ph. Eur), an excipient is any component, other than the active substance(s), present in a medicinal product or used in the manufacture of the product.
Finished Pharmaceutical Product (FPP)	A finished dosage form of a pharmaceutical product that has undergone all stages of manufacture, including packaging in its final container and labeling.[9]
Generic medicines	Generic medicines work in the same way and provide the same clinical benefit and risks as their brand-name counterparts. A generic medicine is required to be the same as a brand-name medicine in dosage, safety, effectiveness, strength, stability, and quality, as well as in the way it is taken. Generic medicines also have the same risks and benefits as their brand-name counterparts.[10]
Good Clinical Practice (GCP)	A standard for clinical studies which encompasses the design, conduct, monitoring, termination, audit, analysis, reporting and documentation of the studies and which ensures that the studies are scientifically and ethically sound and that the clinical properties of the pharmaceutical product (diagnostic, therapeutic or prophylactic) under investigation are properly documented.[11]

9 https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/content/glossary
10 https://www.fda.gov/drugs/generic-drugs/generic-drug-facts
11 https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/content/glossary

Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP)	A system of controls to ensure that medicinal products are consistently manufactured according to quality standards established by the NRA.
Guidance	Guidance documents are documents prepared for the NRA staff, applicants/sponsors, and the public that describe the agency's interpretation of or policy on a regulatory issue. Guidance documents include, but are not limited to, documents that relate to: the design, production, labeling, promotion, manufacturing, and testing of regulated products; the processing, content, and evaluation or approval of submissions; and inspection and enforcement policies.[12]
Indication	The disease or condition, or manifestation or symptoms thereof, for which the drug is approved, as well as whether the drug is indicated for the treatment, prevention, mitigation, cure, or diagnosis of that disease or condition, including relief of symptoms.[13]
Intended use	Intended use is the objective intent of the persons legally responsible for the labeling of drugs. The intent is determined by such persons' expressions or may be shown by the circumstances surrounding the distribution of the article.[14]
International Conference on Harmonisation of Technical Requirements for Registration of Pharmaceuticals for Human Use (ICH)	Comprised of members from regulatory authorities and the pharmaceutical industry to provide harmonized guidance on the scientific and technical aspects of product registration. ICH currently maintains the CTD guidelines.
International Organization for Standardization (ISO)	An independent, non-governmental international organization that comprises standards bodies from more than 160 countries, with one standards body representing each member country. ISO members are national standards organizations that collaborate in the development and promotion of international standards for technology, scientific testing processes, working conditions, societal issues and more.

12 https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfcfr/cfrsearch.cfm?fr=10.115
13 https://www.fda.gov/files/drugs/published/Indications-and-Usage-Section-of-Labeling-for-Human-Prescription-Drug-and-Biological-Products-%E2%80%94-Content-and-Format-Guidance-for-Industry.pdf
14 https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cder/training/otc/topic2/topic2/da_01_02_0040.htm

Labeling	Product labeling, or artwork, refers to all layers of product packaging. Maintaining updated product labeling is a critical part of regulatory lifecycle management. The components of product labeling include: • **Primary packaging:** the sachet, blister pack, container, etc. that the product directly touches • **Patient Information Leaflet (PIL):** contains instructions, dosage, and safety information for the patient • **Summary of Product Characteristics (SmPC):** describes the approved uses of the medicine and is used by healthcare providers • **Secondary packaging:** the outer carton or container that is visible to the eye without opening the product
Legalization	International documents that have originated in one country but are intended for use in another country require embassy legalization to be recognized by the legal system of the foreign country. Embassy legalization is the alternative method for authenticating a document that is utilized for countries that are Non-Hague Convention countries. These countries do not recognize the Apostille as a means to authenticating documents per the 1961 Hague Convention.
Letter of Authorization (LoA) / Power of Attorney (PoA)	A legal document typically issued by the product licensor or licensee to a distributor, Local Technical Representative (LTR), Marketing Authorization Holder (MAH), etc. to establish the relationship between them.
Local Technical Representative (LTR)	If the applicant for product registration is not based in the country of registration, the regulatory authority may require that a local representative be appointed. If applicable, this requirement will be included in the country-specific registration guidelines.
Marketing Authorization (MA)	Also referred to as product license or registration certificate. A legal document issued by the competent medicines regulatory authority that authorizes the marketing or free distribution of a medical product in the respective country after evaluation of safety, efficacy and quality. In terms of quality, it establishes, among other things, the detailed composition and formulation of the medical product as well as the quality requirements for the product and its ingredients. It also includes details of the packaging, labeling, storage conditions, shelf life and approved conditions of use. May also be referred to as “product license” or “license” in this and other documents.[15]

15 https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/content/glossary

Marketing Authorization Holder (MAH)	A company, firm, legal person, or non-profit organization that has the right to market a specific product in a given country. The MAH is often selected by the product manufacturer and listed on the product registration application. The national regulatory authority grants Marketing Authorization (MA) approval to the MAH. Typically, marketing authorization must be renewed every few years, though this varies by country.
National Regulatory Agency (NRA)	Local governmental agency responsible for ensuring that products released for public distribution (normally pharmaceuticals and biological products, such as vaccines and medical devices including test kits) are evaluated properly and meet international standards of quality and safety and efficacy.[16]
Originator Product	Product licensed and approved by a stringent regulatory authority on the basis of a full dossier with comprehensive data on non-clinical and clinical studies.[17]
Pharmacodynamics (PD)	The study concerned with the magnitude and time course of the observed pharmacological effect.[18]
Pharmacokinetics (PK)	The study that describes the relationship between administered dose, the observed biological fluid/tissue concentrations of the drug, and time.[19]
Pharmacovigilance (PV)	The science and activities relating to the detection, assessment, understanding and prevention of adverse effects or any other medicine/vaccine related problem.[20]
Quality Information Summary (QIS)	Typically required in registrations in low- and middle-income countries, the QIS is a condensed version of the Quality Overall Summary (QOS) with key quality information of the product.
Quality Overall Summary (QOS)	A summary of all quality-related information provided in the product dossier. This summary usually follows the CTD dossier Module 3 body of data.
Regional harmonization initiatives	A process where regulatory authorities align technical requirements for the development and marketing of pharmaceutical products among multiple countries in a region.[21]

16 https://www.who.int/southeastasia/activities/national-regulatory-agencies
17 https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/content/glossary
18 https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/scientific-guideline/points-consider-pharmacokinetics-pharmacodynamics-development-antibacterial-medicinal-products_en.pdf
19 https://www.ema.europa.eu/en/documents/scientific-guideline/points-consider-pharmacokinetics-pharmacodynamics-development-antibacterial-medicinal-products_en.pdf
20 https://www.who.int/teams/regulation-prequalification/regulation-and-safety/pharmacovigilance
21 https://www.fda.gov/drugs/cder-international-program/international-regulatory-harmonization

Serious Adverse Event (SAE) or Reaction (SAR)	An adverse event or suspected adverse reaction is considered "serious" if, in the view of either the investigator or sponsor, it results in any of the following outcomes: death, a life-threatening adverse event, inpatient hospitalization or prolongation of existing hospitalization, a persistent or significant incapacity or substantial disruption of the ability to conduct normal life functions, or a congenital anomaly/birth defect.[22]
Site Master File	A document prepared by the manufacturer containing information with respect to the production and/or control of pharmaceutical manufacturing operations carried out at a named site, and to any closely integrated operations at adjacent and/or nearby buildings, if only part of a pharmaceutical operation is carried out.[23]
Stringent Regulatory Authority (SRA)	Defined by their status as a member or observer of the ICH. SRAs are recognized for having the highest standards for quality, safety, and efficacy of pharmaceutical products. As such, national regulatory authorities and the WHO take the approval of a product by an SRA into consideration during their review processes. Refer to WHO for a comprehensive list of SRAs.[24]
Technical File	The collection of all technical documents that a medical device manufacturer must submit for product registration. This is the medical device equivalent of the dossier for pharmaceutical products.
Unexpected Adverse Event (UAE)	Refers to an event or reaction that is not listed in the investigator's brochure or is not listed at the specificity or severity that has been observed; or, if an investigator's brochure is not required or available, is not consistent with the risk information described in the general investigational plan or elsewhere in the current investigational new drug application.[25]
Variation	A change to the terms of a marketing authorization.
Warning letter	When an NRA finds that a manufacturer has significantly violated NRA regulations, the NRA notifies the manufacturer. This notification is often in the form of a warning letter. The warning letter identifies the violation, such as poor manufacturing practices, problems with claims for what a product can do, or incorrect directions for use. The letter also makes clear that the company must correct the problem and provides directions and a timeframe for the company to inform NRA of its plans for correction.[26]

22 https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/cdrh/cfdocs/cfcfr/cfrsearch.cfm?fr=312.32
23 https://extranet.who.int/pqweb/content/glossary
24 https://www.who.int/initiatives/who-listed-authority-reg-authorities/SRAs
25 https://www.fda.gov/drugs/investigational-new-drug-ind-application/ind-application-reporting-safety-reports
26 https://www.fda.gov/inspections-compliance-enforcement-and-criminal-investigations/warning-letters/about-warning-and-close-out-letters

WHO Prequalification (WHO PQ)	A process established by the WHO to facilitate access to medicines that meet unified standards of quality, safety and efficacy. If a product secures WHO PQ, it may be eligible for accelerated registration processes at the country level.