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3 **Joint MHLW/EMA reflection paper on the development of block**  
4 **copolymer micelle medicinal products**

5 Draft

6 **Table of contents**

7 **1. Introduction**

8 **2. Scope**

9 **3. Discussion**

10 **3.1. Chemistry, manufacturing, and controls**

11 *3.1.1 Pharmaceutical Quality*

12 *3.1.2 Description and composition*

13 *3.1.3 Quality characterisation*

14 *3.1.4 Manufacturing process and process control*

15 *3.1.5 Product Specification*

16 *3.1.6 Stability*

17 *3.1.7 Changes in manufacturing during development*

18 **3.2. Non-clinical studies**

19 *3.2.1 General Considerations*

20 *3.2.2 Non-clinical Pharmacokinetics*

21 

- *Analytical Methods*

22 

- *Pharmacokinetics*

23 *3.2.3 Non-clinical pharmacodynamics*

24 *3.2.4 Safety Pharmacology*

25 *3.2.5 Toxicology*

26 **3.3 Considerations for first-in human studies**

27 **4. Conclusion**

## 28 **1. Introduction**

29 There has been significant interest in developing drug delivery technologies to achieve  
30 improved delivery of poorly soluble, high-toxic and/or unstable drugs, to increase  
31 tissue targeting and/or to improve the efficiency of cytosolic delivery of  
32 macromolecular drugs. One of the strategies under development uses block copolymer  
33 micelles. Block copolymer micelles are self-assembled micelles, and they are typically  
34 prepared from AB block copolymers. Other more complex compositions have been  
35 proposed. An active substance can be incorporated into the inner core of the block  
36 copolymer micelle product by chemical conjugation or by physical entrapment. Block  
37 copolymers with amphiphilic character spontaneously assemble into polymeric micelles  
38 in aqueous media, hydrophobic interactions typically drive this self-association.  
39 However, other driving forces may be used to promote micelle formation and enhance  
40 micelle stability. For example, electrostatic interactions between charged block  
41 copolymers and oppositely charged active substances, polymer–metal complex  
42 formation, and hydrogen bonding. In specific cases functional features may also be  
43 added to the system, for example, by targeting molecule conjugation to the block  
44 copolymer, or by the addition of another homopolymer to stabilize the micelle or active  
45 substance, modify its release rate and/or increase the loading of the active substance.  
46 In any given product, a proportion of the active substance could also be extra-block  
47 copolymer micelle, free in bulk solution.

48 It should be emphasised that such block copolymer micelle products (as described  
49 above) have a carefully designed structure in which the inner core typically serves as a  
50 container for active substance and that is surrounded by an outer shell of hydrophilic  
51 polymers. Additionally the chemistry of such block copolymer micelles may be designed  
52 to ensure high stability after dilution on administration due to a low critical association  
53 concentration ( $c_{ac}$ ), to optimize the pharmacokinetics (PK) (targeting), and to control  
54 the drug release, etc. Thus the dissociation of such block copolymer micelles may be  
55 kinetically slow. These properties are different from traditional surfactant micelles used  
56 to entrap/solubilise/aid the transport of drugs. Moreover, a block copolymer micelle  
57 product can contain multiple components within the core including chemically bound  
58 active substance, which in certain cases may be covalently bound.

59 Furthermore, it has been shown in non-clinical studies that block copolymer micelles  
60 may have the potential to preferentially accumulate in solid tumors due to  
61 microvascular hyperpermeability and impaired lymphatic drainage (known as the  
62 enhanced permeability and retention (EPR) effect). The specific physicochemical  
63 properties of block copolymer micelles, such as size, surface-charge, composition, and  
64 stability can be important determinants of safety and efficacy in all proposed  
65 applications.

66 Several block copolymer micelle products are currently in pre-clinical or in clinical  
67 development, for example, products containing anti-tumor agents and proteins.

68

69 As block copolymer micelle products are of nano-scale size, contain more than one  
70 component, and are purposely designed for specific clinical applications they may be  
71 considered as nanomedicines.

72 This reflection paper discusses the general principles for assessing block copolymer  
73 micelle products but does not aim to prescribe any particular quality, non-clinical or  
74 clinical strategy.

75 Where applicable, it should be read in connection with the following ICH guidelines:

## 76 **ICH Guidelines**

- 77 • ICH Harmonised Tripartite Guideline Stability testing of new drug substances and  
78 products Q1A(R2)
- 79 • ICH Quality of biotechnological/biological products Q5A(R1)-Q5E (Q5E Note for  
80 Guidance on Comparability of Biotechnological/Biological Products Subject to  
81 Changes in their Manufacturing Process)
- 82 • ICH Specifications: Test procedures and acceptance criteria for new drug  
83 substances and new drug products: chemical substances Q6A
- 84 • ICH Specifications: Test procedures and acceptance criteria for  
85 biotechnological/biological products Q6B
- 86 • ICH Pharmaceutical Development Q8(R2)
- 87 • ICH Guidance on Nonclinical Safety Studies for the Conduct of Human Clinical  
88 Trials and Marketing Authorization for Pharmaceuticals M3(R2)
- 89 • ICH Guidelines for Toxicokinetics and Pharmacokinetics S3A and S3B
- 90 • ICH Duration of Chronic Toxicity Testing in Animals (Rodent and Non rodent  
91 Toxicity Testing) S4
- 92 • ICH Preclinical Safety Evaluation of Biotechnology-Derived Pharmaceuticals  
93 S6(R1)
- 94 • ICH Safety Pharmacology Studies for Human Pharmaceuticals S7A
- 95 • ICH The Non-clinical Evaluation of the Potential for Delayed Ventricular  
96 Repolarization (QT Interval Prolongation ) by Human Pharmaceuticals S7B
- 97 • ICH Immunotoxicology Studies for Human Pharmaceuticals S8
- 98 • ICH Nonclinical Evaluation for Anticancer Pharmaceuticals S9

99

## 100 **2. Scope**

101 This paper provides basic information for the pharmaceutical development, and non-  
102 clinical and early clinical studies of block-copolymer micelle drug products created to  
103 affect PK, stability and distribution of incorporated or conjugated active substances *in*  
104 *vivo*. Although the focus is on products designed for intravenous administration, the  
105 principles outlined in this reflection paper might also be considered to be applicable to  
106 block copolymer micelle products designed for other routes of administration. The  
107 active substance could be a low molecular weight chemical entity, nucleic acids, or a  
108 biological or biotechnologically derived entity (i.e. recombinant product), including, for  
109 example, peptides and proteins.

110 Due to the complexity of the system, i.e. whether or not the active substance is  
111 chemically bound, and/or additional stabilizers are used, it is recommended that an  
112 early dialogue with the regulators takes place to discuss the likely critical product  
113 attributes of each particular block copolymer micelle product. During this dialogue the  
114 sponsors are encouraged to discuss emerging methods that might be applied to define  
115 quality and non-clinical properties relevant to the proposed clinical application.

116 This document, being a reflection paper, should be read in connection with relevant  
117 ICH guidelines (listed above) and regional guidelines (Annexes I and II)<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Post-marketing issues are not discussed. Drug products that use block copolymers as coating materials for nanoparticles of other materials such as homopolymers or metals are also not covered in this paper.

118

### 119 **3. Discussion**

#### 120 **3.1 Chemistry, manufacturing and controls**

##### 121 **3.1.1 Pharmaceutical Quality**

122 It is important to identify the critical quality attributes of block copolymer micelle  
123 products that will have a major impact on the in vivo PK and pharmacodynamic (PD)  
124 properties that may impact on safety and efficacy. Correctly identifying the parameters  
125 that define relevant physicochemical properties of the block copolymer micelle product  
126 is critical to ensure its quality.

##### 127 **3.1.2 Description and composition**

128 The typical components of block copolymer micelle products are, the active substance,  
129 the block copolymer, and in certain cases, other components such as stabilizing agents.

130 The critical quality attributes of block copolymer micelle product should be carefully  
131 considered on a product specific basis. Of particular importance may be:

132 • the content of the block copolymer and active substance in the block  
133 copolymer micelle product. These should be expressed both as the molar ratio  
134 and the percentage of each by weight.

135 • the composition, mean molecular weight and polydispersity of the polymers  
136 (homopolymers, copolymers etc.) used to synthesise the block copolymers (or  
137 block copolymer-active substance conjugates)

138 • the composition, mean molecular weight and polydispersity of the block  
139 copolymers used to create the block copolymer micelle.

140 Any acceptable ranges given should be fully justified.

##### 141 **3.1.3 Quality characterisation**

142 The following are typical examples of properties, related to:

###### 143 **A. Components containing block copolymers**

144 The chemical composition of block copolymers greatly impacts the driving force behind  
145 polymer self-association, and therefore, size and physicochemical characteristics and *in*  
146 *vitro* and *in vivo* stability of the resultant micelles. Crucial properties include:

- 147 • Chemical structure of the block copolymers:
- 148 • Chemical nature and stability of chemical linkage in the case of block copolymer-  
149 active substance conjugate
- 150 • Impurity profile (e.g., macromolecular impurities)

###### 151 **B. Block copolymer micelle products**

152 Properties relevant for the quality characterisation of the finished product are of  
153 different types and include:

###### 154 Properties related to the block copolymer micelle

- 155 • Block copolymer micelle size (mean and distribution profile)
- 156 • Morphology
- 157 • Zeta potential
- 158 • Association number

- 159 • Concentration dependency of the nano-structure (In some cases, this may be
- 160 expressed as critical micelle concentration (cmc), or critical association
- 161 concentration (cac). It should be noted that these parameters of some block
- 162 copolymers are too low to be measured using the current analytical techniques.)
- 163 • drug loading
- 164 • surface properties
- 165 • chemical structure
- 166 • physical state of the active substance
- 167 • in vitro stability of the block copolymer micelle in plasma and/or relevant media
- 168 • in vitro release of the active substance from the block copolymer micelle product
- 169 in plasma and/or relevant media
- 170 • in vitro degradation of the block copolymer in plasma and/or relevant media

#### 171 Properties related to the manufacturing process

- 172 • validated process for reconstitution
- 173 • validated process for ensuring sterility

#### 174 Properties related to the *in vivo* behaviour

- 175 • osmolarity
- 176 • fraction of active substance that is surface associated
- 177 • release rate and place of active substance release
- 178 • block copolymer degradation rate and place of degradation

179 Where the block copolymer component itself (not the active substance) has a biological  
180 activity which would have an impact on clinical efficacy and/or safety, its potency and  
181 physicochemical properties that are critical for its biological activity should be  
182 evaluated as part of characterisation.

183 A list of validated tests to be applied routinely to the block copolymer micelle product  
184 should be defined by the applicant and should be based on the parameters chosen to  
185 characterise the drug product including those described above, as appropriate.

186 Development of discriminating, in-vitro release methods is important for the purpose  
187 of:

- 188 • defining the release of the active substance or block copolymer-active substance
- 189 conjugate from the block copolymer micelle when in the circulation
- 190 • defining the release of the active substance or block copolymer-active substance
- 191 conjugate from the block copolymer micelle at the targeted site of action. The
- 192 proposed media should reflect the physiological environment of the block
- 193 copolymer micelle when in use.
- 194 • defining the stability on storage.

195 The methods used must be sensitive enough to ensure batch to batch consistency

196 This is particularly important to monitor in the case that a block copolymer-active  
197 substance conjugate is involved.

#### 198 **3.1.4 Manufacturing process and process control**

199 A well-defined manufacturing process with its associated process controls is needed to

200 ensure that acceptable product is produced on a consistent basis. It is known that  
201 small changes to block copolymer micelle products may significantly influence their  
202 performance.

203 The manufacturing process should be controlled to ensure consistency in the product's  
204 performance in terms of safety and efficacy. Data showing consistency in quality, and  
205 controls for critical steps and intermediates should be provided. In addition to the  
206 information recommended by the ICH Q8(R2) – pharmaceutical development,  
207 recommendations specific to block copolymer micelle products are provided below.

### 208 ***Components containing block copolymers and/or block copolymer active*** 209 ***substance conjugates***

210 Detailed descriptions of the synthetic process, extraction, and purification procedures  
211 should be provided as applicable.

212 The source and specifications for any starting materials should be provided. In  
213 particular, for polymeric starting materials, molecular weight and molecular weight  
214 distribution should be clearly described. Impurities such as manufacturing impurities,  
215 and macromolecular reaction by-products should be clearly specified.

216 Key intermediates in the manufacturing process should be identified and controlled.

217 Biotechnologically derived and/or entities of biological origin that are used as starting  
218 materials or active substance should follow the requirement for medical use contained  
219 in the ICH quality guidelines for biotechnological/biological products.

220 To identify the impact of a manufacturing process change, e.g. change in scale, a  
221 careful evaluation of all foreseeable consequences for the product including process  
222 validation/evaluation should be performed.

### 223 ***Block copolymer micelle products***

224 In the manufacturing process of block copolymer micelle products, micelle formation  
225 process is critical. When micelle formation occurs spontaneously, the process of micelle  
226 formation would be equal to the dispersion process of block copolymer. When other  
227 methods are required for micelle formation, critical quality attributes associated with  
228 the process (e.g. micelle size and solution transparency) should be controlled.

229 Since block copolymer micelle products contain highly-functional polymers, it is highly  
230 recommended that appropriate quality control of intermediates (i.e. the block  
231 copolymer) and/or the process, is undertaken based on the Quality by Design (QbD)  
232 concept.

### 233 ***3.1.5 Product Specification***

234 Regarding definition of an acceptable specification for a block copolymer micelle  
235 product (see guidelines ICH Q6A or Q6B), it is recommended that the applicant  
236 engages in an *early dialogue with the regulators*. Additional testing specific to block  
237 copolymer micelle products may be needed.

### 238 ***Components containing block copolymers***

239 A detailed description of the tests, procedures, and acceptance criteria for block  
240 copolymers and/or block copolymer-active conjugates should be provided. Evaluation  
241 of the polymer, such as mean molecular weight and its distribution should be obtained.  
242 The composition of each component should also be obtained.

### 243 ***Block copolymers micelle products***

244 Because drug products based on block copolymers are functional polymeric structures,  
245 the critical quality attributes should be defined in respect of the functions for the  
246 intended use. These attributes will include particle size, release rate of the active  
247 substance from the micelle, and potency if the active substance is a  
248 biotechnological/biological entity. Where present, the composition regarding average  
249 number of targeting-molecules conjugated to the polymeric micelle to promote active  
250 targeting should be justified.

- 251 • it should be noted that block copolymer micelle products may be a mixture of  
252 block copolymer micelles and block copolymer unimers (with or without bound  
253 active substance), depending on the individual characteristics of the block  
254 copolymers, the active substance and the test conditions used. Therefore,  
255 analytical tests should be performed considering the product's form under  
256 appropriate test conditions and procedures. The test concentration should be  
257 carefully considered, because dilution of block copolymer micelle products may  
258 cause disassociation of micelles and result in an increased proportion of unimers.
- 259 • considerations relating to identity and purity should take into account both the  
260 active substance and the block copolymers. Impurities, including possible  
261 synthetic macromolecular by-products, should be evaluated. Undesirable  
262 aggregates, precipitates, and degradation products will be also considered as  
263 impurities.
- 264 • potency, if the active substance is a biotechnological/biological entity.

265 Other attributes are as follows:

- 266 • Physicochemical properties of block copolymer micelle products determined to be  
267 critical to product quality. However, not all the characterization tests need to be  
268 included in the specifications. (See section 3.1.3 on Physicochemical  
269 characteristics of block copolymer micelles).
- 270 • Assay of incorporated (or conjugated) and unincorporated (or unconjugated)  
271 active substance.
- 272 • Assay of block copolymers or weight fraction to active substance

273 Stability should be considered in the context of the proposed clinical use and justified  
274 in the specification.

### 275 **3.1.6 Stability**

276 The concepts in ICH Q1A(R2) apply to the design of stability studies for block  
277 copolymer micelle products. Those in ICH Q5C also apply to biotechnological/biological  
278 entities.

279 In general, stability studies should address the physical and chemical stability of the  
280 active substance, the block copolymers (and if present block copolymer-active  
281 substance conjugates), and the resultant micelles. Typical attributes that may be  
282 evaluated include, but are not limited to:

283 Physical stability

- 284 • mean block copolymer micelle size
- 285 • release of the incorporated or conjugated active substance
- 286 • secondary aggregation
- 287 • in vitro release of active substance, as appropriate under appropriate test  
288 conditions

289 Chemical stability

- 290 • stability of active substance
- 291 • stability of block copolymer components (e.g. degradation of polymers)
- 292 • if present, stability of block copolymer-active substance conjugates

293 In vitro methods, using conditions relevant to the proposed use, should be used to  
294 determine

- 295 • the release rate of the active substance entrapped in the block copolymer micelles
- 296 • the rate of release of active substance chemically bound to block copolymer  
297 micelles

### 298 **3.1.7 Changes in manufacturing during development**

299 If there are changes in manufacturing critical process parameters or equipment used  
300 for manufacture, complete characterization of the block copolymer micelle product may  
301 be warranted on a case-by-case basis. Approaches to determining the impact of any  
302 process change will vary with respect to the specific manufacturing process, the  
303 product, the extent of the manufacturer's knowledge and experience with the process  
304 and development data provided.

305 It is important to also consider applying the principles for assessing the comparability  
306 studies of products before and after changes made in the manufacturing process, as  
307 those developed for Biological Medicinal Products. The principles of comparability  
308 studies are outlined in section 1.4 of ICH Q5E (Note for Guidance on  
309 Biotechnological/Biological Products Subject to Changes in their Manufacturing Process).

310

## 311 **3.2 Non-clinical studies**

### 312 **3.2.1 General Considerations**

313 Significant changes in pharmacokinetic characteristics can occur when an active  
314 substance is administered as a block copolymer micelle product, i.e. volume of  
315 distribution and clearance may be changed, half-life prolonged and tissue distribution  
316 changed. Significant changes not only in the PK characteristics but also in the PD and  
317 safety of the active substance can also occur when it is administered as a block  
318 copolymer micelle product. Moreover, it has been noted that certain block copolymers  
319 (not containing an active substance) can display inherent biological activity, which  
320 would have an impact on clinical efficacy and/or safety. Cellular uptake of block  
321 copolymer micelle entrapped active substance may be limited to the endocytic route.

322 The PK characteristics of the block copolymer micelle product could be dependent on:

- 323 • the rate of clearance of the block copolymer micelle containing entrapped or  
324 chemically bound active substance
- 325 • the rate of dissociation of the block copolymer micelle. This may lead to release of  
326 block copolymer unimers (with or without bound active substance) that would  
327 have lower molecular weight (smaller size characteristics) and may display  
328 different clearance characteristics
- 329 • the rate of release of entrapped active substance from the block copolymer  
330 micelle
- 331 • the rate of release of active substance chemically bound to the block copolymer  
332 unimer



- 333 • the rate of degradation of the block copolymer
- 334 • clearance and metabolism of free active substance.
- 335 • the distribution of the block copolymer micelle
- 336 • interaction of the block copolymer micelle with plasma or serum proteins or blood
- 337 cells

338 The rate and location of in vivo active substance release is a crucial parameter which  
339 often determines the toxicity and efficacy. An attempt should be made to develop the  
340 necessary methodology to define active substance release.

341 All non-clinical studies should be conducted using well-characterised block copolymer  
342 micelle product and the rate of micelle dissociation and product stability should be  
343 known under the chosen test conditions.

### 344 **3.2.2 Non-clinical Pharmacokinetics**

#### 345 **Analytical Methods**

346 Validated analytical techniques should be developed, that are capable of measuring the  
347 concentrations of active substance both in total and in free form in blood, plasma or  
348 serum, and the total concentration of active substance in organs and/or tissues.

#### 349 **Pharmacokinetics**

350 As the PK behaviour of block copolymer micelle products can be very different from  
351 that of the active substance administered without the block copolymer micelle carrier  
352 and this can impact significantly on efficacy and safety, in vivo PK should be  
353 determined. The choice of appropriate species and models to investigate in vivo PK,  
354 and release of the active substance should be justified in respect of proposed clinical  
355 use and the composition of the block copolymer micelle.

356 As physicochemical parameters such as size, surface-charge and morphology may  
357 impact on the distribution of block copolymer micelle product, the effect of variability in  
358 such parameters on distribution should be shown to justify the product specification.  
359 Therefore, in addition to the information recommended in the ICH S3 (S3A and S3B),  
360 S6(R1) and M3 (R2), the following parameters specific to block copolymer micelle  
361 products should be assessed:

- 362 • PK parameters such as C<sub>max</sub>, half-life, and AUC, of the block copolymer micelle  
363 product both for total active substance and for free active substance in blood,  
364 plasma, or serum.

365 PK parameters should be measured at different dose levels and at appropriate  
366 time points.

- 367 • Distribution of the block copolymer micelle products in organs and/or tissues  
368 relevant to proposed clinical use and route of administration. Specifically total  
369 amounts of active substance may be required - see analytical methods. A  
370 distribution time profile should be obtained using multiple time points with  
371 justification of the time course of the study.

- 372 • Sampling time points and sampling duration should be carefully selected so as to  
373 accurately quantify the time course of the concentrations of active substance  
374 both in total and in free form and metabolites in blood, plasma or serum, and  
375 the total concentration of active substance and metabolites in organs and/or  
376 tissues. Some factors should be considered for the sampling schedules, for  
377 example, the block copolymer micelle stability after administration, and the  
378 profile of localization to specific organs and/or tissues. In particular, samples

379 taken in the initial distribution phase (e.g. <15 min) are considered very  
380 informative for calculating the distribution volume to estimate the stability of  
381 block copolymer micelles in blood circulation.

- 382 • Measurement of active substance metabolites in blood, plasma or serum and  
383 maybe organs and/or tissues is especially important when the metabolite is  
384 acknowledged to be the primary active compound. If one or more metabolites  
385 have substantial clinical activity then it might be necessary to compare their  
386 kinetics, and where necessary, toxicokinetics, to determine accumulation  
387 following multiple doses.
- 388 • Comparing the PK of the block copolymer micelle product and the active  
389 substance administered by itself is recommended. Such comparative studies are  
390 also considered useful to demonstrate a claimed pharmacokinetic advantage of  
391 the block copolymer product against the active substance administered by itself.
- 392 • It may also be important to consider the protein and cellular interaction of block  
393 copolymer micelles administered intravenously as these factors are known to  
394 have potential to influence the distribution, stability and safety of nanomedicines.

395 The metabolic and excretion pathways of the active substance should be determined  
396 and fully characterized after administration of the block copolymer micelle product.  
397 Furthermore, the metabolic and excretion pathways of the micelle constituents are by  
398 themselves of interest. Their detailed characterization is needed unless otherwise  
399 justified.

400 If there is concern that components of the block copolymer micelle drug products may  
401 cause drug-drug interactions, for example by modulating membrane transporters such  
402 as p-glycoprotein, an appropriate evaluation should be carefully undertaken.

### 403 **3.2.3 Non-clinical pharmacodynamics**

404 The non-clinical pharmacodynamic studies should include demonstration of  
405 pharmacodynamic response in appropriately justified in vitro (where possible) and in  
406 vivo models. In vivo evaluation should involve an appropriate route of administration,  
407 justified dose levels and a justified dosing regimen depending on proposed clinical  
408 application. Appropriateness of the pharmacological model should be discussed in  
409 respect of the PK of the block copolymer micelle product, and of the PD and PK of the  
410 active substance when administered by itself.

411 The chemical composition and physicochemical properties of a block copolymer micelle  
412 product affect properties including size, surface-charge, and the rate of release of the  
413 active substance. Some important factors to consider when designing studies to discuss  
414 the mechanisms of action include:

- 415 • the fate of active substance (the location and rate of in vivo active substance  
416 release)
- 417 • the fate of the micelles (block copolymers or other stabilizing components)  
418 following administration and/or cellular entry by endocytosis or other  
419 mechanisms.

420 The PD effect of the micelles should be assessed using in vitro and in-vivo  
421 pharmacodynamic models.

### 422 **3.2.4 Safety Pharmacology**

423 When applicable (e.g. for block copolymer micelle drugs out of the scope of ICH S9)  
424 the core battery of safety pharmacology studies should be conducted, in accordance  
425 with ICH M3 (R2), ICH S7A and ICH S7B.

### 426 **3.2.5 Toxicology**

427 For the non-clinical evaluation of toxicities of block copolymer micelle products, the  
428 recommendations in the ICH safety guidelines especially of S4, S6(R1) and S9 and M3  
429 (R2) should be followed.

430 Relevant toxicity studies of the block copolymer micelle product should be conducted to  
431 assess both the toxicological profile and exposure-response relations according to the  
432 ICH safety guidelines.

#### 433 **Toxicokinetics**

434 In addition to blood, plasma, or serum concentration, the active substance should be  
435 measured in the target tissue(s) and toxicologically relevant organs related to  
436 proposed clinical use.

#### 437 **Additional studies**

438 Depending on the physicochemical and/or pharmacokinetic characteristics of the block  
439 copolymer micelle product and/or the block copolymer used for its manufacture, target  
440 organ function evaluation may be necessary.

441 Certain nanomedicines have the potential to induce infusion reactions. Studies  
442 designed to investigate complement activation, hematotoxicity, antigenicity, and/or  
443 immunotoxicity (ICH S8) should be considered depending on the characteristics of the  
444 block copolymer micelle product.

445

### 446 **3.3 Considerations for first-in-human studies**

447 Block copolymer micelle products are often designed to change the distribution of  
448 active substance. Therefore, in addition to the information recommended in the ICH S3  
449 (S3A and S3B), S6(R1), M3 (R2) and PMFS/ELD Notification NO. 0402-1, April2, 2012  
450 or EMEA/CHMP/SWP/28367/2007 (as appropriate), when considering first-in-human  
451 studies it will be essential to consider non-clinical pharmacokinetic data specific to the  
452 block copolymer micelle product e.g. the block copolymer micelle, the active substance,  
453 the proposed clinical use and the route of administration, using sampling time points  
454 and sampling duration that is carefully selected so as to accurately quantify the time  
455 course of block copolymer micelle products for total active substance and for free  
456 active substance and metabolites, as follows:

- 457 • PK parameters such as C<sub>max</sub>, half-life, and AUC, of block copolymer micelle  
458 products both for total active substance and for free active substance in blood,  
459 plasma or serum.
- 460 • A sufficient number of samples to adequately describe the plasma concentration-  
461 time profile should be collected. Frequent sampling at early time points are  
462 considered useful for providing reliable information about the initial distribution  
463 process. Generally the sampling schedule should also cover the plasma  
464 concentration time curve long enough to provide a reliable estimate of the total  
465 extent of exposure.
- 466 • Distribution of the block copolymer micelle products in target lesion and major  
467 organs; specifically total amounts of active substance in target lesion and major  
468 organs and their time profiles at multiple time points over an adequate period of  
469 time.

470 The starting dose for first-in-human studies should be chosen in compliance with ICH  
471 M3(R2), and regional guidelines, and following careful consideration of all related non-  
472 clinical data, including critical product attributes, pharmacological dose-response, PK,

473 and pharmacological/toxicological profile as discussed in sections 3.1 and 3.2 above.  
474 Dose-limiting toxicity in humans can be determined in a similar way to that of  
475 conventional drugs, except for hypersensitivity reactions because these reactions are  
476 not always dose-dependent.

477 Potential critical quality attributes for each block copolymer micelle product should be  
478 identified and used to evaluate consistency as discussed in section 3.1. Consistency of  
479 the quality attributes should be confirmed between the products used for non-clinical  
480 studies and those for first-in-human studies, and test procedures should be established  
481 before commencement of first-in-human studies. If the manufacturing process used to  
482 prepare block copolymer micelle product for non-clinical studies is changed before first-  
483 in-human studies comparability should be demonstrated or otherwise justified.

484 Stability data that ensure the block copolymer micelle stability throughout the first-in-  
485 human studies are required.

486

#### 487 **4. Conclusions**

488 Given the complexity of block copolymer-micelle products and the fact that experience  
489 with such products is limited companies are advised to seek product-specific scientific  
490 advice regarding specific questions on the data requirements.

491

#### 492 **Glossary**

493 The purpose of this glossary is to describe terms as they are used in this RP.

494 1) Active substance: Molecule which shows the main therapeutic effect

495 2) Block copolymer: More than two kinds of polymer connected in series to form such  
496 as AB or ABA type copolymer (or others).

497 The block copolymer is also called a unimer: the minimum unit from which the block  
498 copolymer micelle is prepared. The active substance may be chemically bound to the  
499 unimer.

500 3) Block copolymer micelle: A micelle which consists of block copolymers. Active  
501 substances can be incorporated into the inner core of the block copolymer micelle by  
502 chemical conjugation (including covalent conjugation) or by physical entrapment.

503 4) Block copolymer micelle product: "Medicinal product", a drug product which contains  
504 active substance, block copolymers and in certain cases, other ingredients.

505 5) Free active substance: Active substance present in the drug product that is not  
506 incorporated within the block copolymer micelle by chemical conjugation or by physical  
507 entrapment.

508

509 Free active substance may be released from the block copolymer micelle product after  
510 administration. In this reflection paper, the term "free" does not suggest the  
511 disassociation of active substances from plasma or serum proteins.

512

513 6) Biological activity: The specific ability or capacity of a product to achieve a defined  
514 biological effect.

515 7) Potency (expressed in units): In the case that the active substance is a protein, the  
516 quantitative measure of biological activity based on the attribute of the product which  
517 is linked to the relevant biological properties, whereas, quantity (expressed in mass) is  
518 a physicochemical measure of protein content.

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## **Regional guidelines**

### **Annex I**

#### **MHLW**

- ICH Harmonised Tripartite Guideline Stability testing of new drug substances and products Q1A(R2)[June 3, 2003, PMSB/ELD Notification No.0603001]
- ICH Quality of biotechnological/biological products Q5A(R1)-Q5E (Q5E Note for Guidance on Comparability of Biotechnological/Biological Products Subject to Changes in their Manufacturing Process) [February 22, 2000, PMSB/ELD Notification No.329 (Q5A(R1)), January 6, 1998, PMSB/ELD Notification No.3 (Q5B), January 6, 1998, PMSB/ELD Notification No.6 (Q5C), July 14, 2000, PMSB/ELD Notification No.873 (Q5D) and April 26, 2005, PFSB/ELD Notification No.0426001 (Q5E)]
- ICH Specifications: Test procedures and acceptance criteria for new drug substances and new drug products: chemical substances Q6A [May 1, 2001, PMSB/ELD Notification No.568]
- ICH Specifications: Test procedures and acceptance criteria for biotechnological/biological products Q6B [May 1, 2001, PMSB/ELD Notification No.571]
- ICH Pharmaceutical Development Q8(R2) [June 28, 2010, PFSB/ELD Notification No.0628-1]
- ICH Guidance on Nonclinical Safety Studies for the Conduct of Human Clinical Trials and Marketing Authorization for Pharmaceuticals M3(R2) [February 19, 2010, PFSB/ELD Notification No.0219-4]
- ICH Guidelines for Toxicokinetics and Pharmacokinetics S3A and S3B [July 2, 1996, PMSB/ELD Notification No.443 and PMSB/ELD Notification No.442]
- ICH Duration of Chronic Toxicity Testing in Animals (Rodent and Non rodent Toxicity Testing) S4 [April 5, 1999, PMSB/ELD Notification No.655]
- ICH Preclinical Safety Evaluation of Biotechnology-Derived Pharmaceuticals S6(R1) [March 23, 2012, PFSB/ELD Notification No.0323-1]
- ICH Safety Pharmacology Studies for Human Pharmaceuticals S7A [June 21, 2001, PMSB/ELD Notification No.902]
- ICH The Non-clinical Evaluation of the Potential for Delayed Ventricular Repolarization (QT Interval Prolongation) by Human Pharmaceuticals S7B [October 23, 2009, PFSB/ELD Notification No.1023-4]
- ICH Immunotoxicology Studies for Human Pharmaceuticals S8 [April 18, 2006, PFSB/ELD Notification No.0418001]
- ICH Nonclinical Evaluation for Anticancer Pharmaceuticals S9 [June 4, 2010, PFSB/ELD Notification No.0604-1]
- Guidelines for Non-clinical Pharmacokinetic Studies [June 26, 1998, PMSB/ELD Notification No. 496]
- Guidance for Establishing Safety in First-in-Human Studies during Drug Development [April 2, 2012, PFSB/ELD Notification No. 0402-1]

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566 **Annex II**

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569 • ICH Harmonised Tripartite Guideline Stability testing of new drug substances and  
570 products Q1A(R2) [CPMP/ICH/2736/99]

571 • ICH Quality of biotechnological/biological products Q5A-Q5E (Q5E Note for  
572 Guidance on Comparability of Biotechnological/Biological Products Subject to  
573 Changes in their Manufacturing Process) [CPMP/ICH/295/95 (Q5A(R1)),  
574 CPMP/ICH/139/95 (Q5B), CPMP/ICH/138/95 (Q5C), CPMP/ICH/294/95 (Q5D)  
575 and CPMP/ICH/5721/03 (Q5E)]

576 • ICH Specifications: Test procedures and acceptance criteria for new drug  
577 substances and new drug products: chemical substances Q6A  
578 [CPMP/ICH/367/96]

579 • ICH Specifications: Test procedures and acceptance criteria for  
580 biotechnological/biological products Q6B [CPMP/ICH/365/96]

581 • ICH Pharmaceutical Development Q8(R2) [EMA/CHMP/167068/2004]

582 • ICH Guidance on Nonclinical Safety Studies for the Conduct of Human Clinical  
583 Trials and Marketing Authorization for Pharmaceuticals M3(R2)  
584 [CPMP/ICH/286/95]

585 • ICH Guidelines for Toxicokinetics and Pharmacokinetics S3A and S3B  
586 [CPMP/ICH/384/95 and CPMP/ICH/385/95]

587 • ICH Duration of Chronic Toxicity Testing in Animals (Rodent and Non rodent  
588 Toxicity Testing) S4 [CPMP/ICH/300/95]

589 • ICH Preclinical Safety Evaluation of Biotechnology-Derived Pharmaceuticals  
590 S6(R1) [EMA/CHMP/ICH/731268/1998]

591 • ICH Safety Pharmacology Studies for Human Pharmaceuticals S7A  
592 [CPMP/ICH/539/00]

593 • ICH The Non-clinical Evaluation of the Potential for Delayed Ventricular  
594 Repolarization (QT Interval Prolongation ) by Human Pharmaceuticals S7B  
595 [CPMP/ICH/423/02]

596 • ICH Immunotoxicology Studies for Human Pharmaceuticals S8  
597 [CHMP/167235/2004]

598 • ICH Nonclinical Evaluation for Anticancer Pharmaceuticals S9  
599 [EMA/CHMP/ICH/646107/2008]

600 • Guideline on requirements for first-in-man clinical trials for potential high-risk  
601 medicinal products [EMA/CHMP/SWP/28367/2007]

602 • Reflection paper on the pharmaceutical development of intravenous medicinal  
603 products containing active substances solubilised in micellar systems (non-  
604 polymeric surfactants) EMA/CHMP/QWP/799402/2011

605 • Draft Reflection paper on the data requirements for intravenous liposomal  
606 products developed with reference to an innovator liposomal product  
607 EMA/CHMP/806058/2009

608 • Guideline on strategies to identify and mitigate risks for first-in-human clinical  
609 trials with investigational medicinal products EMA/CHMP/SWP/28367/07

- 610 • Guideline on the Investigation of Pharmacokinetic Drug Interactions  
611 (CPMP/EWP/560/95/Rev. 1)
- 612 • Guidance for Industry. Bioanalytical Method Validation U.S. Department of Health  
613 and Human Services Food and Drug Administration. May 2001
- 614 • Guideline on bioanalytical method validation. EMEA/CHMP/EWP/192217/2009  
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