

# Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

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Recruitment procedure

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Educational Setting

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**Version 2.0**

## 1. Aim

This SOP is intended to provide a minimum set of services in the context of recruiting the schools including its students in Bangladesh, Cyprus, Pakistan, Slovenia, and England and Northern Ireland (UK). In addition, the regional management teams should take into account the specific cultural and local circumstances in their individual study region.

## 2. Scope of the SOP

The scope refers to all study regions and schools involved in the EUthyroid2 educational setting.

## 3. Abbreviations

BUHS	Bangladesh University of Health Sciences
CUT	Cyprus University of Technology
GDPR	General Data Protection Regulation
ICP	Islamia College Peshawar, Pakistan
PM	Participant Management
QUB	Queen's University Belfast, UK
RM	Regional Management
SOP	Standard Operating Procedure
Surrey	University of Surrey, UK
UMCL	University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Slovenia
UK	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (England and Northern Ireland)

## 4. Background

The participating study regions Bangladesh University of Health Sciences (BUHS), Cyprus University of Technology (CUT), Islamia College Peshawar, Pakistan (ICP), University Medical Centre Ljubljana, Slovenia (UMCL), and University of Surrey/Queen's University Belfast, UK (Surrey/QUB) are supposed to recruit a final study population with a complete follow-up data set of 750 students per region. Participant recruitment should follow a uniform procedure within each region. This SOP serves as a minimum standard for all settings. Documents are provided in English and should be translated into local languages by the Regional Management of the participating study regions as required. Any changes beyond this basic SOP must be reported to the Steering Committee.

## 5. Processes

### 5.1. Flow chart

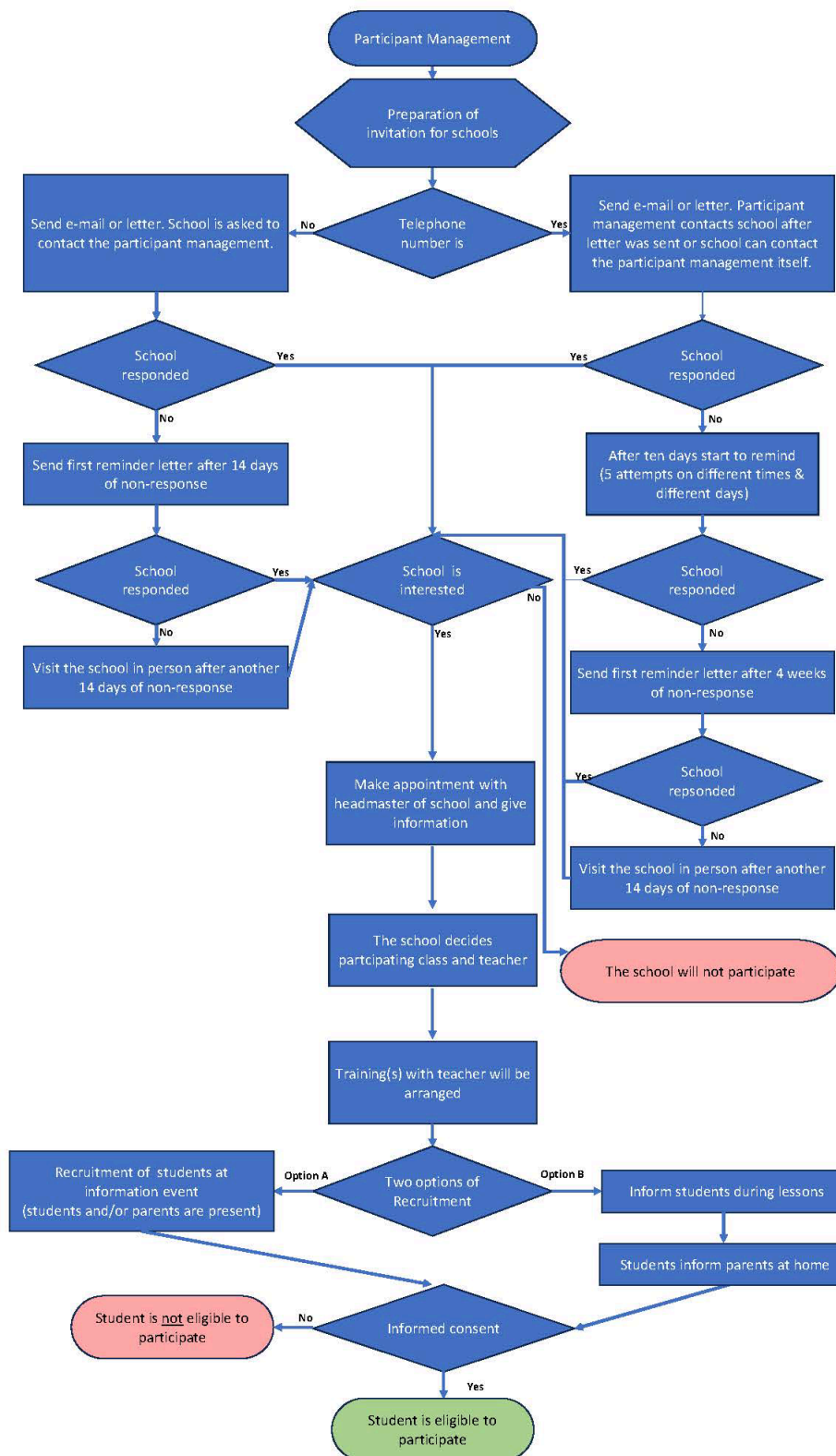


Figure 1. Recruitment process in the educational setting.

Each study region operates its own and Participant Management (PM) Regional Management (RM). The participant management is exclusively responsible for the initiation of recruitment (Invitations to participate in the study), administration of address data and consents. A Participant Management employs staff to manage the participants' personal identifying data and ensure that it is processed according to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).

### 5.1.1. Involvement of the schools

The PM or RM will search for potential schools and inform them about the study. The PM will manage the contact details of the schools and the participating teachers and students with a software of their choice (e.g MS office or something similar).

Within each study region different school types as secondary schools, high schools and vocational schools should be included aiming a total number of 1000 of students aged 13 to 17 years for baseline and 750 students at the end of the Second Follow-up.

#### 5.1.1.1. Invitation

The initial contact to the schools will be made in writing a letter or an email. The written invitation contains:

- A standardised cover letter
- Prepaid return envelope (if invitation is sent by letter)
- Study information flyer
- Optional: letter of support from local mayor, politicians, ministries, or other important opinion leader

##### A) Schools with known telephone number

In the cover letter that is sent to schools with a known telephone number, it is announced that a staff member will contact them by telephone in the next few days or they are welcome to contact the staff member themselves either by telephone, email or the enclosed response letter (incl. request for telephone number(s) and availability). If there is no response to the invitation letter within ten days, the study staff will make at least five attempts within the next four weeks at different times of the day and on at least three different days of the week to establish telephone contact. If these attempts are unsuccessful, a reminder letter with reply and prepaid envelope will be sent with the request to actively contact the PM (see below section: "Reminder procedure"). All contact attempts should be documented in order to be able to demonstrate to the European Commission that the best possible efforts were made to recruit the targeted sample size per region.

##### B) Schools with unknown telephone number

In the cover letter that is sent to schools for which no telephone number could be researched, those contacted are asked to inform the PM either by telephone, email or the enclosed reply letter with a stamped envelope of the times at which a personal appointment to present the project would be possible. If the institution contacted makes contact by telephone or email and does not provide its telephone number of its own accord, it should be requested. If institutions with an unknown telephone number do not respond to the invitation letter within fourteen days, they will be sent a reminder letter

with a reply and prepaid envelope analogous to the procedure described above (see below “Reminder procedure”).

### Reminder procedure

If the school does not respond to the initial contact attempt (in writing) or if no contact could be made by telephone, a first reminder letter is sent (analogous to the procedure for the initial letter under point B) with a reply and prepaid envelope, etc. This letter should contain wording suitable for both cases (initial telephone contact or written contact attempt) or be adapted to the respective case. If no contact can be made after another waiting period of two weeks, the school can be visited in person.

### 5.1.2. Agreements on participation of schools

After the school has expressed interest, an appointment is made by telephone or in-person.

During the appointment, the following information will be given:

- General project information
- Participant information
- Induction plan for the staff performing the study
- Consent forms
- Compliance with data protection regulations
- Viewing materials

If there is still interest in participating, a second appointment is made to plan and prepare the implementation and to contractually regulate participation.

### 5.1.3. Recruitment of study participants

The representative of the school will provide the contact information of teachers who will be trained by the Regional Management team to conduct the study. There are two options for recruiting students into the study to obtain consent:

Option A: A member of the Regional Management or a trained teacher will present the study at an information meeting, where teachers, students, and their parents are invited. Ideally, the consents are collected immediately. However, if the parents or pupils would like more time to think about it, the consents can also be submitted later within 7 days (see SOP “Informed Consents and Revocations”)

Option B: The parents cannot or do not want to attend the information meeting. Students will then share the study information and consent forms with their parents. In this case, the signed declaration of consent can be submitted to the school within 7 days.

### Inclusion criteria

- Age 13-17 years at the time point of recruitment
- Attending the specified settings

## 6. Appendix/Referrals

- Attachment 1 Standardised cover letter
- Attachment 2 Study Information Flyer
- Attachment 3 Documentation of Invitation

## Attachment 2: Standardised cover letter

[School' Name]  
[School's Address]  
[City, State, ZIP Code]



**Dear Headmaster, dearTeacher,**

As part of the ongoing commitment to advancing patient care and promoting evidence-based practices, we are writing to invite you to participate in an upcoming EU-funded intervention study that holds great promise for improving healthcare outcomes in our region and beyond.

At EUthyroid2, we recognise the pivotal role that teachers and lecturers play in shaping the quality of care delivered to our community. It is with great excitement that we extend this invitation to you, knowing that your expertise and dedication will significantly contribute to the success of this important research initiative.

This intervention study, entitled EUthyroid2, is the follow-on project of the initial "EUthyroid" that uncovered major limitations in European prevention programmes against iodine deficiency including our country, and it aims to improve the low awareness with respect to iodine deficiency-related risks in young women. Your participation in this study will not only contribute to the growth of scientific knowledge but will also have a direct impact on enhancing the care we provide to our patients.

We have carefully selected a distinguished team of researchers and experts to lead this study, and we are confident that your involvement will enrich the collaborative efforts. Your valuable insights and experience are crucial to the success of this research, and we believe that your participation will benefit the success of this intervention study itself as well as contribute to new evidence in the research of iodine deficiency.

To facilitate your participation, we have attached information about the study. We provide you with a fully prepared lesson, a workbook with exercises and solutions including active learning elements and active cooperative learning in groups elements. Furthermore, we assure you that all efforts will be made to accommodate your schedule and streamline the process to ensure a seamless experience.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification, please do not hesitate to contact us at our EUthyroid2 office.

Thank you for your consideration and your ongoing commitment to advancing healthcare in our region.

Sincerely,  
[Name of regional representative]  
Head of the Regional Management in [your country]

**EUthyroid2 Office**  
Regional Management of [your country]  
[Regional Management's Address]  
[City, State, ZIP Code]  
[Email Address]  
[Phone Number]

## Attachment 2: Study information flyer

**Our vision is:**

- to find the best ways to inform adolescents and young women, increase their knowledge on iodine, and improve their iodine status
- to take steps towards the elimination of iodine deficiency in Europe and beyond

**Our goals are:**

- to raise awareness about the importance of iodine and the risks of iodine deficiency-related disorders
- to have a positive impact on the health of adolescents and young people, their iodine intake habits, and the health of their future offspring



**Join us in the EUthyroid2 project!**

Find out more about the project:

 <https://euthyroid2.eu>



Feel free to contact us:

 [EUthyroid2@qub.ac.uk](mailto:EUthyroid2@qub.ac.uk)

**Join us in the EUthyroid2 project!**



**EUthyroid2**

- ▶ No extra effort to take part in the study
- ▶ Opportunity for classes to win different prizes

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© iStock.com/Arctic - Iukers (two women)

 Co-funded by the European Union  UK Research and Innovation

**Who we are:**

A team of researchers, medical experts, and non-profit organisations are collaborating in the EUthyroid2 project to improve awareness with respect to the importance of iodine and the risks of iodine deficiency among adolescents and young women.

For this purpose, the EUthyroid2 research team developed interventions for healthcare units and educational settings.

The intervention for educational settings, which we would like your school to participate in, is designed for adolescents (13-17 years old).





**Our offer to you:**

If your school decides to participate in the study as an educational setting, this will require **no extra effort to take part**, as a fully prepared lesson on iodine and extensive material will be provided.

Classes will have the opportunity to **win prizes in a poster competition and prizes for the development of their own questionnaire**.

**Be part of increasing adolescents' awareness about the importance of iodine and improving their iodine status for their health.**

The intervention for educational settings will be conducted in 4 European countries (England, Northern Ireland, the Republic of Cyprus, and Slovenia) and 2 non-European countries (Bangladesh and Pakistan).

**Classes taking part in the study will receive information on iodine** in various forms (lecture, booklet, exercises, and/or assignments) and will have the **opportunity to win different prizes**.

To find out if the intervention worked well, students taking part in the study will be surveyed on iodine awareness and their experience of the intervention.

[Study region]

Contact the EUthyroid2 team at:  
[contact details study region]





B) Schools with unknown telephone number

School	Dispatch date of invitation letter	Date of Response	Dispatch date of reminder letter	Date of school visit