

Minutes from STEP-steering committee meeting 2025-02-28

Online meeting

Participants: Per Lindner (writer of minutes), Ilse Duus Weinreich (controller of minutes), Tommy Andersson, Karin Skov, Poul Kruse-Hansen, Külli Kõlvald, Ilkka Helanterä, Mats Bengtsson, Line Boulland, Anne Werner Hauge and Jørn Petter Lindahl

1. Update from EURO-KEP

PL, IDW, and MB provided an update on the EURO-KEP initiative following the recent two-day kick-off meeting in Madrid. The purpose of the meeting was to outline the work ahead and get to know each other.

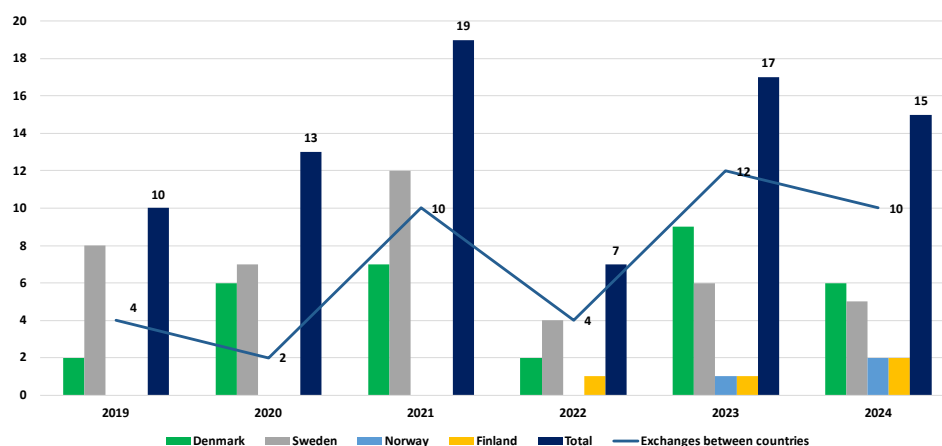
The first task for Work Package 3, in which SCTP is involved, is to develop and distribute a survey to all countries regarding legislation and operational procedures for exchange programs. The survey has been finalized and sent to ONT, Spain, which will convert it into a web survey before dissemination.

A discussion followed on SCTP's role in a future EURO-KEP. The consensus was to continue operating STEP with the current software. Match runs could be synchronized with EURO-KEP so that pairs not matched in STEP could be included in a subsequent EURO-KEP match run. The committee agreed to remain actively engaged in EURO-KEP to influence its design and ensure compatibility with the STEP program.

2. STEP 2024

IDW provided an update on the match runs and transplantations performed until 2024. From 2019-2024 in total 81 transplantations (Swedish-STEP not included) done through STEP.

Number of transplantations per year per county
- and number of exchanges between countries



Number and causes of broken cycles were discussed, among others if a pre-evaluation should be done of all matching donors to a recipients before optimization and prioritization. In the end we might reduce the number of broken cycles (currently 59%) but it will not have any impact on the number of transplantation.

3. Evaluation of the Current Program

Results in Primary and Re-run Match Runs

Should matches found in the primary run have priority over those found in the re-run? Although re-runs may yield additional matches, it was decided that matches established in the primary run will take precedence. The prioritization outlined in the STEP guidelines applies exclusively to the primary run. This clarification will be reflected in the updated STEP guidelines.

Possibility to set limits

Should it be possible to set age and/or weight+height limits for acceptable donors? The committee decided to allow to set an age limit, which is particularly relevant for paediatric cases. Height/weight (BMI) will be included as informational data but will not be used as a restrictive limit.

Length of Chains and Cycles

Should chains include more than three pairs? Should the maximum cycle size remain at three pairs?

It was decided to retain the upper limit of three pairs per cycle. However, in the future, there should be no upper limit for chains.

4. Updated STEP Guidelines

The STEP guidelines have been revised to reflect current practices and circulated for review before the meeting.

A discussion was held regarding the removal of a section on recipient prioritization in cases where a transplantation fails (procurement, transport, or other unforeseen issues). Views varied on whether centres should have the option to grant such recipients priority on the Scandiatransplant waiting list. It was suggested that this topic be presented at the annual NKG meeting for further deliberation and with concrete suggestions.

A new version of the guidelines will follow