



FRAMEWORK FOR EXPERT WORKING GROUPS

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1. Introduction

Against the background of rapid technological innovation, which creates the need to continually improve and develop the methods, techniques and procedures of forensic science, and given the complexity and scope of this science, the need to exchange information and to ensure cooperation among experts, the following framework for Expert Working Groups (EWG) defines their roles and operations.

2. Definition

An Expert Working Group consists of experts in a particular scientific area.

3. Aim

An Expert Working Group shall support the European development of its particular area of forensic science by any or all of the following activities:

- Exchanging information and expertise through meetings.
- Promoting quality assurance (e.g. by Collaborative Testing) and the development of professional standards.
- Harmonising methods.
- Combining research activities.
- Providing education and training within the particular area.
- Establishing international access to data collections.
- Producing a best practice manual according to the ENFSI template for those areas of work for which the Expert Working Group is responsible.

4. Operation

The Expert Working Group shall establish and maintain:

- Terms of reference including aims and objectives, with respect to this framework.
- Details of the organisational structure of the Group and the organisation of its meetings.
- Individual project plans for major tasks.
- A membership list.

The Expert Working Group shall nominate a representative for membership in the Quality and Competence Liaison Group (QCLG) and Research and Development Liaison Group (RDLG).

5. Membership

Three types of membership are distinguished within Expert Working Groups: Member, Associate Member and Guests.

5.1 Member:

- An Expert Working Group shall be open to representatives from all member-institutes. The institute shall be active in the area of the Group.
- The Director of the Institute may nominate one representative of the Institute to function between the Expert Working Group and the Institute and to vote for the institute in question (one vote per institute).
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5.2 Associate Member:

- An Expert Working Group may decide by a simple majority vote amongst its Members whether it wishes to admit as Associate Members representatives from other European or non-European forensic institutes, forensic scientists, academics or other experts in its field according to the aims and objectives of the Group.
- Associate Members have the same voting rights as members (one vote per institute).

5.3 Guest:

- Guests may be admitted to Expert Working Group meetings at the discretion of the Chair of the relevant EWG.
- The number of Associate Members and Guests in an Expert Working Group meeting may be limited. Any decision to limit the numbers shall be supported by at least half of the members of the Group.

6. Meetings

- Expert Working Groups should have an Annual Meeting (AM) devoted to Working Group business and/or scientific issues. It should normally not exceed two days duration, and shall be financed by a registration fee, which shall not exceed 250 EUR per person.
- All meetings shall be open to the members of the Expert Working Group and may at the discretion of the Chair of the relevant EWG be open to other experts from the ENFSI Institutes and to guests.
- The results of each meeting shall be documented in a written report to be sent to the participants, ENFSI Members and to the ENFSI Board.
- The venue shall be changed on a voluntary basis within Europe, with different Institutes acting as hosts.
- At the triennial European Academy of Forensic Science (EAFS) Meetings, each Expert Working Group shall be responsible for the conference seminar in its expert area after consultation with the Conference Organising Committee.
- Planning of open scientific meetings by Expert Working Groups should be such as to support the cycle of EAFS Meetings.
- Working Groups shall prepare preliminary agenda for their meetings and distribute them well in advance to the ENFSI Member-Institutes together with invitations and forward the copy to the Secretariat. The meetings of WGs shall be organised in accordance with general ENFSI calendar

7. Organisation of Expert Working Groups

- Each Expert Working Group shall elect a Steering Committee from the members, responsible for strategic planning and monitoring of progress. An associate member is eligible for the Steering Committee after written permission by the ENFSI Board. This Steering Committee shall meet at least once per year, preferably during WG AM.
- The Steering Committee shall consist of at least
 - A chairperson
 - A deputy chairperson
 - A treasurer
 - A liaison person for the Quality and Competence Committee

- A liaison person for the Standing Committee of Research and Development
- A website editor

Further members of the Steering Committee are eligible.

8. Annual Report and Plan

- An Annual Report and Plan from each Expert Working Group shall be given to the ENFSI Board not later than four weeks before the Joint Meeting (Board and Chairpersons of the Working Groups).
- The Chairperson of the Group, or his/her nominated substitute, may be invited to attend the ENFSI Annual Meeting to take part in the discussion on his/her expert area.
- The Annual Report shall cover all activities of the Group, including the following information:
 - Membership (changes, composition, meetings)
 - Steering Committee (contact details)
 - Changes in the Terms of Reference
 - Achievement against Annual Plan (issues solved/outstanding, progress)
 - Summary of the Annual Plan for next year
 - Changes in aims and organization

The Annual Plan shall be based on the ENFSI Strategic Plan and shall covering the forthcoming year of the P&R cycle.

9. Establishment and Annulment

- The decision on the establishment of an Expert Working Group shall be made by the ENFSI Board, who may seek all Members' views either in writing or at the next full meeting of the Membership.
- An application shall be addressed to the ENFSI Board and shall include:
 - The Terms of Reference of the proposed Expert Working Group with a clear statement of its objectives.
 - A list of founding members, together with signed letters of support from each individual's ENFSI Member
 - Internal rules on Membership and election of a Chairperson.
 - Frequency and duration of meetings.
 - Any other issues considered to be important to the internal organisation of the Group.
- If an ENFSI Member has any concerns about the work or management of an Expert Working Group, the matter should be raised in writing with the Chair of the Group. The Chair should seek to resolve the issue by reference to the ENFSI Constitution and supporting documents. If this does not resolve the issue, the advice of the ENFSI Board should be sought on the matter.
- An Expert Working Group, which shows no useful outcome, may be annulled at an ENFSI Annual Meeting.

10. Advising to external organisations

- An Expert Working Groups may be requested by an external organisation (e.g. EU-entities) to provide an expert opinion on issues with respect to the particular expertise field.
- The Working Group must forward the request to the ENFSI Board via the ENFSI secretariat immediately.
- The ENFSI Secretariat serves as the relay between the requesting authority and the particular Expert Working Group. The ENFSI Secretariat deliberates with the ENFSI Board during the process.

- The Working Group chairman is responsible for an adequate procedure resulting in a sound opinion.
- The Working Group as a whole should be given the chance to contribute to the formulation of the advice. Only Working Group members are entitled to contribute. Sufficient time should be given – if possible – to enable all Working Group members to submit their contribution.
- It should be taken into account that EU-entities usually only accept opinion from individuals or institutes from EU-countries.
- In the final expert opinion / report there should be room for minority opinions.

11. Finances

- All procedures concerning financial operations are dealt with in the Framework for Finances (BRD-FWK-008).

12. Amendments against previous version

Date

Paragraph 4, bullet point 1, added: “with respect to this framework”

Paragraph 4, last sentence, deleted: “Education and Training Liaison Group (ETLG)”

Paragraph 5, deleted: “List of Members and Associated Members shall be kept by the Secretariat and available for the ENFSI Member representatives. The Secretariat shall be informed about the changes in WG’s composition in relevant time.”

Paragraph 7, bullet point 1, deleted: “– however not as chairperson –“

Paragraph 7, bullet point 2, added: “The Steering Committee shall consist of at least

- A chairperson
- A deputy chairperson
- A treasurer
- A liaison person for the Quality and Competence Committee
- A liaison person for the Standing Committee of Research and Development
- A website editor

Further members of the Steering Committee are eligible.”

Paragraph 8, bullet point 1, replaced: “two” by “four” weeks before the Joint Meeting.

Paragraph 8, bullet point 3, replaced: “using” the following “format” by “including” the following “information”

Paragraph 10, bullet point 5, deleted: “(i.e. not the associated members)”

Paragraph 11, bullet point 1, deleted: “Each WG shall nominate a person responsible for WG’s financial operations. The Secretariat will be informed about the nominated persons and their contact data.”

Paragraph 11, bullet point 2 and 3, deleted: “All the management of the collection and payment shall be carried out in an official bank account of ENFSI. All the information in relation with the economic aspect of WG regular activities shall be at disposal of the Board and Secretariat at any time.

Paragraph 11, added: “All procedures concerning financial operations are dealt with in the Framework for Finances (BRD-FWK-008).”