

Terms of reference

Statute of ENFSI Forensic Information Technology Working Group (FIT-WG)
(Revised, November 20th 2014)

This document of “Terms of Reference” was voted and approved by ENFSI FIT-WG board by unanimity in the annual meeting held in Tallinn (Estonia) from the 17th to 21st of November 2014.

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, this statute comes from the ENFSI Memorandum of Understanding and gives basic framework for FIT-WG activities as an Expert Working Group (EWG).

2. Definition

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

3. Aim

The FIT-WG shall support the European development of the particular area of forensic science relating to information technology with the following activities:

- 3.1 To exchange information and expertise with the other ENFSI member laboratories of the discipline of FIT.
- 3.2 Cultivate co-operation with other working groups and committees concerned with digital evidence.
- 3.3 To establish quality in developing of professional standards in all aspects of FIT.

4. Objectives

- 4.1 To maintain a FIT-WG which complies with the global aims of the ENFSI.
 - 4.1.1 To exchange information effectively and regularly.
 - 4.1.2 To harmonize methods, terminology and practices.
 - 4.1.3 Encourage collaborative research.
 - 4.1.4 To exchange developments.
- 4.2 To develop and promote in ENFSI member laboratories a discipline forensic information technology.
 - 4.2.1 Promote the activities of this working group.
 - 4.2.2 Suggest recommendation containing minimal standards of laboratory equipment and processes.
 - 4.2.3 Exchange information on current crime-cases.
 - 4.2.4 Support other FIT working group colleagues by providing education and training.

4.3 Cultivate co-operation with other working groups and committees concerned with digital evidence.

4.3.1 Identify any other international group related to our field of expertise.

4.3.2 Invite eligible groups to become members of this working group.

4.3.3 Identify and co-operate with related groups within the ENFSI.

4.4 To establish quality in all aspects of forensic information technology.

4.4.1 Identify quality issues.

4.4.2 Install procedures for harmonizing working methods.

4.4.3 Propose and execute Quality Assurance Proficiency testing.

4.4.4 Produce and maintain updated a best practice manual according to the ENFSI template for the area of FIT.

4.5 To cultivate relations with significant technical organisations.

4.5.1 Identify organisations that can contribute to this working group.

4.5.2 Request significant information from these organisations.

4.5.3 Inform organisations about appropriate forensic requirements and problems.

5. Operation

The members of the working group shall establish and maintain:

5.1 Terms of reference including aims and objectives.

5.2 Details of the organisational structure of the Group and organisation of its meetings.

5.3 Individual project plans for major tasks.

5.4 A membership list.

6. Membership

6.1 Members

A FIT-WG member can be any forensic laboratory that belongs to a ENFSI member institute and deals with forensic information technology. The Director of the Institute belonging to ENFSI may nominate one representative for the function in the WG and to vote for the institute in question (one vote per institute, regardless of the number of attendees of the same institute).

6.2 Associate Members

6.2.1 FIT-WG associate membership is open to any laboratory or forensic team dealing with forensic information technology around the World.

6.2.2 Associate membership is conditional upon submitting a written application form that must be approved by the FIT-WG Board. Associate members have the right to take part in all FIT-WG activities except "closed" FIT-WG activities or sessions.

6.2.3 Conditions for participating as an associate member are:

- Law enforcement or similar background
- Approval by the FIT-WG Board
- Active participation

- 6.2.4 Associate Members have the same voting rights as members (one vote per institute)
- 6.2.5 Associate Members will have a higher fee for the meetings compared with the member's fee, due to the need to pay the annual Institute fee to ENFSI.

6.3 Guest

- 6.3.1 Guests may be admitted to Working Group meetings at the discretion of the Chair of the FIT-WG.
- 6.3.2 The number of Associate Members and Guests in the 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.

6.4 Resignation from membership

- 6.4.1 A FIT-WG member can resign from the membership by sending a written resignation application to the FIT-WG Board.

6.5 Exclusion from membership

- 6.5.1 The FIT-WG Board can exclude FIT-WG associate members from the FIT-WG. An appeal against this decision can be submitted to the ENFSI Board.
- 6.5.2 In case of misconduct, the FIT-WG Board can suspend any member. Reference will be sought from the ENFSI Board.
- 6.5.3 If an ENFSI Member has any concerns about the work or management of the Working Group, the matter should be raised in writing with the Chair. 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.

7. Meetings

7.1 FIT-WG meetings

- 7.1.1 FIT-WG meetings are to be held at least once every year (Annual Meeting).
- 7.1.2 FIT-WG meetings are organized according to the FIT-WG activity program. The program is prepared and approved by the FIT-WG Board.
- 7.1.3 Official communication language of FIT-WG is English.
- 7.1.4 Financial costs of the FIT-WG meetings are covered by registration fees of participants and subsidies.
- 7.1.5 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.
- 7.1.6 The venue shall be changed on a voluntary basis within Europe, with different Institutes acting as hosts.

7.2 FIT-WG Board meetings

- 7.2.1 Ideally the FIT-WG Board meetings will be arranged to coincide with FIT-WG sessions.
- 7.2.2 FIT-WG board meetings will be organized by the FIT-WG Chairman and with at least two months notice to the members.

- 7.2.3 FIT-WG board shall prepare preliminary agenda for their annual 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 organized in accordance with general ENFSI calendar.
- 7.2.4 FIT-WG board issues will be dealt with by correspondence wherever possible.

8. FIT working group bodies

8.1 FIT-WG Board

- 8.1.1 FIT-WG Board consists of the representatives of all member laboratories. Each member laboratory can nominate one representative to the FIT-WG Board. Any other colleague from the same laboratory can substitute nominated FIT-WG Board members.
- 8.1.2 Every FIT-WG Board member has one vote (one vote per institute). Voting can take place if more than 60% of FIT-WG Board members are present at the FIT-WG Board meeting. Majority of board members present is necessary for a valid result. In case of vote parity the decision is taken according to the vote of the FIT-WG Chairman. For important issues when a meeting cannot be organized the FIT-WG Chairman can call for voting through other means approved by vote of FIT-WG Board.
- 8.1.3 The FIT-WG Board will approve FIT-WG membership, the meeting agenda and all other FIT-WG activities.
- 8.1.4 The FIT-WG Board will appoint Working Group Co-ordinators who will report progress on specific aims, objectives or activities.
- 8.1.5 Any board member can propose modifications to this statute. Voting, as stated in point 8.1.2, approves all modifications.

8.2 FIT-WG Executive officers

- 8.2.1 The FIT-WG Executive consists of a Chairman and a Vice-chairman.
- 8.2.2 FIT-WG Chairman and Vice-chairman are elected from FIT-WG Board members for a two-year period.
- 8.2.3 FIT-WG Chairman co-ordinates the activities of FIT-WG between FIT-WG Board meetings, represents FIT-WG at the ENFSI meetings and executes all other tasks given to him by FIT-WG Board or ENFSI Board.
- 8.2.4 The FIT-WG Chairman is responsible for a report of all meetings. This report will be sent to the members and the ENFSI board.
- 8.2.5 The Vice-chairman is appointed to assist and deputize for the Chairman.
- 8.2.6 Executive officers can be removed from Office by a vote of the FIT-WG Board.
- 8.2.7 The FIT-WG Chairman can appoint any FIT-WG Board member to represent the WG at any meeting.

8.3 Steering committee (SC)

- 8.3.1 The FIT-WG steering committee is composed of:
- The chairman and vice-chairman
 - A Secretary
 - A Quality Assurance Manager

- A Research and Development Manager
 - A Training and Education Manager
 - The organizers of the next meeting
- 8.3.2 The FIT-WG SC is to meet at least once a year, in preparation of the coming meeting of the Working group
- 8.3.3 The FIT-WG SC are committed to animating the activities of the Working Group throughout the year.
- 8.3.4 Candidates for the steering committee are approved by the FIT-WG Board.
- 8.3.5 An associate member is eligible for the Steering Committee – however not as chairperson - after written permission by the ENFSI Board.

8.4 Treasurer

- 8.4.1 The Board shall nominate a treasurer responsible for WG's financial operations. The ENFSI Secretariat will be informed about the nominated persons and their contact data.
- 8.4.2 All the expenses charged to the FIT-WG account should be approved by the treasurer and the chairman.
- 8.4.3 The treasurer will inform to the Board the financial situation of the WG every year during the meeting.
- 8.4.4 All the management of the collection and payment shall be carried out in an official bank account of ENFSI.
- 8.4.5 All the information in relation with the economic aspect of FIT-WG regular activities shall be at disposal of the Board and Secretariat at any time.

9. Advising to external organisations

- 9.1 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.
- 9.2 The WG must forward the request to the ENFSI Board via the ENFSI secretariat immediately.
- 9.3 The ENFSI Secretariat serves as the relay between the requesting authority and the WG. The ENFSI Secretariat deliberates with the ENFSI Board during the process.
- 9.4 The WG chairman is responsible for an adequate procedure resulting in a sound opinion.
- 9.5 The WG as a whole should be given the chance to contribute to the formulation of the advice. Only WG members (i.e. not the associated members) are entitled to contribute. Sufficient time should be given – if possible – to enable all Working Group members to submit their contribution.
- 9.6 It should be taken into account that EU-entities usually only accepts opinion from individuals or institutes from EU-countries.
- 9.7 In the final expert opinion / report there should be room for minority opinions.