



STANDING COMMITTEE  
FOR QUALITY AND COMPETENCE (QCC)

**FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROCESS FOR THE CREATION  
OF TECHNICAL DOCUMENTS**

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**NOTE:** The previous Guidance for the Process of the Creation of Technical Documents, issued on 18 July 2018, was referenced QCC-DOC-001. This document has been revised and is referenced QCC-FWK-001 in order to conform with the correct nomenclature of ENFSI documents. Due to the change of references, this document is at issue 001.

## 1. AIMS

This Guidance clarifies the role of the various ENFSI entities involved in the process of creating technical documents.

## 2. SCOPE

The scope of this guidance covers the creation, amendment and distribution of Best Practice Manuals (BPM) and Guidelines only.

## 3. TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

### 3.1 Best Practice Manual

A Best Practice Manual (BPM) is a field-specific document, which describes a forensic activity (or part of it) like an examination, methodology, analysis and/or investigation in a laboratory or at a crime scene. It covers all relevant aspects of the examination like the principles of the method(s) used, instrumentation, quality assurance principles, competence requirements of the expert, training processes and approaches to forensic examinations.

A BPM should be written in general terms and is aimed at practitioners in the field and assumes prior knowledge in the discipline. The BPM is not meant as a standard operating procedure (SOP) in an individual laboratory.

A BPM is based on consensus amongst the forensic experts and reflects the accepted and proven practices at the time of writing. The requirements of the judicial systems are addressed in general terms only.

### 3.2 Guideline

A Guideline is a specific document, which gives recommendation, advice or clarification on a particular aspect/aspects of a forensic topic. The guideline may have a narrow forensic

discipline approach i.e. specific requirement for the analysis of a new drug or a broad application in the forensic domain i.e. limitations of proficiency testing. It may be field or non-field specific.

A Guideline assumes prior knowledge in the forensic discipline. It is based on consensus among the relevant forensic experts and reflects the accepted practices at the time of writing. The requirements of the judicial systems are addressed in general terms only.

## 4. PROCESS / PHASES

A typical creation process for a technical document goes through the following six phases:<sup>1</sup>

### 4.1 Preparation

Once a requirement for creation of a technical document is established, the following steps are initiated:

- A team of writers / authors is established by an EWG or Project Team.
- A team leader is assigned.
- A working plan and timeframe is set.
- Consultation (if needed) is established.
- The QCC is informed by the EWG or Project Team of the initiation of the technical document.

### 4.2 Creation

The writers decide whether the document is a BPM or a Guideline. The relevant ENFSI templates for BPMs or Guidelines must be used. Templates and examples can be downloaded from the ENFSI intranet when available (<https://epe.europol.europa.eu>) and/or can be found on: <https://enfsi.eu> under "DOCUMENTS".

- The status of the document "draft" or "approved by" on day/month/year has to be stated in the top header of every page of the document. The document must also have footer on every page containing page numbering, abbreviation for document type, reference code, issue number and issue date.
- If the creation of the document involves the co-operation or input with an external partner, additional requirements to the structure, layout and/or the use of logos may be in place. These requirements must be respected, but the document should be as close as possible to the template elaborated by ENFSI. It is important to remember that when a technical document has been produced within an EU-funded project, there are some contractual / visibility obligations as mentioned in Grant Agreement with the European Commission (Refer to Appendix B for details).
- The team creates a first draft document ready for review.

### 4.3 Reviewing

- In order to assure that a technical document reflects the opinion of the entire group, the first draft document has to be presented and circulated within the particular EWG followed by a revision phase of at least 6 weeks. The email requesting for feedback and collated feedback will be archived by the authoring team or the WG.
- Feedback received by the EWG is to be considered and implemented as relevant by the authoring team.
- BPMs and Forensic Guidelines (after being internally peer-reviewed or consulted upon) shall be sent to the Secretariat for publishing on the ENFSI public website, for at least 4 weeks, for public evaluation by the professional community.
- After feedback received by the professional community, the "Template for comments" is sent

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<sup>1</sup> Basic phases appear in a schematic representation in Appendix C

to the authoring team by the Secretariat. The writing team must consider and implement the feedback as relevant.

- The team creates a final draft document (in a .docx format) ready for review by the QCC.
- QCC shall check the peer reviewed document for quality assurance issues and insure that it adheres to the template's rules.
- The technical document is sent back (if needed) from QCC to the issuing body within 4 weeks of receiving the document, along with any matters raised by the QCC which are to be duly considered by the EWG or Project Team.
- The EWG / Project Team addresses comments and sends to QCC the final draft of the document.
- QCC initiates the Document's final draft last review which is to be concluded within 2 weeks.
- It is good practice for EWG / Project Teams to keep a record of feedback received and decisions made.

#### 4.4 Finalization

- The final draft is initially pre-approved by the QCC.
- The QCC forwards the technical document to the Board via the Secretariat requesting formal approval.
- The Board initiates the process of the document's final / formal approval. The overall process is due to last 4 weeks.

Note: In the case where the Board makes comments on the content of the document, it is returned to the issuing entity via the QCC.

- The approved document is sent by the Board to the Secretariat for publication.

#### 4.5 Publication

- The Secretariat publishes the document (in read-only pdf-format) on the ENFSI website(s) within 2 weeks after receiving it from the Board.
- The Secretariat also informs the relevant parties for the publication date.

#### 4.6 Archiving

- All approved documents shall be archived by the Secretariat (including an editable - .doc/.docx- text format copy).
- The issuing entity and the ENFSI Secretariat will keep a record of the history of the documents (current status, historic versions, dates of issue, etc.).
- All different phases of the documents written -creation, review, finalization- (e.g., peer reviewed and public commented) shall be stored by the issuing body until the final version of it is approved.
- Quality Assurance dedicated software can be used for administrating the documents.

## 5. TECHNICAL DOCUMENT AMENDMENT AND REVIEW

### 5.1 Technical Document Amendment

Technical document amendment will be undertaken by the specific EWG / Project Team. They shall decide whether the changes are minor or significant.

All amendments will be highlighted in yellow. If the changes are significant, section 4 of this document will be followed. If the changes are minor, progress to section 4.4.

### 5.2 Technical Document Review

It is strongly advised for all technical documents to be reviewed every 5 years. At the point of undertaking the review, section 4.3 will be followed.

## **6. GENERAL ABBREVIATIONS**

### **6.1 Following abbreviations shall be used by ENFSI Standing Committees, the ENFSI Board and Secretariat:**

BRD	ENFSI Board
QCC	Quality & Competence Standing Committee
RDC	Research & Development Standing Committee
SEC	Secretariat
EAFS	European Academy of Forensic Science

### **6.2 Abbreviations for Expert Working Groups**

APS	Animal, Plant and Soil Traces Working Group
DI	Digital Imaging Working Group
DNA	DNA Working Group
DOC	European Document Experts Working Group
DWG	Drug Working Group
PGT	Paint, Glass & Taggants Working Group
EXP	Forensic International Network for Explosives Investigation
FEI	Fire and Explosion Investigations Working Group
FGR	Firearms and GSR Working Group
FIN	European Fingerprint Working Group
FIT	Forensic Information Technology
FHX	European Network of Forensic Handwriting Examiners
FSA	Forensic Speech and Audio Analysis Working Group
MRK	Expert Working Group Marks
RAA	Road Accident Analysis Working Group
SOC	Scene of Crime Working Group
THG	European Textile and Hair Working Group

### **6.3 Other abbreviations**

BPM	Best Practice Manual
GDL	Forensic Guideline
FWK	Framework
TOR	Terms of Reference
GEN	General
TPL	Template

## **7. REFERENCES**

- FRAMEWORK FOR TEMPLATE FOR FIELD SPECIFIC BEST PRACTICE MANUAL (BPM).
- FRAMEWORK FOR TEMPLATE FOR GUIDELINE.
- FRAMEWORK FOR FORMAT AND APPROVAL OF ENFSI DOCUMENTS.
- Frameworks, ENFSI policy docs

## **8. AMENDMENTS TO PREVIOUS VERSION**

The document has been amended throughout to make it more practical with clearer guidance regarding the process for creation of technical documents.

## APPENDICES

### A. Allotment of Reference Codes

The unique reference number is made up of: **“EWG”** - **“Type of Document”** - **“Sequential BPM/guideline number”**. Typical examples of the unique reference numbers are:

- FIN-BPM-001; the 001 stands for the 1st BPM published by the particular EWG.
- FIN-GUI-003; the 003 stands for the 3rd guideline published by the particular EWG.

### B. Excerpt of the Grant Agreement with the European Commission

#### **"ARTICLE 22 — PROMOTING THE ACTION — VISIBILITY OF EU FUNDING**

##### **22.1.2 Information on EU funding — Obligation and right to use the EU emblem**

Unless the Commission requests or agrees otherwise, any communication activity related to the action (including at conferences, seminars, in information material, such as brochures, leaflets, posters, presentations, etc., in electronic form, via social media, etc.) and any infrastructure, equipment or major result funded by the grant must:

- display the EU emblem and

- include the following text: “This [insert appropriate description, e.g. report, publication, conference, infrastructure, equipment, insert type of result, etc.] was funded by the European Union’s Internal Security Fund — Police.”

When displayed in association with another logo, the EU emblem must have appropriate prominence.

##### **22.1.3 Disclaimer excluding Commission responsibility**

Any communication activity related to the action must indicate the following disclaimer:

“The content of this [insert appropriate description, e.g. report, publication, conference, etc.] represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility. The European Commission does not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.”

C. Schematic Representation of Technical Documents Creation Phases



STANDING COMMITTEE FOR QUALITY AND COMPETENCE (QCC)

**PREPARATION-CREATION-REVIEW-FINALIZATION-PUBLICATION phases**

