



TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXPERT WORKING GROUPS

DOCUMENT TYPE :	REF. CODE:	ISSUE NO:	ISSUE DATE:
STATUTORY	BRD-TOR-003	012	26.04.2024

1. Introduction

The current background of rapid technological innovation creates the need to continually improve and develop the methods, techniques and procedures of forensic science. Given the complexity and scope of this science, the need to exchange information and to ensure cooperation among experts is essential.

The following Terms of Reference for Expert Working Groups (EWG) defines their roles and operations.

2. Definition

An EWG consists of experts in a particular scientific area.

3. Aim

An EWG shall support the European development of its particular area of forensic science by the following activities:

- Exchanging information and expertise through meetings;
- Promoting quality assurance (e.g. by Proficiency Testing and Inter-Laboratory Testing) and the development of professional standards;
- Harmonising methods;
- Promoting research activities;
- Providing field-specific education and training;
- Establishing international access to data collections;
- Producing relevant best practice manuals and guidelines according to the ENFSI template.

Effective contribution to the implementation of the ENFSI Action Plans and other documents when required, including reporting on progress.

4. Operation

The Expert Working Group shall establish and maintain:

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

The ENFSI Secretariat shall be informed about all changes of above mentioned data to ensure up-to-date EWG information.

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 Honorary Member.

5.1 Member:

- An EWG shall be open to representatives from all ENFSI member institutes that are active in the area of the EWG.
- ENFSI member may nominate one representative of the institute to participate in the EWG and having a voting right (one vote per institute).

5.2 Associate Member:

- An EWG may appoint Associate Members as representatives from other forensic institutes, universities or other institutions which are not member institutes of ENFSI.
- The acceptance of an Associate Member shall be voted on by the EWG members with a simple majority.
- Associate Members have the same voting rights as members (one vote per institute).
- The number of EWG Associate Members shall not exceed 50 percent of the membership, without prior approval of the ENFSI Board (following explanation by the EWG Chair).

5.3 Honorary Member:

- Individuals who have made significant contributions to an Expert Working Group can be invited to become an Honorary Member of the particular EWG.
- The acceptance of an Honorary Member shall be voted on by the EWG members with a simple majority.
- Honorary members have no voting rights.

6. Meetings

- EWGs should have an Annual Meeting (AM) devoted to its business and/or scientific issues.
- All meetings shall be open to the EWG Members, Associate Members and Honorary Members. Additionally, the EWG may invite other contributors whose attendance might be beneficial to the aims of the meeting.
- EWGs shall prepare preliminary agendas for their meetings and distribute them well in advance to the Secretariat. The Secretariat shall forward the relevant documents to the

- member institutes through email, publish the event on the open website and add the event to the ENFSI Event Calendar on EPE. The report of each meeting shall be prepared and sent to the EWG members, ENFSI Members and to the ENFSI Board.
- A brief note from the meeting should be sent to ENFSI Secretariat in order to be published on ENFSI website and ENFSI LinkedIn account.
 - The venue shall be changed on a voluntary basis within Europe, with different institutes acting as hosts.
 - The Chair of the EWG (or a nominated individual from the EWG) shall attend the ENFSI Board Joint Meeting occurring twice a year (one in person and one VC).
 - The Chair of the EWG, or a nominated individual, shall attend on invitation the Permanent Representatives' Annual Meeting to update the PRs on the work of the EWG. It is intended that this will be on rotation of the EWGs and therefore once every three to four years.

7. Organisation of Expert Working Groups

- Each Expert Working Group shall elect a Steering Committee from its members, responsible for strategic planning and monitoring of progress. An Associate Member and an Honorary member are eligible for the Steering Committee after written permission by the ENFSI Board.
- The Steering Committee shall meet at least once per year, preferably during the EWG Annual Meeting, and shall include however not limited to
 - 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
 - A GDPR compliance lead

Specific permanent, or project based tasks, should be organized by Subcommittees.

8. Annual Report and Plan

- An Annual Report and Plan from each EWG shall be provided to the ENFSI Board no later than four weeks before the Joint Meeting (ENFSI Board and EWG Chairs).

The Annual Report shall cover all activities of the EWG, including the following information:

- Membership (changes, composition including the number of associate members, meetings);
- Steering Committee (contact details);
- Subcommittees (contact details);
- Changes in the Framework;
- Achievements against Annual Plan (issues solved/outstanding, progress);
- Summary of the Annual Plan for next year;
- Proposed changes in aims and organization.

The above information is to be uploaded to the relevant ENFSI online document.

Abstracts of the scientific papers presented at the meetings could be part of the report, at the discretion of the authors and may be published at the ENFSI public website.

The Annual Plan shall be based on the ENFSI Strategic Plan and shall be covering the forthcoming year of the Planning and Reporting 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 nearest ENFSI Annual Meeting.

An application shall be addressed to the ENFSI Board and shall include:

- The Framework 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 ENFSI Member.
- Internal rules on Membership and election of a Chairperson.
- Any other issues considered to be important to the internal organisation of the EWG.

If an ENFSI Member has any concerns about the operation 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 EWG may be annulled at an ENFSI Annual Meeting if, for example, it proves not to be effective in supporting the aims and objectives of ENFSI or there is a requirement to change the current operating model or the number of EWGs.

EWGs with related fields of expertise may be merged for practical reasons. Such action shall be voted on by the membership at the Annual Meeting. However, the EWGs concerned shall be consulted about a planned merger prior to this.

An EWG may be split by a reasoned request of the Steering Committee sent to the ENFSI Board. The request would be evaluated by the ENFSI Board, prior to a decision being taken with the ENFSI members at the ENFSI Annual Meeting.

10. Finances

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

11. Amendments against previous version

- Paragraph 3: The words "any, or all, of" were deleted in the first sentence.
- Paragraph 3: The words "and Combining" were deleted from the 4th bullet point.

- Paragraph 3: The sentence “Effective contribution to the implementation of the ENFSI Action Plans and other documents when required, including reporting on progress.” was added.
- Paragraph 5.: A third type of membership, the “Honorary Member” was added.
- Paragraph 5.1: The member institutes were specified as “ENFSI member institutes” and “ENFSI member”.
- Paragraph 5.3: This paragraph was newly added.
- Paragraph 6: The need for preparing a short report after each EWG meeting to be published on the ENFSI website and LinkedIn account was added.
- Paragraph 6: The obligation of the EWG Chair to attend the yearly ENFSI Board Joint Meetings and on occasion the ENFSI Permanent Representative Annual Meeting was added.
- Paragraph 7: The role of the Honorary Member was added as eligible for the Steering Committee.
- Paragraph 7: The “GDPR compliance lead” was added as a mandatory role of the Steering Committee.
- Paragraph 8: The sentence “The EWG Chair, 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.” was deleted as it has been added under paragraph 6.
- Paragraph 8: The sentence “The above information is to be uploaded to the relevant ENFSI online document.” has been newly added in order to comply to the newly established Reporting and Planning procedure.

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