

PROJECT TASK FORCE ON EUROPEAN SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING STANDARDS

TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR EXPERT WORKING GROUPS TO PROVIDE INPUT FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF DRAFT EUROPEAN SUSTAINABILITY REPORTING STANDARDS

OBJECTIVE

The role of the external expert working groups ('Expert WGs') is to support the Project Task Force on European sustainability reporting standards (PTF-ESRS) in the development of a pre-exposure draft of European sustainability reporting standards as detailed in the associated [call for candidates](#).

The role of the Expert WGs includes providing specialised knowledge to enhance the PTF-ESRS's understanding of sustainability reporting specific issues, and technical assessment of proposals by performing activities such as reviewing, providing input, advising and supporting the PTF-ESRS in developing the pre-exposure draft of European sustainability reporting standards.

The output of the Expert WGs always takes the form of input to the PTF-ESRS. The Expert WGs are not a decision-making body, but advisory in nature.

CONFIDENTIALITY

The Expert WGs members do not express their views relating to the work of the PTF-NFRS publicly in any way, and maintain strict confidentiality with respect to all materials made available to them by the PTF-ESRS and its clusters which are not in the public domain, and all discussions taking place with the PTF-ESRS clusters. The need for strict confidentiality, including not expressing their views publicly, extends to any personal support staff Expert WGs members might be utilising.

PREFERRED COMPOSITION OF THE EXPERT WGs

The Expert WGs should consist of members with demonstrated knowledge, practical experience and high-profile expertise in the field of: sustainability reporting standard setting; preparing, reviewing or using sustainability information; or matters within the scope of standard setting including digitisation of corporate reporting. More specific details on the areas and topics of knowledge and expertise required are detailed in the Appendix to the associated [call for candidates](#).

The Expert WGs shall include a balanced representation from a broad range of stakeholders with a legitimate interest and expertise in sustainability reporting and standard-setting, with expertise and experience on the specific areas and topics detailed in the associated [call for candidates](#). A sufficient number of experts will be selected as necessary for the different matters to be covered by the sustainability reporting standards being drafted.

The composition of the Expert WGs should, to the extent possible, be balanced in terms of nationality, gender and professional background.

The indicative size of each Expert WG is up to six members.

The appointment of the members is recommended by a nominating committee for approval by the PTF-ESRS.

The Expert WGs members are appointed in their personal capacity and may not be represented by alternates.

The Expert WGs are chaired by PTF-ESRS members who are leading their corresponding clusters.

MEETINGS

Expert WGs have joint meetings with their corresponding clusters.

The Expert WGs are expected to meet as frequently as necessary to achieve their objective as outlined above. Due to the pandemic-related restrictions, meetings will mainly be conducted remotely using Microsoft Teams. Advice and other input will also sometimes be sought via email or telephone. Any physical meetings are expected to take place at the EFRAG offices in Brussels, organised in such a way that most members are able to travel to and from Brussels on the same day. Expert WGs members are expected to bear their own travel and other costs in participating in the activities.

The work and meetings of the Expert WGs are conducted in English.

The Expert WGs can, through their corresponding Chair and in coordination with the PTF-ESRS Chair, invite specialists to their meetings for specific agenda items.

All meetings of the Expert WGs are closed sessions, i.e. not open to the public.

METHODS OF WORKING

The administrative support of the Expert WGs is provided by the Secretariat supporting the PTF-ESRS clusters.

The Secretariat team of each cluster:

- Prepares the papers for their corresponding Expert WG meetings. Members of the Expert WGs can submit papers they want to share or be discussed to the Secretariat team of each cluster, who assess that the papers do not duplicate others and are sufficiently understandable.
- Endeavours to make the meeting papers available a few working days before the meetings of their corresponding Expert WG.
- Prepares summary minutes of the meetings of their corresponding Expert WG, and endeavours to make the draft minutes available before the next meeting of the Expert WG concerned.

The Cluster Leads:

- Chair the meetings of their corresponding Expert WGs.
- Ensure that the PTF-ESRS clusters benefit from the input of the Expert WGs.

RELATIONSHIP WITH THE PTF-ESRS

PTF-ESRS members that are not in their corresponding clusters can participate in the discussions of the Expert WGs as appropriate.

The clusters corresponding to each Expert WG provide updates to the PTF-ESRS on the outcome of their discussions with the Expert WGs, including any diverging views between the Expert WGs members, PTF-ESRS cluster members or preferred alternatives, with underlying arguments.

Expert WGs members:

- Receive, for information purposes, a copy of the papers submitted to the PTF-ESRS on the specific topics on which the Expert WGs advise the PTF-ESRS clusters.
- Are duly and timely informed about the draft consultation documents submitted by their corresponding cluster to the PTF-ESRS on the specific topics on which the Expert WGs advise the PTF-ESRS cluster, with the invitation to provide input.

A delegation of the Expert WGs may be invited to participate in the PTF-ESRS plenary meetings as observers with speaking rights when the specific topics on which the Expert WGs advise the PTF-ESRS clusters are discussed. The composition of the delegation is proposed by the Chair of each Expert WG and validated by the PTF-ESRS Chair.

The Expert WGs receive feedback from the PTF-ESRS plenary meetings on the issues where the PTF-ESRS decides to deviate from the Expert WGs advice to the corresponding cluster.