

EPO WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference

The WADA EPO Working Group (EPO WG) is a specific Working Group¹ created by the WADA Science Department at the request of the WADA Laboratory Expert Advisory Group (Lab EAG).

These Terms of Reference are approved by the WADA Director General, following consultation with the Senior Associate Director of Science (Laboratories).

Purpose

To be responsible for providing expert advice, recommendations and guidance to WADA Management, and to report to the Lab EAG with respect to the overall monitoring of laboratory EPO method performance, including the provision of second opinions. It shall also be responsible for the maintenance review of the Technical Document on EPO (TD EPO) and the EPO Technical Notes (TNs).

The EPO WG will carry out its current mandate over the January to December 2023 period. It will deliver recommendations to WADA on an ongoing basis during this period. The necessary meeting timelines will be framed with this in mind.

There may be future work for this WG, and it will be evaluated at the end of this current period.

Objectives/Key Activities

- 1) Provision, upon request by Laboratories and/or WADA, of second opinions pertaining to EPO analytical results, including the review of EPO Laboratory Documentation Packages.
- 2) Participate as external experts in laboratory assessments, focusing on the evaluation of laboratory EPO method performance.
- 3) Review and update the TD EPO, if/where required.
- 4) Review and update the TNs for EPO method performance, in support of the TDEPO.
- 5) Provide expert opinion on scientific and technical issues related to EPO, including the provision of feedback on laboratory corrective action reports (CARs) associated with EQAS or routine EPO performance or resulting from laboratory on-site assessments in a timely fashion.
- 6) Advise WADA on technical issues associated with the application of EPO.
- 7) Provide review, upon WADA request, of selected research projects on EPO method development and application to anti-doping analysis.

¹ WGs are created on an as-needed basis only, and generally with a defined mandate requiring deliverables within a set timeframe. Where the expected deliverables are not met, an extension of mandate is possible, however it is not expected that WGs continue indefinitely. If it is considered that their work should be ongoing in nature, whether WG should be elevated to an Expert Advisory Group would need to be determined.

Reporting Structure

The EPO WG reports to WADA Management and the Lab EAG.

Membership/Composition

The composition of the EPO WG shall not exceed a maximum of 8-10 members however an exception may be applied if deemed necessary.

The WADA Director General, following consultation with the Senior Associate Director of Science & Medicine (Laboratories) and the Chair of the WADA Lab EAG will appoint members to the EPO WG.

Members are selected on the basis of their relevant background and experience (e.g., expertise in the areas of EPO method development, validation and application to anti-doping analysis).

The Members of the EPO WG are recorded on the WADA website.

If required, additional experts may be called upon on an ad-hoc basis for their contributions.

Member terms² reflect the current mandate of the EPO WG, i.e., until 31 December 2023. If the work of the EPO WG is not completed within the originally planned timeframe, and is extended, the composition and terms of members are reviewed to ensure their relevance remains.

Chair/Rapporteur

The EPO WG Chair is selected based on his/her proven record and expertise in the areas of EPO method development, validation and application to anti-doping analysis. When possible, the Chair will be also a member of the Lab EAG.

He/she shall act as the official reporter who is responsible for ensuring appropriate coordination with WADA Management and the Lab EAG for providing accurate and timely information on all relevant issues.

WADA Liaison

The WADA Science Department, and in particular the Senior Associate Director of Science & Medicine (Laboratories), will serve as the primary liaison between WADA and the EPO WG.

The Senior Associate Director of Science & Medicine (Laboratories) will be an observer to the EPO WG in the sense that he contributes to and brings expertise to support the work of the EPO WG but does not have a voting position. Additional WADA Department Science staff may also participate in EPO WG meetings as WADA experts on particular subject matters and to provide general support to the group where required.

² Should the member come from a WADA-accredited laboratory whose accreditation is revoked during their term, the member's term on the EPO WG will cease immediately. If the Laboratory is suspended or under an Analytical Testing Restriction, subject to WADA's discretion, the member may continue on the WG.

Meetings and Working Norms

The EPO WG will meet in person, or virtually via video or teleconference (as determined by WADA) as many times as is necessary to complete its mandate.

The EPO WG normally operates on the basis of consensus and maintains as informal a manner as is possible or appropriate for the conduct of business. Consensus will be sought whenever possible. In the event of divergence of opinion or disagreement concerning recommendations, the absolute majority (determined by vote by hand) will rule. In the event of a tie, the Chair has the casting vote. There is presently no formal practice concerning a quorum. The Chair has the responsibility to determine if a quorum is present. Meeting notes will record any dissenting opinion on request.

The Chair may limit discussion of resurfacing issues by referring to previous recommendations or conclusions of previous discussions.

Meeting notes of the EPO WG meetings, reports and correspondence relative to the group's work shall be retained at the WADA Headquarters.

Conflict of Interest

EPO WG members will be bound by the WADA Conflict of Interest policy. They will be required to annually complete and sign a Statement of Absence of Conflict of Interest in accordance with the policy.

Confidentiality

All group members are required to sign a Confidentiality Agreement upon appointment (and again at the start of each year if their appointment is renewed). This ensures all members reflect on the confidential nature of their WADA work and confirm their adherence to such confidentiality rules. Signing this document each year is a new process as of 2020 (as a result of the governance changes mentioned above); previously members were only required to sign once.

Communications and Media

All EPO WG members must read and comply with WADA's Media Relations policy. If a member should receive a request for an interview in relation to their role in WADA or WADA's work they should first consult with the WADA Media Relations Senior Manager or (if absent), with the WADA Communications Director.

Budget and Financial Support

WADA has budgeted for the EPO WG for up to twelve months. Should an extension of the mandate be required, additional budget will need to be approved prior to final confirmation of the group continuing.

WADA shall provide the necessary administrative and operational resources for meetings. WADA will meet all travel and accommodation costs, as well as most meals onsite. A daily indemnity is provided to cover incidental costs during travel to and from the meeting.

Where meetings are held virtually and meet certain rules such as a minimum duration, a daily indemnity for virtual attendance is disbursed.

It is acknowledged that some experts go above and beyond, including providing extensive advice throughout the year, outside of annual meetings. WADA offers a further daily indemnity to experts for such work carried out. The specific indemnity details are outlined in the full “Overview of WADA Working Groups” document provided to Members on appointment.

Effective Date

These ToR come into effect on 1 January 2023.

These ToR are published on the WADA website.