

EPO WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference

The WADA EPO Working Group (EPO WG) is a specific Working Group¹ created by the WADA Science & Medicine 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 & Medicine (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 original mandate of the EPO WG was from January to December 2023, which was then extended to December 2024. It will continue to deliver recommendations to WADA during this extended period. There may be future or ongoing work for this WG (such as second opinion provisions as part of the EPO analytical testing process). It is intended that the future of this group 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 analysis, 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.

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.

- 6) Advise WADA on technical issues associated with the application of EPO analysis.
- 7) Provide review, upon WADA request, of selected research projects on EPO method development and application to anti-doping analysis.
- 8) Monitor existing and future trends in the EPO WG's fields of expertise having the potential to impact the anti-doping system and propose new ideas for WADA's internal Innovation Board consideration.

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 membership of the EPO WG is published 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 2024. 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.

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 EPO WG.

WADA Liaison

The WADA Science & Medicine 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 Science & Medicine Department 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.

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.

Code of Ethics, Conflict of Interest, Confidentiality and Media

Upon their appointment and again annually, all EPO WG members are required to sign a document, pursuant to which they undertake (i) to comply with the Code of Ethics adopted by the WADA Foundation Board (as amended from time to time); (ii) to comply with the Conflict of Interest policy adopted by the Foundation Board (as amended from time to time); (iii) to keep all matters related to WADA confidential; and (iv) to comply with the WADA Media Relations Policy issued by the Agency (as amended from time to time).

A) Code of Ethics

The purpose of the WADA Code of Ethics is to establish clear ethical standards over the activities of WADA Officials (as defined in Section 2 of the Code of Ethics) to allow WADA to achieve its mission and protect its core values. WADA and all its Officials undertake to foster a culture of ethics, loyalty, and integrity within their respective areas of competence.

B) 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, and to update such statement if and as necessary during the year.

C) Confidentiality

All EPO WG members are required to sign a Confidentiality Declaration upon appointment and again annually. This ensures all members reflect on the confidential nature of their WADA work and confirm their adherence to such confidentiality rules.

D) 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 in the fight against doping in sport, they should first consult with the WADA Head of Media Relations or (if absent), with the WADA Communications Director.

Budget and Financial Support

WADA has budgeted for the EPO WG for 2024. 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 cover certain expenses and compensate members for meetings in accordance with its applicable indemnity policy.

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 indemnity to experts for such work carried out. The specific indemnity details are outlined in the "Overview of WADA Working Groups" document provided to Members each year.

Effective Date

These ToR originally came into effect on 1 January 2023 and have been updated in January 2024 to reflect the extended timeframe and to make some administrative updates.

These ToR are published on the WADA website.