ICS Committees Working Group Standard Operating Procedure

Over the past 3 years the number of working groups within ICS committees has increased and are likely to continue rising in line with the ICS strategy to increase scientific output. The office therefore feels that it is important to outline some key standard operating procedures for working groups (WG).

A working group is a group of ICS members and non-members brought together under an ICS committee(s) to work on a specific project. The outcome of which include;

- creation of an informational document
- creation of a standard
- resolution of problems related to a system or network
- Continuous improvement
- Research

Requirements for all Working Group members:

- **Annual ICS Membership- the Chair and all working group members must be or agree to become, an ICS member. The ICS views working group members as extensions of committee's and they must therefore abide by the ICS Bylaws concerning this area.**
- **Disclosure – All working group members must provide an annual disclosure on their membership page.**

Failure to abide by the above terms will lead to the member(s) removal from their working group.

Working Groups, General Information

- The composition needs to be multidisciplinary and multinational, representing the most important stakeholders (including, e.g., patient representatives, health economists, and others as appropriate)
- Non-ICS members can be part of the WG as experts or representatives of specific stakeholders but they must become an ICS member for the duration of their time on the project**
- The WG should generally not include more than 15 people
- Selection of WG members should follow a transparent process, which is recorded and publically available
- Additional contributions to a WG's deliberations can be received from outside individuals
- The WG should not receive any sponsorship from industry and the members should disclose all relationships
- All members of the WG will be responsible for the entire content of the document as a group.
- After publication of the standard, the WG will be dissolved.
- A typical lifespan for an ad hoc WG will maximally be 36 months. If the WG fails to be productive the committee can move to dissolve the WG.
- The ICS will not provide financial budget for face-to-face meetings of any ad hoc WG.

The WG has a chairman who will:

- propose the key question or topics of discussion to the committee, together with a strategic plan.
- keep a digital working log of the WG activities (keeping the office informed of these plans)
- make sure that the composition of the WG is well balanced and that the process is transparent
- use web-based and e-mail exchange of information and monitor the execution of assignments within the assigned timeline
- adhere to EBM principles, where appropriate
- report to the Committee Chair
- be responsible for production of a first draft of the report within a stipulated time frame (generally 18 months)
- be responsible for submission for publication and dissemination (if applicable)

Creating a standardisation document

Criteria for Assessing a Proposal to establish a WG. Proposal to go to committee chair;

- Title of the project
- Name of applicant
- Description of the topic: The arguments for creating the WG are:
  (Explain why one or more of the following arguments is relevant)
  - area of clinical uncertainty or ‘‘debate’’ exists
  - evidence of better treatment is available
  - evidence for renewal of the existing standard is available
  - evidence of practice variation is available
  - other clinical or scientific relevance
  - there is significant controversy in practice or literature
  - there is conflicting or incomplete evidence
  - there are cultural differences in practices or viewpoints
  - there is socio-economic relevance

- List of proposed names (with CVs):
  - confirmation that individuals have agreed to contribute
  - evidence of multinational and interdisciplinary balance
  - opportunity for ICS members to apply to join the WG and transparent,
  - documented process for selection
  - process to register contributions from individuals or groups not in the WG

- Description of the methodology and how it will be used:
  - web-based approach
  - e-mail
  - conference calls or webcasts
  - face-to-face meeting (mainly during ICS international meetings)

- proposed timeline
- Description of topic, proposed WG composition, likelihood of
- implementation, likelihood of publication, innovation of approach,
- realistic timeline, use of electronic tools.

Development of a Standard document

Stage	Timescale (months)	Working Group	Committee
Proposal stage	-6 to 0	Applications for Chairmanship or membership	Call for applications. Review subject, Chair, Group, criteria, timeline and starting date.
Preparatory stage	0 to 18	WG constituted. Development of draft.	Evaluate progress. Appoint mentor. Evaluation
Committee stage	18 to 21	Draft submitted to Committee Chair	Review of the process and document against criteria. Approval by consensus.
Enquiry stage	21 to 24	Draft on ICS website	Internal and external review. Comments by ICS members and stakeholders.
Approval stage	24 to 27	Submit final document to SSC.	Process review. Submission to ICS Board of Trustees.
Publication	27 to 36	Final text to ICS office for web publication. Journal submissions.	Official ICS document. WG dissolved
Implementation stage	36>	N/A	Support implementation. Education (with ICS Education Committee). Register of comments. Identify research needs. Support health technology and economic assessment.

**If an expert/specialist is unwilling to become and ICS member then we would strongly suggest that the committee looks for an alternative person to be part of the working group. If no one else is suitable and the committee feels strongly that this expert/specialist is required then the Committee Chair will need to request this funding in their annual budget request and arrange payment with the office.