

UNECE Expert Group on Resource Classification

Technical Advisory Group

Terms of Reference

Last Updated 28th Nov 2017

Background

The Technical Advisory Group (TAG) has been in place since Feb 2014, providing technical advice to stakeholders and recommendations on draft technical documents to the Bureau. Work on many commodities (Nuclear Fuels, Injection, Renewables, Anthropogenic Resources) to develop bridging documents, case studies etc., was undertaken by dedicated Working Groups and reviewed by the TAG. However, in addition to its review role, the TAG undertook work on developing bridging documents, case studies and responses to stakeholder request, for Minerals and Petroleum.

The 8th EGRC, April 2017, agreed to form Working Groups for Minerals and Petroleum and the Bureau has decided to reorganise the structure of Working Groups, Task Forces and the TAG to work more efficiently. Under this revised structure the commodity Working Groups report through the TAG i.e. keep TAG informed on plans, activities, progress and concerns. TAG, Task Forces and non-commodity Working Groups report to the Bureau. Minerals and Petroleum work previously done by the TAG will be the responsibility of the new Minerals and Petroleum Working Groups. The core membership of the TAG is now the Chairs of the commodity Working Groups, and the TAG coordinates, supports, reviews and validates the work of each commodity Working Group.

This document describes the scope and responsibilities of the TAG and how it will work. It also outlines the generic scope of commodity Working Groups to clarify the division of roles.

Scope of Working Groups and the Technical Advisory Group

The scope of each commodity Working Group encompasses the following, where appropriate. This list is generic. The work priorities may be different for different Working Groups and some items may not be applicable to every Working Group.

- Develop and maintain commodity specific specifications, guidelines and best practice documents
- Provide advice on interpreting, applying and/or mapping to UNFC
- Assist in stakeholder engagement for the application of UNFC
- Assist stakeholders to develop and maintain bridging documents
- Work with stakeholders to develop case studies to illustrate and test commodity specifications, bridging documents, guidelines and best practices.
- Assist with reviews of documents, as agreed with TAG, and provide expert advice to other EGRC Working Groups and Task Forces.
- Review and evaluate progress and delivery against workplan on an annual basis, identify issues and opportunities, define solutions and implement related actions.

The main responsibility of the TAG is to review and validate documents proposed by the Working Groups. It is also responsible for coordination and support of the commodity Working Groups.

- Ensure appropriate and timely review of draft EGRC documents. All documents developed by the commodity Working Groups and proposed for public comment or for UNECE approval will be reviewed. Other commodity Working Group documents may be reviewed at the discretion of the TAG

e.g. working papers to be shared with EGRC. The Bureau may also ask the TAG to review other draft EGRC documents e.g. developed by the Task Forces. The review process is described below.

- Review Working Group goals, objectives and plans and recommend to the Bureau
- Receive incoming requests for assistance or advice and agree which Working Group will handle these and appropriate timing and review of responses.
- Maintain awareness of progress on Working Group projects and of any emerging issues or opportunities, to assist in timely execution and to keep the Bureau informed. The TAG will provide a forum for discussion amongst Working Group Chairs to identify solutions, to flag issues and to make suggestions to the Bureau or to specific Task Forces.
- Facilitate appropriate support across Working Groups e.g. identifying where an expert in another group could provide helpful advice.

Review Process

The TAG will appoint a review team, and team lead, for each document to be reviewed. This team and team lead will be drawn from the Working Groups and TAG and, at the discretion of the TAG, may include other EGRC experts. The makeup of the team will depend on the document being reviewed. For documents which are proposing changes or extensions to the UNFC, such as new specifications, the review team will involve experts from different commodities to help ensure consistency. The TAG may decide that other documents, such as case studies, may only require review by the relevant commodity Working Group.

In consultation with Secretariat of United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (ECE), and with the review team lead, the TAG will agree review timing to meet ECE deadlines.

The review team lead will coordinate the work of the team and will act as point of contact for the review, liaising with the document lead (the lead of the group developing the document) and keeping the TAG chair informed of progress and of technical issues. Where appropriate, the review team lead and review team may provide advice on interim versions or on specific issues arising during the work. The review team will review the final draft and provide a written assessment of the document and recommendation. The review group will make every effort to make decisions or recommendations by consensus. When consensus is not possible, the majority view will be accepted, but the written review will reflect the diversity of opinions.

The review team lead will send the written recommendation to the TAG chair, together with a summary of the key discussion points and any outstanding issues or concerns. The TAG chair will decide whether to discuss the review further with the TAG. The TAG chair will then send the review to the Bureau, copying the review lead, TAG members, and document lead, and identifying any residual concerns or issues.

TAG Membership

The TAG membership will be the Chairs of the Working Groups, with the TAG Chair appointed by the Bureau. The Chair of the Bureau, or his/her nominated alternate, is always invited to attend ex officio.

The TAG Chair will be appointed for a period of two years and may be asked by the Bureau to serve additional terms. The TAG chair may appoint additional members as required, subject to Bureau approval. Where appropriate, the TAG may call upon other EGRC members for assistance and advice.

TAG Meeting Arrangements

The TAG will meet at least bi-monthly, but typically monthly. Meetings will be conducted via audio or videoconference or similar method at a time agreed by the members. An in-person meeting will be convened at the time of the annual meeting of the Expert Group on Resource Classification. A secretariat will be provided by the ECE. A notice and draft agenda of a TAG meeting will be sent to each representative member at least 1 week prior to the meeting. The chair will propose the draft agenda and members will be invited to comment and input. The agenda will be agreed at the start of the meeting

The meetings will be led by the Chair. If the designated Chair is not available, the Chair will nominate a member to be responsible for convening and conducting that meeting. The role and responsibility of the Chair is to promote full participation by all, ensuring consideration is given to the appropriate issues, follow-up and adequate reporting. If a Working Group Chair is unable to attend a meeting, he/she may nominate an alternate to represent the Working Group.

For arriving at decisions or recommendations, a majority of the TAG members, including the Chair, will constitute a quorum. The Group will make every effort to make decisions or recommendations by consensus. When consensus is not possible, the majority view will be accepted, but the meeting minutes will reflect the diversity of opinions, and this range of views will be reported to the Bureau.

The draft meeting minutes will be prepared by the Chair, or nominee, and circulated to the members of the TAG as soon as practicable, but preferably within 2 weeks of the meeting. The minutes will be reviewed and approved at the next meeting. These will be made available to the public through the ECE website, following review with the Bureau and subject to Bureau agreement.

Resources and Budget

Members of the Group are not paid or funded in any way by the ECE. A member's time and travel expenses may be covered personally, by that member's employer or through arrangements made by the ECE through any other available source of funding.

Responsibilities and Workload

It is expected that the Chair and members of the TAG will actively support and contribute to the work, attending most of the meetings and contributing to email discussion on TAG business between meetings. However, the intent will be to manage the level of this discussion between meetings.

Work as a member of a review team for a specific document will require additional time commitment. This will typically involve personal study of the document and some audio calls and email discussion.

Annual Report

The TAG will review its work and prepare an Annual Report for the Bureau. The report will summarise: reviews completed during the previous year and in progress; emerging themes, issues or suggestions; an assessment of effectiveness of the TAG and how this may be improved where necessary. Upon conclusion of Bureau review, the report will be submitted to the Expert Group on Resource Classification, to keep the Bureau and the Expert Group informed of its activities. This report will be prepared and presented at the annual meeting of the Expert Group on Resource Classification.

Review Cycle

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed on a regular basis to ensure they remain appropriate to fulfil the role of the TAG.