



## **GUIDANCE FOR THE STEERING COMMITTEE ON THE APPOINTMENT OF EXPERTS AND CHAIRPERSONS/TOPIC LEADERS TO EXPERT WORKING GROUPS**

Once the Steering Committee (SC) agrees to establish an Expert Working Group (EWG) SC members and observers need to carefully consider whom they will appoint to the Expert Working Groups.

### **Criteria for membership of the EWG**

#### ***Expertise***

Most EWG members are expected to have three roles i.e.

- to be a topic expert,
- to represent the views of their sponsoring organisation,
- to communicate the outcomes of the EWG discussions back to their sponsoring organisation.

It is very important that your appointee to the EWG has expertise in the topic area. This expertise is required, not only to contribute to the guideline development, but also to assess the information that others provide and advise their sponsor as to whether a change in position is justified.

#### ***Sufficient time to contribute***

Many EWG members have been unaware of what commitment would be required of them in terms of their participation in meetings, work between meetings, etc. Additionally the most significant reason limiting EWG member's contribution in the past has been the pressure of non-VICH work, many experts have indicated that it had stopped them contributing fully. Please ensure your appointee has the time and resources to contribute fully, and is committed to doing so.

#### ***Likelihood of continuing for duration of the WG***

Change of membership of EWGs once they have been established, has been identified as a hindrance to progress. This is because new members have not participated in the scientific discussion that has previously occurred. Please ensure that your EWG appointee is likely to be available for the entire duration of the EWG process.

### ***Language proficiency***

The official language of VICH is English. This makes effective contribution difficult for those who are not proficient in English. While EWG members are asked to be sensitive to those who do not have English as a first language, you need to ensure that your EWG member can effectively communicate at meetings (with or without a simultaneous interpreter at his own region's/organisation's cost).

### **Criteria for Chairpersons/Topic Leaders**

Selection of the appropriate Chairperson is a critical step for the success of any EWG. It is clear from the survey of EWG members, that group management skills are at least as important as subject expertise.

When SC members/observers nominate Chairpersons/Topic Leaders for EWGs, please ensure that your nominee meets the following criteria.

#### ***Most important***

Ability to manage the meeting so all can participate freely

Ability to facilitate resolution of different views between EWG members

Ability to manage the EWG to meet timeframes and achieve objectives

Ability to summarise the discussions, indicate the way forward and propose solutions to problems

Ability to draft constructive discussion documents

Being a scientific expert on the topic

#### ***Important***

Ability to communicate well with the SC and write the requested progress reports in the given timeframe

Knowledge of how guidelines are applied in practice

Ability to organise meeting arrangements

Thorough understanding of VICH processes

#### ***Desirable***

Familiarity with Good Veterinary Practice

### **Guidance to give to new EWG members by the SC member/coordinator**

EWG members will receive two documents from VICH:

- SOP on VICH Procedures for the Expert Working Groups (VICH/00/151)
- Guidance for Members of Expert Working Groups (VICH/00/150)

Encourage your EWG member to study these documents and provide clarification where necessary.

Draw the attention of your EWG member to the VICH web-site and the comprehensive information available on it. Explain the need to regularly review it.

Areas where previous EWG members have indicated a lack of understanding include:

- Objectives of VICH
- Scope of the guidelines
- The VICH nine step process
- VICH policies including consultation at Step 4
- The likely timeframe for completing the assigned work, including the consultation period
- The need to establish a work plan
- The location of meetings and obtaining approval from the SC
- Their role as a EWG member
- The role of other EWG members e.g. Chair, advisors, and additional experts from other regions appointed by the SC
- The equal status of all experts on the EWG
- What matters to raise with the Chair

***Other matters you should also discuss with your EWG member***

- What their relationship is with their SC member/VICH coordinator and what feedback and communication is expected, and at what stages of the process
- What consultation processes occur in your region, both formal and informal and what their role is in these processes
- What support they can expect from their sponsor in their work
- How travel costs and expenses for meetings will be met
- Expectation that they will be flexible and be prepared to change their position if the scientific arguments support it
- Importance to reach a consensus
- The likely time commitment
- When an EWG has achieved its task, explain that the EWG shall remain in existence until the second meeting of the SC after the final implementation date, i.e. implementation achieved in all 3 regions. This leaves a period of approximately 12 months to allow full application of the guideline in the three regions – a sufficient period of time to identify any issues that may need to be referred back to the EWG for resolution.

- When your EWG member is a Chairperson, stress that when the SC meeting takes place in his/her region, he/she will be asked to attend the meeting and report directly to the SC.

Lastly, thank the EWG member for their anticipated contribution and pass on the appreciation of the SC for them agreeing to participate actively in the VICH process.