

Working Groups – New Guidelines and Operational Processes

Introduction

Under the *Rules of Procedure for APLMF Collaboration*, the Forum may set up working groups to undertake specific tasks, which are limited in time and have clearly defined terms of reference (Article 6).

This draft document sets out the details of how Working Groups are expected to operate in the future, how their work programme is developed and how Groups work with the wider Forum (including general communications and updating at the Annual meeting).

The Executive are seeking feedback from APLMF members on the proposed processes and they will be tabled at the meeting in Tokyo for discussion and endorsement as part of the Working Group session.

Background

The APLMF Working Groups were established to support the work programme and activities of the Forum by undertaking specific tasks in a collaborative environment. There are currently seven working groups, established over 20 years ago, covering:

1. Training Coordination (*established 1994*)
2. Goods Packed by Measure (*established 1994*)
3. Mutual Recognition Arrangements (*established 1994*)
4. Utility Meters (*established 1995*)
5. Medical Measurement (*established 1996*)
6. Quality Measurement of Agricultural Products (*established 1996*)
7. Metrological Control Systems (*established 1996*)

The existing Rules of Procedure provide limited guidance on how the Working Groups should operate, how often they should meet, how often they should be reviewed and the roles and responsibilities of the Working Group Chair (also referred to as Convenor) and members on each of these groups.

At the 22nd APLMF meeting in Hawaii (November 2015) a number of ideas were identified by participants in a workshop session examining how the Forum could change and improve the way in which APLMF undertakes its Working Group activities and annual Working Group Forum meetings. The ideas generated in that workshop are incorporated into these proposed new guidelines and operating processes.

Working Group Membership

Members of these groups can be either a member economy appointed Delegate, or a person(s) nominated by the Delegate (Article 6.2, *Rules of Procedure for APLMF Collaboration*). All APLMF members and corresponding members are entitled to take part in the work of these Groups.

Currently many of the Working Groups have limited membership, and often are operating with only one or two members plus a Convenor/Chair. The APLMF is a relatively small organisation, and its member economies have limited resources to deploy to lead and support the activities of these Working Groups. Consequently, the Forum has to be highly selective in establishing new Working Groups or in identifying too many tasks/activities to be undertaken by the Groups.

Each Working Group requires a **Chair and a minimum of three members** to enable effective progress on the work programmes to be achieved annually. If membership falls below this level, then the APLMF Executive can propose at the next Forum meeting that the Working Group be disestablished.

Membership of a Working Group is a way of building the skills and experience of member economies. The composition of a Group should include a range of experience and consider the transition of members over time to ensure active collaboration across member economies.

Chair – Role and responsibilities

The Chair's primary role is to lead the work programme of the Group, and in this context it is important that the Chair ensures that there are sufficient members of the Group to support the work programme. Often Working Groups have relied on the Chair not only leading the work but also doing a large proportion of the work as well.

If Working Groups are to be effective, a key role of the Chair is ensuring the right composition of skills are available. The Chair is expected to draw on additional resources from outside of APLMF to help accomplish the work plan (for example, involving consumer groups, industry bodies, authorities, experts/technical support).

Given the limited resources available, another key responsibility of the Chair is prioritising the tasks of the Working Group and establishing the timelines for completion of the work programme.

The Chair is responsible for establishing how the Group will operate in terms of teleconferencing, email discussions or webinars etc, setting the agenda for meetings, providing members with minutes or action points from any meeting. The Chair is expected to forward presentations, minutes and agendas, working papers etc to the Secretariat for uploading onto the Working Group pages on the APLMF website (Members Only Section).

The Chair is also responsible for establishing expectations amongst members of the Group on how they will work together, encourage active collaboration by all members at meetings and using an open and collaborative approach to resolving differences of opinion within the Group.

The Chair is responsible for the delivery of the **annual report** of the Working Group's activities and the proposed future activities to all member economies at the annual APLMF meeting. This written report is expected to be **delivered six weeks before the date of the annual meeting** to enable all Forum members to read the report and identify questions or issues for discussion at the Forum meeting.

The Chair is responsible for updating the President and Secretariat of any developments or achievements of the Working Group. The Chair is also expected to identify work in their Group that is interest to all members and to provide a short summary for inclusion in the President's newsletter.

The Chair is expected to take account of ongoing work and discussions in other international groups (eg OIML Technical Committees) and Specialist Regional Bodies (eg APMP) etc, and to update Group members, as appropriate, via regular meetings and the Working Group's website page.

Members – Roles and responsibilities

Members of Working Groups are expected to work collaboratively in undertaking the tasks agreed in their annual work plan, and deliver the specific work as agreed by the Chair at the regular Working Group meetings.

Members are expected to help the Chair in preparing the annual report (eg providing peer review or specific material/information).

Meetings

Working Groups are responsible for arranging their own work programmes according to their terms of reference and will hold meetings when necessary (and in a way that enables members to collaborate effectively).

All invitations, agendas and documents sent to Group members in relation to any meeting are to be copied to the APLMF Secretariat, and will be uploaded in the Members Only Working Group section of the APLMF Website.

The Secretariat will explore and develop new technological options that can better support Working Group activities collaborative engagement, for example, team viewer, videoconferencing, Centra virtual meetings/webinar etc.

The Secretariat will also provide a short summary outlining meeting processes and protocols to assist new members and support their active engagement in Working Group and Forum meetings.

Work Plans

The APLMF Working Groups are established to support the work programme and activities of the Forum by undertaking specific tasks in a collaborative environment. Each Working Group Chair provides a written report and presentation to the Forum on their Group's previous year's activities and proposed activities for the upcoming year. The future work plans of each of the Working Groups are agreed by the Forum at the annual meeting,

The Working Groups endeavour to provide an environment that facilitates detailed discussion and collaboration on addressing specific issues that of interest to member economies (and to a lesser extent, corresponding members).

There are three key mechanisms to help guide each Working Group's activities:

- **Terms of Reference** – Each Working Group has a clearly defined terms of reference to assist in framing the tasks undertaken by the Group. However, not all Groups appear to currently have clear terms of reference, and the Forum does not revisit the original terms of reference to ensure that they remain valid. It is proposed that the Terms of Reference be periodically reviewed three (3) yearly by the Group and reaffirmed by the Forum. In the first instance, it is proposed that

each Working Group undertake to review in consultation with the Executive Committee of their Terms of Reference and update the Forum on any modifications.

- **Time-limited tasks** – Each Working Group is set up to undertake a series of specific tasks that are limited in time. However, to date no Working Group has ceased or completed its specific tasks, or have established new tasks.
- **Training Coordinator role** - In the case of coordination of APLMF's training, this activity is core to APLMF operations and likely to be ongoing and not time bound. As a result, it is proposed that the activities undertaken by the Training Coordination Working Group cease to be delivered by a Working Group and instead **become part of the work of the APLMF Secretariat**. A specific person will take responsibility for the role of Training Co-ordinator, supported by the Executive and Working Group Convenors. The travel expenses incurred by the Training Co-ordinator will be covered by APLMF as is the case with other Secretariat members. It is proposed that the Executive select and appoint a person to this **new role for a fixed period of up to 3 years** from identified candidates from member economies.
- **Needs assessment** – undertaking a needs assessment every two years of members to determine the topics and identifying any new issues that the APLMF should be undertaking a specific collaborative work programme to address. Some topics may not require a Working Group to be established and could be addressed by tasking a specialist or expert to prepare a report for the members. However, there is also benefit in member economies working together to identify different solutions and risks associated with various topics, and a new issue may require either a new Working Group to be established, or an existing Working Group to broaden its remit (Terms of Reference) to undertake the work.

Approval of the work plan

The proposed work plan will be developed by the Chair with support and agreement of the Working Group members. The proposed **draft work plan will be distributed** to all APLMF member **six weeks prior** to the APLMF Annual meeting, to enable all members to provide feedback and commentary to the Chair (copied to the Secretariat for posting on the Working Group web page). Members will also be encouraged to raise questions or seek clarification, which the Chair can address at the annual Forum working group sessions.

The Chair, in consultation with the Working Group members, will make any revisions to the proposed work plan and distribute the final draft before the annual APLMF meeting. This version will be presented at the Forum and be the basis for any further discussion on the proposed work plan.

Each future work plan will be endorsed by all members at the APLMF annual meeting.

Reports

The Working Groups are required to prepare yearly reports for each annual meeting of the APLMF. These reports are to be sent to the APLMF Secretariat at least **six (6) weeks before the APLMF annual meeting**, so the Secretariat can provide the reports to all APLMF members and upload them to the Annual Meeting webpage (together with other material for the annual meeting).

The annual report should cover the following issues:

- Details of the membership of the Working Group
- Progress and activities since the last annual APLMF meeting
- Proposed programme for further work (for next year and outyears)

- Identification of any emerging issues, risks, resourcing issues, engagement etc, and any proposed solutions for APLMF Executive or members to consider

The distribution of the future work plans and annual reports outlining the current year's activities by the Working Group, prior to the annual meeting will ensure greater engagement and discussion of the Working Group's activities by APLMF members.

Comment

The Secretariat is seeking member feedback during the Working Group meeting on the proposed new *Working Group Guidelines and Operational Processes*.

The Secretariat, on behalf of the Forum, is also happy to consider any comments or suggestions for amendment of this guideline from members.

Recommendations:

It is recommended that the Forum members consider this document and:

- (1) **Agree** the new *Working Group Guidelines and Operational Processes*.
- (2) **Approve** creation of Training Co-ordinator role within the Secretariat to replace the Training Coordination Working Group as described in the new *Working Group Guidelines and Operational Processes*.



Appendix – Working Groups

Working Group	Date	Chair	Scope	Objective(s)
Training Coordination	1994	Mrs Marian Haire Australia	Training is an important component in developing regional confidence in measurement and testing and it has been a key delivery action of the Forum in the region.	To establish a regionally consistent training program that will provide highly competent staff and a comparable legal metrology system in the region.
Goods Packed by Measure Originally known as <i>Packed Articles</i> .	1994	Mr Kevin Gudmundsson New Zealand	Legislative and administrative requirements for prepacked articles, including short measure, identification of the packer on the packet, standard sizes, permitted deficiencies, drained weight and deceptive packaging	To harmonize the requirements for prepacked articles in the Asia-Pacific economies with a view to removing technical barriers to trade.
Mutual Recognition Arrangements	1994	Dr Charles Ehrlich United States of America	The identification of the requirements for mutual recognition arrangements between legal metrology authorities in the region and other regional legal metrology bodies is key to removing barriers to free trade in the region.	To support free trade in measuring instruments and the removal of technical barriers to trade through mutual recognition arrangements of measurement and testing in legal metrology
Utility Meters	1995	Mr Alan Johnston Canada	Utility meters covered by the Group covers wide range of measuring instruments: water meters, gas meters, electricity meters, taximeters, telephone meters and heat meters. Given the significant of international trade in these meters, focus is on ensuring harmonisation of pattern approval requirements for meters.	To ensure that requirements for utility meters are harmonized within the Asia-Pacific region.
Medical Measurement	1996	Ms Shiu-Chyin Chuang Chinese Taipei	Accuracy and reliability of medical measuring instruments, with a focusing on the harmonisation, pattern approval and verification of electronic sphygmomanometers (instruments for measuring blood pressure).	To ensure the accuracy and reliability of medical measuring instruments in human medication and to promote harmonization and pattern approval in the region.
Quality Measurement of Agricultural Products	1996	Dr Tsuyoshi Matsumoto Japan	Development of requirements to calibrate, verify and test rice moisture meters as well as other instruments/ requirements for quality analysis of agricultural products (eg moisture and protein in cereal grains and oilseeds)	To ensure the accuracy of measurement used for agricultural products.
Metrological Control Systems	1996	Mr Guo Su People's Republic of China	Focus currently on ionizing radiation metrology for human health and security in medicine on legal metrology system and application of pressure metrology in industry safety.	Developing a total systems approach which ensures that individual elements of the measurement process are assessed in terms of a total process to ensure efficiency in controls mechanisms.