

Memorandum of Understanding for ERCIM Working Groups

Name of the WG

1. Purpose

The purpose of an ERCIM Working Group (WG) is to *build and maintain a network of researchers* in a particular scientific topic. A Working Group is open to anyone who wishes to participate but must comprise at least 3 ERCIM members. The Chair of the WG is chosen by the working group and while it is not necessary to be a member of ERCIM, the Chair must come from a European country. The WG Chair should disseminate all communications from ERCIM to its members unless instructed not to do so.

The formation of the WG should be in accordance to the procedure in Appendix I.

2. Mission Statement

The Working Group should formulate a Mission Statement that includes:

- * Scientific Excellence
- * Investigation of new issues
- * Participation in European project proposals. The Working Groups are encouraged to engage the ERCIM office in the preparation of the proposal as well as in the Administrative and Financial Coordination of successful proposals.

3. WG Activities

The activities of a working group are divided into a number of areas: workshops, proposals and projects, mobility and fellows, and dissemination of information.

The kick-off meeting should take place during an ERCIM meeting. The benefits of this are the provision of services such as rooms, internet facilities and lunches, provided by the host institute.

3.1 Workshops

Each WG must organise at least one workshop per year that will be open to any researcher in the field. They should be aligning with the half-year ERCIM meetings or in connection with a specific conference normally attended by most researchers in the field. Financial support for organising a workshop can be provided by ERCIM, as described later in §4.

The quality of the workshop activity is measured by the proceedings and attendance list (both of which should appear on the group's website).

When a WG organises an event such as a workshop, they should provide ERCIM News with publicity data.

3.2 Project Proposals

One of the activities of an ERCIM working group is to collaborate in the preparation of proposals that cross national borders. As an incentive, working groups can apply for financial support through the Activity Grant (see 4.1.2.), provided that such grants are available in specific fiscal years.

An ERCIM proposal is coordinated by the ERCIM office and is well-represented by ERCIM members (typically 2 or 3 ERCIM members depending on the type of project). The ERCIM office may undertake the Administrative and Financial Coordination of successful proposals upon approval by the Science Task Group.

3.3 Mobility and Fellows

A working group is also the focus of internal mobility within ERCIM in addition to attracting fellows from outside ERCIM. Working Groups will be invited to identify topics of interest to be included in the half-year calls published for the ERCIM Fellowship Programme, and as a consequence can participate in the programme by hosting a fellow (at ERCIM institutes only).

3.4 WG Web Page Maintenance

The WG maintains the web page accessible via the ERCIM server with details of Mission Statement, members, and contact details. Activities (that are assessed on a yearly basis) should also appear on the website under the following headings:

1. Joint publications
2. Joint projects / proposals
3. Prior and Upcoming Events
4. Mobility
5. Visibility
6. Cooperation with Commercial Companies and Industry
7. Other Activities.

The benefit of a well-maintained website is that WG reporting is made easier (see below).

4. Duties and Rights of WGs

4.1 Financial Support

4.1.1. Basic support

After WG establishment, ERCIM supports the WG financially. This amount is validated by the ERCIM AISBL Board and is subject to annual revision. Appendix II lists the current procedure of applying for financial support.

This support is given by the ERCIM Office to the chairman of the working group or a person designated by the chairman, and can be used to cover costs caused by:

- travel and subsistence for ERCIM workshops or project proposal meetings that take place in Europe each year,
- travel and subsistence for invited speakers at ERCIM workshops, and
- organisational costs of ERCIM workshops.

Only real costs are reimbursed and receipts will be requested. The reimbursement form is provided by the ERCIM office.

4.1.2 Activity Grant

The Working Group Activity Grant will pay awards up to an amount validated by the ERCIM AISBL Board and subject to annual revision. The availability of Activity Grants will be announced to the WGs upon approval of each year's budget.

4.2 Reporting

Each working group has to report on its activities to the Science Task Group after the end of each calendar year using a web form (http://www.ercim.org/component/option,com_wgreport/Itemid,66/).

The Science Task Group analyses the activities of the report and makes recommendations to the ERCIM AISBL Board.

The yearly WG reports is composed of the following sections

Section A: Joint Projects

Section B: Joint Publications

Section C: Organised Events

Section D: Mobility

Section E: Visibility

Section F: Cooperation with Commercial Companies and Public Services

Section G: Planned activities and outlook

Section H: Comments

The report should provide clear details of activities for the year in question and, in particular, the activities involving collaboration among ERCIM members. In other words, separate the report year's activities from prior years for ease of interpretation.

Parts of the report might be used by the ERCIM office for publications such as the annual report or ERCIM News (subject to approval by the WG chair).

5. WG Setup

By default, the ERCIM institute which raised the interest in a new WG topic takes the initiative and calls for a first meeting. It also takes the chair of that working group at least until the first meeting. The (interim) chair can decide to hold a kick-off meeting before the working group is officially approved by the AISBL Board, for example to find out whether there is sufficient common interest for a particular research theme under the general topic. However, the WG is considered an ERCIM WG only after the AISBL Board approves the request by the (interim) chair or his/her institute. If the initiating institute agrees to it, then the interim chair can be taken by another institute who volunteers to undertake the duties.

6. WG Closure

A working group can cease to be designated an ERCIM Working Group and therefore lose the benefits associated with its official recognition. This can occur if:

- (a) the working group so decides and notifies the Science Task Group, or
- (b) the AISBL Board judges that the WG does not comply with its mission, or

- (c) following a recommendation by the Science Task Group the AISBL Board officially decides that there is not sufficient activity within the working group (e.g., a report to the Science Task Group missing for the second time, or no workshops organised during two consecutive years).

Furthermore, the natural lifetime of a Working Group is seen as 4 years. After this period, the WG must be re-evaluated by a process defined by the Science Task Group.

Name :

Date :

Signature :

Appendix I - WG Formation

The process of WG formation is initiated by the submission of an application to the Science Task Group, which will subsequently discuss the application and submit a recommendation to the AISBL Board. The application must comprise the following elements:

1. Full name & acronym of the WG
2. Participants
 - a. from ERCIM organisations
 - b. non-ERCIM organisations, including industry
3. WG organisation
 - a. Chair
 - b. Other bodies/responsibilities
4. Mission statement
 - a. Objectives of the WG
 - b. Coverage of the field – areas of interest (scientific/applications/industrial sectors)
 - c. Prior achievements of key participants
 - d. Synergies/overlaps/contacts with existing ERCIM WGs
5. Provide an outline of planned activities for the first year with actions and milestones (such as meetings, workshops, projects, publications, dissemination activities)

Appendix II - Financial Support for ERCIM WGs

The available budget for supporting WG activities for each year is approved by the ERCIM AISBL Board by the end of the previous year. The budget is intended to cover reimbursements of actual costs (travel and subsistence for the chairman or the designated person, travel and subsistence for invited speakers at ERCIM WG workshops, and organisational costs of ERCIM WG workshops) The maximum amount that a WG may claim – currently at 1.5KEuros - will be redefined according to the AISBL budget for subsequent years.

Each WG leader wishing to claim financial support must submit a request to the Science TG chair via email, stating the relevant WG event and its goals as well as the expenses that the funds are intended to cover. To be eligible for receiving financial support the WG must maintain an up-to-date web site and submit regularly the WG annual reports.

From 2017 forward, requests will be accepted by two cut-off dates (tentatively in January and June) that will be announced to the WGs upon budget approval.