

Terms of Reference (ToR) - EBSA Working Group

Working group: **Conference Program Working Group (CPWG)**

Date: 07-05-2024

Version number: 2024-CPWG-01

Background and aim

The European Biosafety Association's Conference Program Working Group (CPWG) has a long history of curating the program for EBSA's annual in-person conference. However, with the challenges presented by the COVID-19 pandemic, the CPWG's role has evolved. In response to the pandemic, the CPWG successfully pivoted to organizing online member events. The positive reception of these virtual gatherings has led to a permanent change in the group's focus. Going forward, the CPWG will not only develop the program for the annual face-to-face conference but also organize online events throughout the year. These online events offer several advantages. They allow the CPWG to delve into more specialized topics, catering to a wider range of interests. Additionally, online meetings make participation more accessible for members new to the field and those facing financial constraints associated with travel to in-person conferences. This broader reach strengthens the EBSA community and fosters knowledge sharing within the field of biosafety and biosecurity.

Objectives

The main objectives of the CPWG are to:

1. Develop a high-quality scientific program that is relevant and useful to EBSA members, both for online and in-person events.
2. Promote the exchange of knowledge and experiences between biosafety professionals from different sectors and experience levels from all over Europe through providing the necessary networking opportunities during conferences and on-line events.

Members

The CPWG is composed of a group of experienced biosafety professionals with expertise in a variety of areas and should also represent the diversity of EBSA Members.

The CPWG should consist of 5 to 10 Members, including the CPWG Chair, and the chairs of the Local Organizing Committees (LOC) of the previous conference, the current and the upcoming conference (liaisons with the local team).

Any EBSA Member can volunteer to join the CPWG as standing member. CPWG evaluates requests based on criteria such as competence, previous experience and lack of conflicts of interest of the



candidate. Candidates are then presented to EBSA Council for approval.

Temporary members linked to LOC of the present, previous or upcoming conference, joins CPWG the year before their LOC organises a conference and two years after.

The term of both the standing and temporary CPWG Members is for a period of 3 years and can be renewed at the end of this period. As an organisation, EBSA highly values continuity and experience in the working groups but at the same time it is important to regularly make room for other EBSA members to join the working groups.

Within CPWG a Chair is elected by the CPWG members for a term of 3 years, re-election is possible.

One of the members of the CPWG, preferably the Chair, takes on the role of liaison to the EBSA Council.

Operations

The CPWG meets regularly to discuss and develop the conference program and the online meeting program through a combination of face-to-face meetings, conference calls and e-mail communication. Meetings are called by the Chair. The meeting location (physical, online) is decided based on what is most convenient for all participants and least expensive for EBSA.

Decisions are made by simple majority, while the Chair should strive as much as possible for unanimity. Whenever disputes cannot be resolved by the CPWG members, EBSA Council will be contacted.

As required, CPWG Members may be charged with particular tasks, and they report on progress to the Chair.

The following two types of events are organised by CPWG:

1. The in-person yearly EBSA conference. The role of the CPWG in short below:
 - a. Composing the full conference program
 - b. Identifies and evaluates suggested presentations and poster presentations
 - c. The CPWG works closely with the EBSA Office and the Local Organising Committee (LOC) to organise the conference
2. On-line EBSA events. The role of the CPWG in short below:
 - a. Identifies interesting and relevant topics for the EBSA Members
 - b. Puts together a diverse program
 - c. Identify potential speakers by reaching out to the members or known expert contacts

CPWG and the EBSA Conference Office establish and update on a regular basis an Operational Guideline, which covers all procedures and indicates timing and persons responsible for different tasks during preparation of the Conference, at the Conference and after the Conference.

Documents produced by CPWG are centrally stored and are accessible to CPWG Members and the EBSA Office. EBSA Council can access documents on-demand.

Reporting and evaluation

CPWG regularly reports to Council and annually to the members on the work carried out and the results of their work.

The EBSA Council liaison of CPWG is invited to the EBSA Council meetings where the status of the work and the results achieved are discussed. The CPWG Chair reports to the EBSA members during the Annual General Assembly about the work and results achieved in the past year.

CPWG evaluates the feedback of participants from EBSA events that are organised by CPWG.

The CPWG's performance is evaluated annually by the EBSA Council. The evaluation based on the following criteria:

- The quality and relevance of the conference program and if applicable on-line events
- The level of participation and engagement from the EBSA members
- The overall feedback from conference and on-line event participants