



## AEC Working Groups: tasks and guidelines

AEC is very grateful to the individuals who make up the working groups that develop the areas of AEC activity associated with particular events and/or conduct work on behalf of the organisation within specific projects, and to their institutions, for their dedication of time and resources to this important task. Working group members are financially supported either by their home institutions or with the support of grants from the European Commission, which cover their travel and accommodation expenses to the working group meetings and, when appropriate, to various events. .

Working groups provide advice to AEC policy and work, develop relevant tools, documents and/or strategies, participate in the preparation of events - contributing their specialist perspective on content, suggesting presenters, making important contacts or presenting or moderating at the events themselves - and help to steer the direction in which the areas and issues they address should develop over time.

Working Group tasks include:

- Acting as an ‘observatory’ for issues connected to the WG
- Creating tools, guidelines, policy statements, etc. relevant to the field
- Supporting the development of their own field within AEC’s portfolio of activities, whilst recognising the need for overall balance in these activities
- Acting, when requested, as an expert advisory and/or advocacy group to AEC Council
- Where relevant, planning the periodic AEC event relevant to the WG

Working group members are selected and appointed on the basis of a call for applications, which is accessible to all AEC members. The selection process for a specific working group is conducted by a committee equally composed of members of the corresponding working group and of members of the AEC Office Team. The following principles guide this process:

- Each member must be ***active in the field relevant to the working group’s task***
- Each member should have the ***time, energy and institutional support*** to be able contribute pro-actively to the group’s work, whether working in face-to-face meetings or online
- Each member should ‘share the vision’ of the group and be ***a committed team-player***, whilst bringing their own perspective to the group
- Each new member should bring some ***expertise that is complementary*** to that already existing within the group
- Each new member’s ***gender and nationality*** should, wherever possible maintain or enhance the ***balance*** of these across the group as a whole

AEC asks prospective new members for a motivation letter, introducing themselves, defining what they find being their expertise and competence areas. This is a useful practice and enables a somewhat more formal approach to ensuring that the overall expertise of the group is well-balanced.



In general, the number of members and their terms of office are kept informal. The guiding principles are as follows:

- There is *no set number* of members for a working group but they generally operate best with more than five and fewer than ten individuals
- The term of office is defined in the *terms of reference*, developed according to the needs of each working group.
- All working groups recognise the importance of *bringing in fresh ideas* - and also, when appropriate, of spreading in a fair manner the burden to institutions of supporting working group members; for this reason, working groups *regularly review their membership* and look for fresh recruits, while at the same time ensuring a sufficient level of continuity in the membership.
- A working group membership will cease at the latest at the end of the calendar year, in which the individual's employment by the sending AEC institution comes to an end (due to e.g. a professional change, a retirement, etc.) In case of a student member, working group membership should not last longer than three years after the individual has graduated..

Each AEC working group has a *chairperson*, selected from amongst the working group members. There is no official policy as how to select the working group chair; he or she is usually selected either through an informal approach by the previous chair or by informal voting within the working group as a whole. The appointment as chair has no fixed term. However, a typical period for serving in this role within the group would be between 3 and 5 years.

In addition to the tasks of working group members listed above, those of the chair include:

- overseeing all working group activities in liaison with the member of the AEC Office Team appointed to support the group.
- preparing agendas for working group meetings in liaison with the relevant member of the AEC Office Team
- when relevant, opening events with official speeches on behalf of the working group
- acting as front person for any inquiries to, or contact with, the working group and the event it supports

Anyone interested in joining a working group should contact either an existing member of the group or the AEC Office.