

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

DiSSCo Technical Advisory Board (TAB) Terms of Reference

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A. Premise

DiSSCo, as a research data infrastructure, is heavily investing in its ability to link together and serve data classes related to the European natural science collections. To this end, it plans to deploy a comprehensive data model, which enables development of world-class e-Services for a diverse set of scientific, industry and policy audiences. DiSSCo does not develop its technical architecture in isolation. Instead, it makes use and augments existing underlying and complementary data systems and services, whilst innovating where necessary to reach the required technical readiness level. The Data Management Plan of DiSSCo, provides an overall guidance on the future implementation and operation of the infrastructure. The implementation of this plan will require a series of key technical decisions to be made, whilst the ever-changing technological landscape mandates further amendments to the existing DMP.

B. DiSSCo Technical Advisory Board mission

The DiSSCo Technical Advisory Board (TAB) mission is to provide expert consultation services in all areas related to the technical sphere of operation of DiSSCo.

C. DiSSCo TAB objectives

1. Collect and analyse scientific priorities of the infrastructure and provide recommendations on how to address these in services and the technical development roadmap;
2. Provide expert advice to the DiSSCo governance and management bodies;
3. Propose metrics for measuring the performance of the technical teams across the DiSSCo projects;
4. Monitor and report on the technical preparation and implementation progress of DiSSCo and specifically in relation to the ongoing portfolio of DiSSCo-linked projects;
5. Draft annual reports on the accounts of technical developments and future technical roadmap and provide advice on the technical priorities of new projects and project proposals;
6. Provide ad-hoc expert advice on requests from the DiSSCo governance bodies and act as external advisory boards to DiSSCo-linked projects;
7. Represent DiSSCo in external meetings, presenting the technical vision and progress of the infrastructure.

D. Rules of participation

D.1. Structure of the body

The DiSSCo TAB consists of at least five and up to 15 statutory members. Additional participants can be invited, on a temporary and ad-hoc basis, to complement the expertise of the members for specific topics, following invitation extended by the chair of the DiSSCo TAB.

DiSSCo TAB members operate independently, as individual experts. In their capacity as DiSSCo TAB members do not represent interests of other organisations, initiatives or specific scientific disciplines and sub-domains. They are expected to draw on their experience and expertise to provide objective

expert advice on all matters of TAB business.

D.2. TAB Membership

D.2.1. TAB Appointment

TAB members are appointed by decision of the DiSSCo General Assembly (or the equivalent decision-making body in the DiSSCo governance). The process includes the approval of a single slate proposed by the DiSSCo Coordination and Support Office (during the preparatory phase governance) or the board of directors (during the operational phase governance model) or any equivalent executive board of DiSSCo.

For the compilation of the TAB slate the DiSSCo Coordination and Support Office or the Board of Directors or the equivalent executive board can decide to open a call for nominations or directly select candidates to be included in the slate.

The DiSSCo TAB slate is presented to the General Assembly (or its equivalent decision-making body) along with a full justification, in relation to the ongoing DiSSCo technical priorities. The slate can be accepted or rejected by the General Assembly (or its equivalent decision-making body). In case of slate rejection (by majority), the DiSSCo Coordination and Support office will move for approval by the General Assembly (or its equivalent decision-making body) of each one of the included names in the slate.

Members to the TAB can be added at any given point, as long as the total number of members complies with the limitations described under Section D.1, and according to the process described in this Section.

D.2.2. membership duration

Each TAB member serves for two years, which equals to the duration of a TAB term. Mid-term retiring members are not replaced, unless the number of remaining members falls short of the requirements described in Section D.1. TAB membership can be renewed for a maximum of three full terms.

D.2.3. Ex-officio participation

The DiSSCo coordinator and deputy coordinators can participate to the TAB meetings *ex-officio* and do not count against the number of appointed TAB members.

D.2.4. TAB leadership

The TAB Chair and vice-chair are appointed by decision of the General Assembly (or the equivalent decision-making body) among the TAB elected members. Once appointed, a TAB Chair (and vice-chair) serves for a duration equal to one term. Mid-term retiring chairs are replaced by the vice-chair for time equal to the remaining time of their original term. Mid-term retiring vice-chairs are not replaced. If no vice-chair is available to replace a mid-term retiring chair, a new chair and vice-chair are appointed through the process described in the beginning of this section. The maximum number of mandate renewals as a TAB chair is two.

D.2.5. Principles for member selection

The following criteria are hereby presented for guidance purposes. They should not be considered as exhaustive nor restrictive.

1. Demonstrated excellence in areas related to the DiSSCo technical needs;
2. Strong understanding of the research data infrastructure landscape;
3. Current or previous participation in DiSSCo-linked projects and work packages;
4. Participation in relevant organizational technical boards;

5. Experience with and understanding of multi-stakeholder processes.

D.2.6. Conflict of Interest

Nominated TAB members are expected to declare all actual, potential and perceived conflict of interest. Specifically, perceived conflict of interest occurs where it could reasonably be perceived, or give the appearance, that a competing interest could improperly influence the performance of the TAB member. Conflict of interests are declared formally (in written communication) to the DiSSCo Coordination and Support office as soon as they become apparent to the nominated or elected TAB member.

E. Rules of procedure

E.1. Agenda setting

E.1.1. Introduced topics

The DiSSCo TAB discuss and provides consultation on the current and anticipated matters. The services of the TAB can be requested by the DiSSCo Coordination and Support Office (during the preparatory phase) or the Board of Directors (during the operational phase) on specific urgent or standing matters. The TAB Chair communicates the anticipated timetable of discussions to the DiSSCo Coordinator or DiSSCo CEO.

E.1.2. Standing topics

Further topics can be introduced for discussions and advice by any of the TAB members, after the approval of TAB Chair. These topics should pertain the current or anticipated needs of the DiSSCo infrastructure or the wider supporting community.

E.1.3. Technical reviews

Technical reviews on certain DiSSCo technical topics can be requested by the DiSSCo governing bodies. Such reviews once produced will be used to inform decisions across the DiSSCo technical teams.

E.1.4. Relationship with other DiSSCo bodies/structures

The DiSSCo TAB keeps abreast with the developments across the DiSSCo portfolio of projects. Specifically, the TAB acknowledges all outputs of the projects and provide consultation when needed, acting in an external advisory board capacity for those projects. Items discussed by the TAB need to remain aligned with the ongoing priorities of the DiSSCo-linked projects.

E.2. Meetings

E.2.1. Frequency of meetings

The TAB convenes physically or virtually (teleconference) at least every two months, or as frequently as needed

E.2.2. Record of meetings

The TAB must register and make public the agenda and the (redacted) minutes of the TAB meetings through DiSSCo public communication channels. Non-redacted versions of the minutes will be made fully accessible to all DiSSCo governance bodies per request.

E.2.3. Decision making process

The TAB members operate individually within the TAB and provide expert opinion on matters arising based on their best judgment. The TAB chair strives to develop internal consensus on matters. In case on diverging opinions, however, the chair is responsible for recording all expressed opinions on the matters discussed.

Consensus view of the TAB on business matters is expected but not required.

E.2.4. Order of business

The order of business and the agenda for each meeting is defined by the TAB chair, in consultation with the DiSSCo Coordination and Support office and after acknowledging the requirements of section E.1. The chair circulates the agenda of the meeting, along with supporting documentation, at least five days prior to the meeting.

TAB members can recommend additional business matters to the chair, either prior to the circulation of the agenda.

E.2.5. Attendance

The chair records attendance and apologies of TAB members. This information is included in the minutes of each meeting and is made publicly available upon request.

TAB members failing to attend more than three consecutive DiSSCo TAB regular meetings, are requested by the chair to justify their extended absence.

E.2.6. Notice of resignation

TAB members are expected to hand their notice of resignation from the TAB through a written communication to the TAB chair. Notice of resignations come into effect at least four weeks after formally submitted, except from letters of resignation on the basis of conflict of interest which become effective immediately. TAB members serving as chairs submit their notice of resignation to the DiSSCo coordination and support office.

E.3. Support to TAB

E.3.1. Communication and Collaboration

The DiSSCo Coordination and Support Office provides the necessary access to services, including access to communication and project management services, for the seamless operation of the TAB. The TAB Chair can request additional services according to the needs of the TAB. Such requests are processed at a discretionary basis by the DiSSCo Coordination and Support Office.

E.3.2. Costs reimbursement

DiSSCo TAB members participate on a solely voluntary basis and are not entitled to any direct or indirect financial reimbursement for their services to TAB.

Additional costs linked to travel and subsidy, in relation to the TAB business, can be claimed by the DiSSCo Coordination and Support Office. These costs include flights, accommodation and meal costs. Reimbursement procedures are defined at a separate policy document and can be adjusted at any time.

E.4. TAB representation

The TAB chair participates ex-officio to the DiSSCo General Assembly without voting rights. The TAB chair acts as the spokesperson of the TAB and responds to public or consortium enquiries regarding the technical mission and service provision of DiSSCo; Participates to public events representing DiSSCo as a Research Infrastructure; and provides public opinion when needed. The TAB chair can delegate the above responsibilities on an ad-hoc basis.



Distributed System of Scientific Collections