



# *INTERBULL TECHNICAL COMMITTEE*

## *TERMS OF REFERENCE*

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#### 1) Background

- a) The purpose of this paper is to outline the terms of reference for the Interbull Technical Committee. The following sections cover the key elements of the Terms of Reference for the Interbull Technical Committee
- b) The Interbull Technical Committee provides counselling to the Steering Committee in technical questions related to international genetic and genomic evaluations of dairy cattle breeds and the related services released by Interbull Centre. Moreover, the Interbull Technical Committee may be requested to provide long-term views and strategies on matters relating to the service.

#### 2) Objective

- a) The objective of the Interbull Technical Committee (ITC) is to identify or review technical topics and questions that may be essential for providing a high-quality service to Interbull Service Users. This objective is achieved via the consideration of new or improved methods that increase the efficiency and/or accuracy of the evaluation service, while safeguarding the transparency of the services and its acceptability by Interbull Service Users.

### 3) Mandate

- a) Make recommendations on technical questions proposed by the Interbull Steering Committee.
- b) Make spontaneous recommendations to the Interbull Steering Committee on methodological topics that may affect the current service or on new technical services that may be of value to service users.
- c) Provide advice and support to the Interbull Centre in addressing technical topics and/or improvements related to the service and/or research projects.
- d) The ITC, may – on request of the SC – consider matters relating to the strategic direction of the service or to questions that are not technical in nature.
- e) The ITC Chair may, at their sole discretion, deem that a topic brought to the attention of the ITC is outside the ITC mandate, except for topics referred to the ITC by the SC.

### 4) Membership

- a) The ITC shall consist of a group of highly regarded scientists, actively involved with research and development in the area of international evaluations and experienced in (inter)national genetic evaluation procedures for dairy cattle.
- b) The Interbull Steering Committee shall appoint ITC members for terms of 4 (four) years, which may be extended for consecutive terms, as long as they remain actively involved with international genetic evaluations, and their participation is supported by an Interbull Service User.
- c) ITC members would preferably represent a broad geographical spread. However, the Steering Committee considers personal qualities and competency as more important. Integrity and independence should characterise the members of the ITC, and it is important that they do not represent their organisations but their own capacity as experts in genetic evaluations.
- d) One member of the Interbull Steering Committee, with thorough technical experience in the area of national and international evaluations, will be appointed as the Chair of the ITC, with a term of 4 years. In the case of their absence, the Chair of the ITC may appoint a Deputy Chair from among the members of the Interbull Steering Committee to act on their behalf.
- e) The Interbull Centre Director shall nominate one geneticist of the Interbull Centre as ITC member. This person's ITC membership lapses once the person is no longer working for the Interbull Centre.
- f) The Chair of the ITC may invite guests, representatives of Interbull Service Users and experts to participate in an ITC meeting. Such participants may act only in a consultative capacity and may be requested to attend for specific agenda items.

### 5) Operational Issues

- a) ITC Recommendations
  - i) ITC recommendations must be presented (usually by the ITC Chair) to the Steering Committee for approval prior to implementation.

- ii) ITC recommendations should be accompanied by a summary of the information needed for the Steering Committee to make decisions, i.e. consequences, advantages, disadvantages, etc.
  - iii) ITC recommendations should be based on sound scientific principles, usually backed by research results, and not only on the views or experiences of the members of the ITC.
  - iv) The ITC should strive to make recommendations in consensus.
  - v) The Chair of the ITC or their nominee chairing a meeting shall summarise discussions and formulate conclusions for recommendations to the Steering Committee and propose it to the meeting for unanimous approval.
  - vi) If the Chair's summing up is not approved by consensus, differences in opinion should be included in reports to the Steering Committee.
- b) Secretariat
- i) Representatives of the Interbull Centre may attend and contribute to ITC meetings.
  - ii) Minutes of ITC meetings are recorded by a representative of the Interbull Centre.
  - iii) The ITC Chair and Interbull Centre member of the ITC shall have regular (monthly) meetings to follow up, and prepare for ITC meetings. They shall jointly prepare the agenda for ITC meetings.
- c) ITC Working Groups
- i) The ITC has the option to refer specific topics or questions to Working Groups (WG), appointed by the ITC.
  - ii) The ITC shall appoint one of the ITC members as the Chair for such WG.
  - iii) The ITC may invite both ITC members, and experts who are not ITC members, to be part of such WG.
  - iv) Under the guidance of the WG Chair, a WG ToR shall be created, which will subsequently need to be approved by the ITC.

## 6) Meetings

- a) The ITC should meet at least once per year, usually in connection with the Interbull Open and Business Meetings. The Steering Committee and ITC Chairs should ensure that adequate time is allocated for such meetings. The meeting should normally precede the meetings of the Interbull Steering Committee, such that outcomes of the ITC meeting can be reported to the Steering Committee.
- b) Additional meetings may be held if the need and opportunity arise, and all ITC members are expected to make extensive use of the Interbull discussion forums, e-mail communication, and online meeting tools.

## 7) Resources

- a) The Interbull Centre operates the administration for the ITC, and covers costs associated with its meetings. However, the Interbull Centre will not cover salary or travel costs, or other such out-of-pocket expenses for the ITC members.
- b) The Interbull Centre may also perform or arrange studies and prepare reports on topics and questions relevant to the responsibilities of the ITC. This may be done in collaboration with WGs as recommended by the ITC and have clear outcomes agreed prior to commencement.

## 8) Reporting

- a) Meetings of the ITC should have an agenda that should be distributed to the members of the ITC one week in advance of the ITC meeting for review. The final agenda should also be made available to the Steering Committee.
- b) Outcomes of ITC meetings may be reported through Interbull Executive Summaries. Key topics and questions will be presented to the Interbull Business Meeting.
- c) Minutes should be kept of all meetings of the ITC. For each of the topics addressed, minutes should contain:
  - i) a clear summary of the topic or question;
  - ii) summation of major issues impacting on the decision or recommendation;
  - iii) appropriate history leading to that decision or recommendation; and
  - iv) a decision or recommendation to the Steering Committee on the issue.
- d) The minutes should be approved by all the ITC members and then shared with the Steering Committee.