

## Task Group Guidelines

Task Groups are groups of scientists, researchers and data experts who work together on a specific problem or theme to advance the state of data management and to advance science and improve our world. Task Groups are proposed according to a procedure defined by the CODATA Constitution and they are approved and endorsed by the General Assembly. They are an important means through which CODATA delivers on its [mission](#) and [Strategic Programme](#), including the [Decadal Programme: Making Data Work for Cross-Domain Grand Challenges](#).

The purpose of this document is to outline and clarify relevant sections of the [CODATA Constitution](#) and to further elaborate on the Task Groups' roles and responsibilities.

### How Task Groups are proposed and endorsed

In the CODATA Constitution, Statute 12 and Bylaw 5 define the process for proposal and selection of task groups. The Executive Committee is responsible for proposing to the General Assembly the need for Task Groups. The power to establish Task Groups is vested in the General Assembly.

Proposals for the establishment or renewal of Task Groups are solicited by the Executive Committee from Delegates, Task Group Chairs, and through CODATA publications beginning at least six months in advance of the General Assembly.

Proposals for new Task Groups, with a clearly formulated objective, budget, work plan, statement of tangible outcomes benefiting CODATA and the research community, as well as a timetable for completion, are submitted to the Secretariat, for procedural review by the Secretary General. The proposed Chair (Co-chairs) and proposed initial members for the Group should also be listed. This should be done at least 12 weeks in advance of the General Assembly. Task Groups seeking renewal must additionally submit a progress report and how past activities lead to the proposal for future activities. The Secretary General, upon being satisfied that minimum criteria have been met, ensures that each proposal is subjected to impartial peer review and that those proposals and reviews are available for assessment by the Executive Committee at their regular meeting prior to the General Assembly.

The Secretariat sends Task Group proposals, after they have been assessed, modified and ranked as deemed necessary by the Executive Committee, to the Delegates at least 8 weeks in advance of the General Assembly.

The President, in consultation with the Executive Committee and in cooperation with the proposer, appoints or confirms the Co-chairs of each Task Group, as per the Constitution, by-law 5.5. The Co-chair in turn shall formulate for the Executive Committee the terms of reference of the Task Group and its detailed work plan and the proposed list of members.

The ballot for establishing or approving continuation of Task Groups at the General Assembly will provide for the casting of either a "Yes" or "No" vote for each Task Group. A Task Group must receive more "Yes" votes than "No" votes to be established or to be approved for continuation. Failures to vote for a given Task Group will be ignored in determining the majority. Approval does not necessarily imply funding of the proposed budget of the Task Group. Allocation of funds for TGs is done through the Executive Committee through a separate process.

## Responsibilities of CODATA Task Groups

Task Groups (TGs) are expected to:

1. Contribute to the realisation of the CODATA Strategic Programme (and to the Decadal Programme 'Making Data Work for Cross-Domain Grand Challenges' in particular) and of CODATA's overall mission.
2. Contribute to global collaboration around Open Science and FAIR data.
  - a. TGs are encouraged to include participation from or engagement with two or more CODATA National Committees.
  - b. TGs are encouraged to help further collaboration between international scientific and data organisations. Specifically, TGs are encouraged to involve or collaborate with International Scientific Unions or Associations; with ISC-Sponsored Programmes; with the Data Together organisations (GO FAIR, RDA and WDS); or with other international data organisations (such as, e.g. FORCE11, ICSTI, DataCite, DDI etc.). In this context, co-branded TGs are encouraged.
3. Pursue clearly stated and well-defined objectives and to produce tangible public outputs that contribute to the realisation of these objectives.
  - a. TGs should state the following clearly: What is the issue that the TG will address? What are the outputs that the TG will produce? What will the outcomes of this activity be (i.e. how precisely will it contribute to the CODATA mission or Decadal Programme)?

- b. Example outputs include: research papers, reports, white papers, policy documents, good practices recommendations, methodology documents, technical proposals, etc.
    - c. Workshops and convergence driving meetings are important but should have a lasting record, a public output and demonstrably lead to an outcome of the type described above.
    - d. All outputs should be clearly branded, using the CODATA logo where possible and acknowledging the role of CODATA and the Task Group.
    - e. All outputs should be submitted to the CODATA collection, currently in Zenodo, and linked from the CODATA website.
4. Participate in CODATA activities and events.
  - a. TGs are expected to organise sessions at major CODATA conferences, such as SciDataCon/International Data Week.
  - b. TGs are strongly encouraged to participate in other CODATA and related activities where possible and where these are in line with the TGs mission.
5. Maintain regular reporting and prompt and proactive communication with the CODATA Secretariat and Executive Committee (EC) Liaison.
  - a. TGs are expected to provide two brief progress reports (after 12 and 20 months) and, if requested, also prior to any extraordinary General Assembly.
  - b. The CODATA Secretariat communicates regularly with TGs. TGs are expected to respond promptly to requests to provide or to distribute information, or invitations to participate in activities.
  - c. CODATA assigns to each TG, an Executive Committee liaison who will give advice, assist the Secretariat and constructively monitor TG activities and progress. These liaisons may or may not have specific expertise in the technical subject of the TG but they do have expertise in data and in the operations of CODATA. TGs must maintain good communication with the ExComm liaison, ensure that they are informed of activities and included in correspondence with the CODATA Secretariat. All Task Group correspondence and outputs should go also to the EC Liaison. Take advantage of the EC Liaison for expert advice and links to the wider CODATA community.

- i. Follow good practice in Task Group organisation, management and communication. This includes holding regular (virtual or otherwise) coordination meetings to maintain communication among TG members. CODATA can assist with Zoom or GoToMeeting where helpful. TGs should also maintain records of meetings, key decisions and documentation.
6. Provide public and transparent accounts of their activities via the CODATA website and other communication channels. TGs are expected to:
- a. Work with the Executive Director and Secretariat to communicate outputs and activities, including contributing material for blog posts and newsletters.
  - b. Help keep information about the TG and its activities on the CODATA website up to date.
  - c. Take opportunities, where possible, to contribute to CODATA's series of webinars or other virtual or in-person events.

## Task Group membership and composition

CODATA's mission is to connect data and people to advance science and improve our world. TGs are intended to bring people together under the CODATA umbrella in support of this mission and to encourage global scientific cooperation around data.

**Co-chairs:** TGs must have 2 or more named Co-chairs, with regional and gender diversity. Co-chairs provide direction for the TG and are the key point of contact with CODATA. TG Co-chairs are expected to communicate frequently with and engage all named TG members.

The President, in consultation with the Executive Committee and in cooperation with the proposers, confirms the Co-chairs of each TG. The Co-chairs in turn formulate for the Executive Committee the terms of reference of the Task Group and its detailed work plan and the proposed list of members.

The term of office of each TG Co-chair is two years and may be renewed for two additional terms of two years each. After completion of this term, the Co-chair may continue to serve as a member of the Task Group. No Officer or Ordinary member of the Executive Committee is eligible to be Co-chair of a CODATA Task Group. Any conflict of this nature must be resolved within 30 days of the conflict arising either by resignation as Task Group Co-chair or by resignation as Officer or Ordinary Member of the Executive Committee.

**Secretary:** In addition to the Co-chairs, it is strongly encouraged for the TG to have a named Secretary who will plan meetings, respond to requests for information, maintain the TG wiki,

blog or other tool etc. This role could be taken by a Co-chair, an early career member or a secondee/intern. The Secretary will take primary responsibility for key aspects of TG coordination.

**Early Career Members:** TGs are encouraged to have at least two named early career members who will be strongly involved in substantive aspects of the TGs activity. These members should also become involved with the CODATA Connect early career and alumni network and receive benefits from that engagement (including where available, training opportunities, bursaries, network benefits etc).

**Internships/Secondments:** TGs are strongly encouraged to increase capacity through internships/secondments. Effort might be lent to the TG by CODATA National Members or by partner organizations, for example. Similarly, the activity of the Task Group might be one that incorporates a topic for post-graduate or post-doctoral research.

**TG Membership Diversity:** One of the benefits of CODATA TGs is to bring international and diverse perspectives and cooperation to bear on an issue. TG membership should be geographically and gender diverse.

## Task Groups Funding

**CODATA Funding:** CODATA designates part of its budget for Task Groups and at the discretion of the Executive Committee provides a small amount of seed funding: historically this has ranged between 1K and 10K Euros per year. In recent years, allocations of 4K Euros per year have been most common. Such funding must be used to achieve tangible TG outputs. For example, directly supporting the drafting, publication or testing of TG outputs, convening a workshop or similar is within scope; speculative attendance at a conference is not. CODATA Task Group funding is allocated annually. The 12-month progress report from each Task Group will be used to guide the funding allocation for year two. Funding is expected to be expended in the calendar year it is received unless permission is received from CODATA.

Shortly after approval at a General Assembly, the CODATA Secretariat will contact the new TG to request information including the TG's work plan and a budget request with detail on how any money will be used, which will be considered by the Executive Committee. CODATA's usual practice is to disburse funds on receipt of an invoice or expenses claim within the budgeted amount. By arrangement, where necessary, funds can be advanced in response to a detailed activity plan.

**External Funding:** TGs are strongly encouraged to look for funding from external sources and historically the status of being a CODATA TG has assisted with this. The CODATA Secretariat

and Executive Committee are willing in principle to provide letters of support and to assist in other ways with such proposals. Proposals to CODATA to continue a TG or to establish a new TG should indicate what steps will be taken to pursue external funding.

## Task Groups Liaisons

To provide oversight of and facilitate communication with Task Groups, the Executive Committee appoints Liaisons from among its members. Such Liaisons shall be considered, *ex officio*, members of their respective Task Groups from the time of appointment until the next General Assembly.

Task Group Liaisons shall:

1. Provide guidance and ensure Task Group's engagement and alignment with the CODATA strategy.
2. Participate, where appropriate, in Task Group activities (including meetings or workshops).
3. Receive copies of all Task Group outputs and significant correspondence
4. Collect annual reports from the TG Co-chairs and provide an overview and assessment of the completed goals to the EC and Officers.
5. Report to the Executive Committee on Task Groups plans, progress, and outputs when required.
6. Consult TG co-leaders on financial issues regarding allocated budget and confirm the list of expenditures in consultation with the CODATA Officers.
7. Comment, as required, to the General Assembly on the application for renewal of the Task Group.