

EBRAINS Science and Technology Committee

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Background

The EBRAINS AISBL is now operational and the EBRAINS Research Infrastructure (EBRAINS RI) is gradually rolling out its services. The different decision-making bodies constituting the bare-bone of the governance structure are in place and a solid scientific expertise is required, in support of the leadership role of the Chief Science Officer.

The creation of an EBRAINS Science and Technology Committee (ESTC) will cater for this critical need. It is built upon the collaboration of the current HBP Science and Infrastructure Board (SIB) and new members nominated by the future National Nodes.

The present Terms of Reference (ToR) proposes a framework for the ESTC.

Mandate and role of the ESTC

Mandate

Its mandate is defined as follows:

The EBRAINS Board of Directors (BoD) mandates the EBRAINS Science and Technology Committee (ESTC) to act as the expert group on all matters related to science, technology and infrastructure.

Members of the ESTC do not represent a Member of the Association, a specific Node or any organization other than EBRAINS; they are acting in the best interest of EBRAINS and the Research Infrastructure, within the powers mandated by the BoD.

The ESTC is tasked with advising the Board of Directors on the strategic agenda of EBRAINS as well as providing its expertise to all governing bodies of EBRAINS on relevant matters. The ESTC will collaborate closely with the EBRAINS Management Board during strategy development and implementation to ensure coherence of the strategy, its implementation of the provision and operation of the research infrastructure.

Role of the ESTC

The ESTC

- Provides advice on the EBRAINS Scientific Strategy to the BoD and the Management Board, which prepares the final strategy for approval by the BoD;
- provides guidance and advice to EBRAINS governing bodies on science-, technology- and infrastructure-related matters through its scientific expertise and with both a strategic and an operational focus;
- provides recommendations and guidance regarding the services offered on the EBRAINS Platform and on their integration; It advises the Management Board on the selection of services, suggested by the National Nodes and ensures that the services provided as part of the EBRAINS RI are coherently integrated into a well-articulated set of tools;
- advises the MB by providing scientific and technical guidance, expertise and recommendations on EBRAINS-led grants applications and project proposals / evaluations, where EBRAINS is involved;
- supports the communication around scientific and technical matters across the RI, and in particular between the decision-making bodies, the Central Hub and the National Nodes;
- supports the EBRAINS CEO and CSO, and more broadly the Central Hub of the EBRAINS Research Infrastructure (RI) in their efforts to develop new collaborations;
- through its members, supports the take-up of the RI and the collaborative efforts to expend the users, contributors and members; it supports and guides the National Nodes in the management of the user communities.

Decisions

The decisions in the ESTC are reached by consensus of the members.

In the event where such consensus cannot be reached, the decision can be put to a vote of the members present, with a simple majority of 50% +1 vote. Each member has one vote. Where a majority cannot be reached, the Chairperson of the ESTC makes the final decision.

The BoD is informed when a decision could not have been resolved by consensus.

Membership

Members of the ESTC

The ESTC consists of about 20 individual members.

The ESTC members are appointed by the Board of Directors among the candidates nominated to reflect the criteria of gender balance, diversity of disciplines, openness to communities and diversity of nationalities.

Data science, computing, neuroscience, neurotechnology, neurorobotics, modelling, data management, clinicians (neurology, psychiatry), neurobiologists and anthropology are fields that should be represented.

The CEO and CSO will be ex-officio non-voting members of the ESTC.

EAN and FENS are invited to make one nomination each.

The ESTC Members are appointed for a mandate of three (3) years. Their mandate can be renewed once. No member of the ESTC shall serve more than six (6) years;

The ESTC members are entitled to a daily allowance paid by EBRAINS for covering their expenses related to their involvement within the committee; The level of the allowance shall be decided upon by the Board of Directors and re-approved yearly.

The ESTC, as a committee of EBRAINS, shall implement the guidelines on diversity and equal opportunities within its own membership; in particular, an equal representation of female and of male members is expected.

The Members of the ESTC are expected to participate to at least 75% of the meetings (or at least 8 meetings if the total number of meetings exceeds 12 per year).

The Members of the ESTC shall be aware of the workload implied and willing to dedicate time to fulfil their duties within the committee.

Chairperson

The ESTC Chairperson is selected and appointed by the BoD.

The chairperson represents the ESTC in the communication with the EBRAINS governing bodies; as such, the chairperson can be invited at the meetings of the EBRAINS MB, BoD and General Assembly, upon invitation by the CEO (for the MB) or the Chairman of the Board (for the BoD and the General Assembly).

The Chairperson will make a proposal for the structure of the ESTC to the BoD.

The chairperson of the ESTC is appointed for three (3) years and can be re-elected. The chairperson shall not serve for more than 6 years.

The chairperson of the ESTC shall not be a member of the HBP SIB.

Membership resignation / dismissal and vacancies

Resignation and dismissal

Members of the ESTC can resign from their position in the committee, giving at least a 1 (one) month notice to the Chairperson. The Chairperson shall inform the BoD of the resignation and discuss the member's replacement.

The BoD can dismiss the members of the ESTC at any time.

Should a member of the ESTC not be fulfilling his/her duties or be in breach with the present Terms of Reference, the Chairperson can inform the BoD who will take the necessary measures to resolve the situation.

Vacancies

If a seat becomes vacant, the Chairperson shall inform the BoD and discuss the recruitment process for a new member.

Meetings

The ESTC meets at least six (6) times per year;

The Chairperson is responsible for calling the meetings. Convocation for the meetings shall be sent to the members no later than two (2) weeks ahead of the meeting.

The documents supporting decisions shall be shared with the participants no later than seven (7) ahead of the meeting.

The Chairperson shall nominate a secretary for the meetings, responsible for writing down executive minutes and recording the decisions made by the ESTC. The secretary shall be a staff member from EBRAINS AISBL tasked with supporting the ESTC.

Termination of Service

The ESTC does not have a termination date or a duration.

The ESTC can be terminated by the decision of the BoD.

If there are concerns about the work of the ESTC, these can be raised with the BoD. The BoD will hold a special meeting to discuss these concerns. If the BoD shares the concerns, it can propose the termination of services and submit it to a vote for which a majority of 2/3 is required. The GA can then endorse the BoD position which will lead to an immediate termination of the ESTC mandate.