

CERN Scientific Policy Committee

Terms of Reference

The Terms of Reference of the CERN Scientific Policy Committee, as approved by the Council at its 213th Session (CERN/3739/Rev.), entered into force on 1 November 2023. They cancel and replace the previous Terms of Reference, adopted in September 2008 (CERN/SPC/313/Rev.6).

I. General Remit and Authority

1. The CERN Scientific Policy Committee (hereinafter referred to as “the Committee” or “the SPC”), a subordinate body established by the Council in accordance with article V, paragraph 12, of the CERN Convention, advises the Council on all scientific matters.
2. The Director-General of CERN provides the Committee with all the support and all the information at the Director-General’s disposal that it may require to fulfil its remit.

II. Detailed Responsibilities

3. The responsibilities of the Committee are the following:

a) Advisory responsibilities

4. To assist the Council, the Committee monitors the overall scientific activities of the Organization, including through periodic horizon scanning, and provides input and recommendations, in particular, on:
 - i. the priorities of research programmes and the allocation of research efforts both within the laboratories of the Organization and extramurally;
 - ii. the scientific aspects of the European Strategy for Particle Physics;
 - iii. the Medium-Term Plan;
 - iv. the achievements of the Organization against the annual goals set for the previous year;
 - v. senior staff appointments made by the Council;
 - vi. the management and staffing of the Organization, from the point of view of scientific policy, including the programmes concerning Graduates and associated members of the personnel;
 - vii. any other scientific and technical matters that affect the activities of the Organization.

b) Decision-making responsibilities

5. The Committee has decision-making responsibilities in respect of:
 - i. its own functioning; and
 - ii. the establishment of time-limited working groups to study specific items falling within its remit.

c) Other responsibilities

6. In addition, the Committee performs any other activities that the Council may request it to perform.

III. Composition

a) Membership

7. The Committee has two categories of members:
 - i. **Appointed members**, who are individuals with the highest standing in the scientific community, appointed by the Council on the proposal of the SPC Membership Selection Committee.

They act *ad personam* and do not represent the interests of any state or constituency.

Members of Council delegations of CERN Member and Associate Member States are not eligible to serve simultaneously on the Committee.

Their term of office is a single, fixed period of four years.

The number of appointed members is defined by the Council and reflects the range of expertise required for the SPC. The SPC provides the Council with its recommendation in this regard.

- ii. **Ex-officio members:**
 - the Chairs of the CERN experiment committees, the CERN Machine Advisory Committee and the scientific advisory committee in respect of future CERN flagship¹ projects;
 - the Chair of the European Committee for Future Accelerators (“ECFA”);
 - the Chair of the Large Particle Physics Laboratory Directors Group (“LDG”).

¹ Report by the Council Working Group on the Governance of CERN: Part 1, section 4.3 (CERN/3545/C/Rev.)

The Council may decide to modify the list of bodies represented by *ex-officio* members on the recommendation of the Committee or the Director-General of CERN.

Ex-officio members act *ad personam* and, while they can report on the activities of their respective bodies, they do not represent the interests of any state or constituency in the decision-making process of the Committee.

b) Chair and Vice-Chair

8. The Chair of the Committee is appointed by the Council on the recommendation of the Committee, normally from amongst the current appointed members, for a period of one year, renewable for not more than two consecutive periods of one year each.

In the event that the Chair is not chosen from amongst the current appointed members, the appointment as Chair automatically confers membership status for the duration of the term of office as Chair.

An *ex-officio* member cannot be appointed as Chair.

9. The Vice-Chair of the Committee is appointed by the Council upon the recommendation of the Committee, from amongst the current appointed members, for a non-renewable period of one year.
10. If the Chair of the Committee is unable to attend all or part of a meeting, or has a conflict of interest on a particular agenda item, the Vice-Chair acts in the Chair's stead. In the event that both the Chair and the Vice-Chair are unable to attend all or part of a meeting, or have a conflict of interest on a particular agenda item, the member who has served longest on the Committee acts as Chair.

IV. Selection procedure for the appointed members

11. The SPC Membership Selection Committee ("Selection Committee"), which is formed every two years to propose candidates for appointment by the Council, comprises seven members:
 - i. three individuals designated by the SPC, with due regard to diversity, from amongst its current or former members and Chairs;
 - ii. the former President of the CERN Council;
 - iii. the former Director-General of CERN;
 - iv. the former ECFA Chair; and
 - v. the former Chair of the High Energy and Particle Physics Division of the European Physical Society ("EPS-HEPP").

12. Should one of the three members designated by the SPC prove unable or unwilling to serve on the Selection Committee, the SPC designates a new member.
13. With respect to the other four members of the Selection Committee, should the most recent former office holder prove unable or unwilling to serve, their immediate predecessor is invited to serve on the Selection Committee. If that person is unable or unwilling to serve, the President's Group² proposes to the Council a replacement member for appointment to the Selection Committee.
14. The Selection Committee is chaired by the former President of the CERN Council who has agreed to serve.
15. The current President of the CERN Council is entitled to observe meetings of the Selection Committee.
16. In principle, the Council convenes the Selection Committee every two years at its December Session, with a view to appointing approximately half of the SPC members at the following September Session to take up office the following January.
17. Suggestions for new SPC members for consideration by the Selection Committee can be submitted by the CERN Member States, Associate Member States and Observer States, the current SPC members and the members of ECFA and the LDG.
18. The Selection Committee may also invite suggestions from members of the following committees:
 - Astroparticle Physics European Consortium ("ApPEC"),
 - FCC Scientific Advisory Committee ("FCC-SAC"),
 - ISOLDE and nTOF Experiments Committee ("INTC"),
 - LHC Experiments Committee ("LHCC"),
 - Machine Advisory Committee ("MAC"),
 - Nuclear Physics European Collaboration Committee ("NuPECC"), and
 - SPS and PS Experiments Committee ("SPSC"), and members of the Boards of the
 - EPS-HEPP,
 - the International Committee for Future Accelerators ("ICFA"), and
 - the Commission on Particle and Fields ("C11") of the International Union of Pure and Applied Physics ("IUPAP").

² Council Rules of Procedure, Rule 5 ([CERN/3388/Rev.4](#))

19. The members of the Selection Committee may also suggest candidates for consideration.
20. To the extent required and applicable, the Selection Committee operates pursuant to the Rules of Procedure of the Council.³
21. The Director-General ensures that the Selection Committee has the infrastructure it requires as well as the necessary support, notably from Council support services and the Legal Counsel.
22. The Selection Committee strives for consensus but, failing that, takes decisions by simple majority.
23. The Selection Committee proposes one candidate per anticipated SPC vacancy.
24. In reaching its proposals, the Selection Committee takes due account of the range of expertise to be covered.
25. The Selection Committee is automatically dissolved as soon as the Council has approved its proposals for new SPC members.

V. Selection procedure for the Chair and Vice-Chair

26. In reaching its recommendation for the appointment of a new Chair or new Vice-Chair, the SPC first draws up a shortlist of candidates. The Committee then conducts a secret ballot. The candidate to be recommended for appointment by the Council must obtain the support of at least two-thirds of all Committee members.

VI. Meetings and Attendance

a) Conduct of meetings

27. The SPC meets at least once prior to each ordinary Council Session, on dates decided by the Council.
28. The SPC may convene additional meetings at the request of the Council, the Chair or the majority of its members.
29. The SPC has four operating modes:
 - i. **Normal:** presentations of, and discussions on, scientific issues and the activity plans of the Organization;

³ See footnote 5 below.

- ii. **Topical:** informal sessions on a selected topic in order to foster discussions and common understanding among the SPC members and the scientific delegates⁴;
 - iii. **Restricted:** discussion of proposals concerning CERN senior staff to be appointed by the Council; selection of the Chair or the Vice-Chair of the Committee; information to be provided by the Chair on the outcome of deliberations held in the Closed operating mode; and,
 - iv. **Closed:** discussions on issues proposed by the Chair, for example assessments of scientific issues and the activities of the Organization.
30. The SPC meets in Topical operating mode at the request of at least five Member States in the Council, the Chair or a majority of the SPC members. The SPC meets in Restricted or Closed operating mode at the request of the Council, the Chair or a majority of the members.
 31. The SPC normally meets in person, with the possibility of remote attendance. Where necessary, the Chair, following consultation with the President of Council, may decide on a remote-only meeting.
 32. For the discussion of and any decision on a matter, the presence of a majority of the members of the Committee constitutes the required quorum.

b) Agenda, documents and minutes

33. The Chair prepares the agenda of each meeting in consultation with the Director-General, following discussion in the President's Group.
34. All documents and information submitted to or produced by the SPC remain confidential, unless otherwise determined.
35. Minutes are produced in accordance with the established procedures for the minutes of the Council and its subordinate bodies.

c) Attendance

36. Each Member State may appoint a Council delegate or adviser and each Associate Member State may appoint a representative, ideally with a scientific background, as observer to the SPC ("scientific delegate").
37. The Chair may decide to invite individuals to be present for specific agenda items.
38. The attendance rights for Committee meetings conducted in each of the four operating modes are set out in annex 1.

⁴ See article 36 below.

VII. Decision making

39. In reaching its recommendations and decisions, the SPC strives for consensus.
40. Where a formal vote is taken, each member, both appointed and *ex-officio*, is entitled to one vote.
41. Unless the manner of voting or the required majority is otherwise specified herein, the SPC takes open votes, by a simple majority of members present and voting (abstentions are not counted).
42. Members can vote in all meetings, regardless of whether they attend in person or remotely. Proxy voting is not permitted.
43. In compliance with the Organization's Code of Conduct as well as its conflict of interest policy, participants in SPC meetings contribute to a constructive climate of discussions that is conducive to consensus building.

VIII. Reporting

44. The Chair of the SPC reports to the Council at each Session, summarising the discussions and conveying the recommendations and decisions taken at its preceding meeting.

IX. Rules of Procedure of the Council

45. Pursuant to Rule 21 of the Rules of Procedure of the Council, the latter Rules of Procedure apply *mutatis mutandis* to the SPC unless the present document contains specific provisions covering the issue(s) concerned.⁵

⁵ At the time of approval of this document, the most recent version of the Council Rules of Procedure was that approved by the Council in June 2023 ([CERN/3388/Rev.4](#)).

Annex 1

CERN Scientific Policy Committee Terms of Reference

Attendance in the four operating modes of the Committee (article 38)

Normal operating mode	Topical operating mode	Restricted operating mode	Closed operating mode
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair and Vice-Chair - Members - Scientific delegates - President of Council - Chair of FC - Director-General - Directors - Department Heads - Any other person invited by the Chair to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair and Vice-Chair - Members - Scientific delegates - President of Council - Chair of FC - Director-General - Any other person invited by the Chair to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair and Vice-Chair - Members - President of Council - Chair of FC - Director-General - Any other person invited by the Chair to attend 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Chair and Vice-Chair - Members - Any other person invited by the Chair to attend
CERN support: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Council secretariat - Legal Counsel (in Normal and for votes in Restricted operating mode) - Minute-writers - Audio-visual technicians 			CERN support: normally none