EuGMS – Special Interest Groups and Task and Finish Groups

General Rules

DEFINITION OF SIGs AND T&FGs

Special interest groups (SIGs) are specific forums which provide their members with an opportunity to share ideas or network on the discussion forum, exchange views and share best practice with their peers and to develop policy positions and scientific papers. Joining a SIG enables the members to: make valuable contacts, gain insight into topical, relevant and challenging issues in specialist areas, further develop their knowledge and apply their additional knowledge and new contacts to drive improvement in the performance of the SIG and the society as a whole.

Task and Finish (T&F) groups may be established by a SIG for the purpose of performing a specific task (i.e. conducting an in-depth review of any service, research, policy or issue that affects the SIG) which falls under the remit of that SIG. Once the evidence has been gathered, the task and finish groups will produce a report to be submitted to the relevant SIG outlining details of the review process, evidence gathered, conclusions and subsequent recommendations. The task will be initiated by a mandate. The mandate should be clearly defined and, if necessary set within parameters. It will trigger the start of the task & finish process and will indicate the subject matter to be considered during the process.

CREATION OF SIGs

Special Interest Groups (SIGs) will be created at the request of a minimum of 5 members from at least 5 different member countries.

Promoters of SIGs will present a written application to EuGMS Academic Board and may contact the Board first for discussion and clarification. This application shall include information about the name and precise aims of the group, the relevance of these aims for the purposes of the EuGMS, the expected method of work, the first expected outcome, the initial chairpersons, and the professional background and experience of its initial and future members, communication among members, planning of meetings and sources of funds. A template to be filled by the proponents of the SIG will be provided by the EuGMS secretariat. A period of up to 6 months will be allowed before confirmation of a SIG.

Once the application receives Academic Board support it will be passed to the Executive Board for approval. The decision will be communicated to the chairpersons of the proposed SIG and to the Full Board.
MEMBERSHIP

There is no upper limit to the number of members of a SIG. However, SIGs shall determine what number of members is optimal to reach its aims, and should take this fact, together with the expertise that new members add to the group, into consideration when accepting new applications to the group. Membership include individuals with relevant scientific interests who are not necessarily associated with national societies which are members of the EuGMS Full Board, but would be expected to join their national society if eligible to do so. At least 60% of the SIG members have to be a EuGMS member. Non-members can join a SIG for a limited period of time, but will need to become a EuGMS member if they wish to continue attending meetings and enjoy wider membership benefits. Representatives from industry will not be members but will be allowed to attend in the role of observers.

Members of SIG accept to:

a) do their best to attend regular actual or virtual meetings of the group.
b) provide their experience and knowledge to promote the aims of the group.
c) participate in the preparation of reports or documents that may arise as a result of the work of the group.
d) regularly participate in tasks that will lead to the fulfilment of the aims of the group.
e) have their name and email publicly posted in the EuGMS website (in the section open only to members) and also in public SIG pages.

Information regarding member's details of specialist practice-based interests, research interests and membership of external groups/committees of interest to the SIG may be added to EUGMS data base. This shall then be used to direct information, questions and queries from the membership.

OFFICERS

The group shall appoint two chairmen. At least one of these must be a member of a EuGMS national society.

The chairpersons will be responsible to:

a) coordinate all the activity of the SIG by convening meetings and regulating the work of its members and the activities of the group.
b) represent the SIG in of the front EuGMS Academic and Executive Board and have the final responsibility for the results of the work of the group.
c) keep records of the activities, meetings, documents or results of the work of the group, and deliver them regularly to the EuGMS secretariat.
d) manage the database of members
e) relate with EuGMS secretariat in all the procedural and logistic aspects of the work of the group.

The two chairpersons shall be elected at a general meeting of the group from members of the group.

Additional officers, e.g. secretary or treasurers, may be elected or appointed by the Chairpersons. In total at least 50% of officers must be members of EuGMS national societies. Officers shall hold office for two years and can be re-elected (chairpersons) or re-appointed (others) for two more years. Exceptions to the rule should be motivated by the candidate(s) and approved by the SIG members. Whenever possible, the election should be made at meetings and congresses of EuGMS. The elections shall be ratified by and shall be accountable to the Academic and the Executive Boards.

MEETINGS

SIGs require, by definition, to maintain regular meetings and contacts of their members for the proper development of their functions. Thus, each group shall hold at least one general meeting in every calendar year.

Annual general meetings will of approve the annual accounts, if applicable, and pass any resolution governing the policy structure and mode of operation of the group. Every two years, the general meeting will serve the purpose of (re)electing the chairpersons and (re)appointing additional officers.

Apart from the general meetings, the groups are expected to have usual contact through electronic means, at a pace that is in accordance to its size, aims and activities. Call for all meetings should be sent to all group members in advance of the expected date of the meeting.

The EuGMS professional congress organization will contact all SIG officials in order to provide a meeting room during the EuGMS Congress.

SIGs are sovereign in the form of organization and conduct of their meetings and activities. However, the chairpersons of each SIG will keep records of these meetings and activities, and regularly inform the Academic Board, so the Academic Director can report regularly to the Executive Board.

ACTIVITIES

SIGs may organize seminars, workshops or symposia to fulfil the aims of the Group. The EuGMS will save slots for SIGs in each congress, so they can present the most relevant output of their activities. The SIG will have to warrant the financial viability of these activities. Should a commercial company support the activity, EuGMS, based on a written agreement,
may ask for a handling fee for the use of its name and reputation and to meet real handling time and expenses.

The group should demonstrate its activities through several outputs: contribution to the scientific program at the EuGMS congress, submissions to EuGMS grants, research projects, publications, etc.

Any resolution, document, report of activity of the group should be approved at a general meeting of the group (either virtual or in person).

Documents produced by the SIG will be an important way of expression of the EuGMS. Thus, all documents or products will have to be finally approved by the Executive Board, after being informed by the Academic Board, before they become available to others in paper or electronic format. Results of the SIG work that may be used or applied outside the group (scientific documents, courses, reports...) will always have to be ratified by the Executive Board.

The SIGs may engage with the Editor-in-Chief of European Geriatric Medicine to publish special issues, usually with appointed Guest Editor. European Geriatric Medicine, as the official EuGMS journal, should be the preferred point for publication of the scientific outputs of SIGs.

FINANCE, ACCOUNTS, REPORTS AND RELATIONSHIP WITH EuGMS

EuGMS will support and promote the SIG by:

a) offering support for group meeting logistics in a way that it is seen egalitarian for all SIGs.
b) helping SIG members in the creation of links with other societies and organizations, including those that may help obtaining financial support for the group,
c) bringing to the SIG all the information that is available to EuGMS and may be linked with the activities of the group.
d) using SIG members as first contacts in any scientific activity that is related to the Group area of knowledge.
e) opening a specific area within the website of EuGMS to the needs of SIG.

SIGs, although self-financing, will receive annual financial support from. This sum is subject to annual review when the overall EuGMS budget is set for the forthcoming year by the Executive Board.
SIG chairpersons will be responsible for the management and recording of the finances of the group (i.e. incoming support, reimbursement of travel fees, etc.) after approval of the EuGMS Financial Directors and the Executive Board in order to ensure transparency and ability to render clear accounts for the Auditors.

The SIG should deliver minimum one output per year.

The SIGs should deliver a short annual report of their activities, which will be approved by the Academic Board.

SIGs are part of the EuGMS and they perform activities relevant to the EuGMS. Members of the groups should consider they are working within this organization in all the activities they perform for the group. All the SIGs will be at all times subject to the EuGMS bylaws, rules and regulations.

Should a conflict of interests between different SIGs arise, the Executive Board will decide on the mechanism for conflict resolution. If conflict persists, the Executive Board will make a final decision.

**TERMINATION**

SIG will be terminated in any of the following circumstances:

a) by a reasoned request of the majority of its members
b) when the activities of the SIG cease to exist for two years, and the Academic Board proposes to the Executive Board the dissolution of the group.
c) when the SIG does not meet the minimum requirements for size, country representation or activities.
d) when it deviates from the objectives that led to its creation or is unable to comply with its aims.

Termination of a SIG will have to be approved by the Executive Board after hearing the Academic Board.

**CREATING OF T&F GROUPS**

Task and Finish (T&F) groups may be created by a SIG for the purpose of perform a specific task which falls under the remit of that SIG. The mandate of a T&F group should ideally contain some guidance on the background to and reasons for the task, the responsible expert, the broad objectives, an outline scope, any constraints, quality expectations and an indication of any deadline.
It will be necessary at the initial stage of the group to ensure that certain prerequisites are in place:

a) Appoint a chair of the group to undertake preliminary planning. This chairperson may or may not be a chair of the SIG.

b) Appoint the members of the group. The numbers should be proportionate to the likely scale and complexity of the task and have a fair representation of the different European countries. They should also have some knowledge and skills related to the area under review. Input from all EuGMS boards, especially the Full Board, may be useful at this point.

c) Ensure that the mandate for the Task & Finish Group is clearly understood and agreed by all members of the group. Any misunderstandings, disagreements or proposed variations or deviations from the mandate must be resolved and/or reported to the initiator of the task.

d) Agree minimum acceptable outcomes in terms of service level and quality.

e) Gather basic information on the area or activity to be investigated, including external sources if necessary.

f) Decide to co-opt other members on to the group from relevant partners, organisations or community groups.

Where applicable, Task & Finish Groups must be self-financing in order to complete a task.

**MEMORANDUMS OF UNDERSTANDING**

EuGMS should use MOUs to establish official partnerships as a formal agreement between two or more parties, excluding commercial companies. MOUs are not legally binding, but they carry a degree of seriousness and mutual respect, stronger than a gentlemen’s agreement. All existing and new MoUs, i.e. contracts with partner societies and organisations regarding a certain domain, shall be formulated in a standardised manner and put under the umbrella of the related SIG.

**PRIVACY POLICY**

The EuGMS is compliant to the EU regulation 2016/679 - General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and has updated its Privacy Policy to reflect the transparency this law requires about personal data collection and usage. The updated privacy policy has taken effect on the 25th of May 2018. Any member of the SIG is invited to go through the updated Privacy Policy to gain a detailed understanding of how we collect, store and process data: http://www.eugms.org/legal-and-ethical-issues/privacy-policy.html

By accepting to become a member of a EuGMS Special Interest Group or Task and Finish Group, individuals accept the EuGMS General Rules on Special Interest Groups and acknowledge and agree to our updated Privacy Policy.
EuGMS, and by extension the IT company that hosts the EuGMS member database, will not under any circumstance share or provide access to the content of the member database to any outside organization or company.