



Charter of the Technical Standing Committee

15 August 2014

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1 Mission

The Technical Standing Committee (TSC) and its mission, purpose, and scope are outlined in Section 10.2 of the Bylaws of the Family History Information Standards Organisation, Inc. (FHISO). In particular, that document tasks the TSC with an oversight role in all of FHISO's technical work.

This document is the Technical Standing Committee Charter mentioned in the Bylaws. The purpose of the charter is to expand on the goals and procedures of the TSC and the technical projects it oversees. Changes to the goals and/or policies may be made by the Board at any time. FHISO Members may suggest changes to the goals, this charter, or the Operations and Policy Manual by contacting the TSC.

1.1 Goals of the Technical Standing Committee

The central goal of the Technical Standing Committee, as with all FHISO committees, is to facilitate the development, documentation, and adoption of standards relating to family history and genealogy information. This overarching goal is achieved through several smaller goals particular to the TSC:

1. Encourage and facilitate member investment in Technical Projects, including individual and organisational participation in Technical Groups.
2. Develop correspondence between the interests of the Board, the various Project Teams, and the general FHISO membership.
3. Control the number of active Technical Projects and the scope of individual Technical Projects to facilitate steady progress without overextension of resources.
4. Facilitate compliance with the principles of open standards development.
5. Steer projects to provide short-term benefit while making progress toward FHISO's longer-term objectives.

1.2 Contacting the Technical Standing Committee

The Technical Standing Committee may be contacted at tsc@fhiso.org. It may also establish and manage other email aliases and web portals as it deems appropriate. It is anticipated that most contact with the TSC will flow through project-specific channels established between the TSC and individual Technical Groups.

2 Technical Standing Committee Policies

2.1 Committee Composition

The TSC consists of the following members:

1. Committee Coordinator, appointed as outlined in the Bylaws. The committee coordinator is a member of the FHISO Board by virtue of having this position.
2. Committee Co-Coordinator, appointed as outlined in the Bylaws. The committee co-coordinator is a member of the FHISO Board by virtue of having this position.
3. Committee Recorder, appointed by the committee coordinator.
4. Each Project Team Coordinator, by virtue of having that position. Note that Exploratory Groups Coordinators are not given a seat on the TSC by virtue of having that position, though members of the TSC are permitted to serve as Exploratory Group Coordinators.
5. Special Members, appointed by the FHISO Board as outlined in the Bylaws of the Family History Information Standards Organisation.

2.2 Meetings, Voting, Minutes, and Reports

Regularly scheduled TSC meetings will be held, usually at least monthly, by means of electronic communication. An email conversation may be considered such a meeting if it meets the other constraints of this section. The scheduling and conduct for these meetings follows the Executive Committee policy on organisational meetings. Special TSC meetings may be called by the TSC Coordinator or by the majority vote of the TSC members.

The TSC maintains meeting minutes and produces reports about its activities in accordance with the Executive Committee policy for Committee Reporting. These minutes and reports are created by the Committee Recorder unless otherwise assigned. Meeting times, minutes, and reports shall be available on a TSC web portal (see section 1.2).

Only members of the TSC may vote on TSC issues. The TSC shall attempt to build full consensus on all issues, but decisions may be made by simple majority vote if stronger consensus cannot be reached in a reasonable time. Votes, including which members abstain and the vote cast by each voting member, shall be recorded in the meeting minutes. See also the note about Transitional Members in section 3.

2.3 Supervisory Roles

The TSC supervises all Exploratory Groups (EG) and Project Teams (PT), collectively referred to as Technical Groups (TG). This includes maintaining a master list of TGs in a publicly accessible location as well as facilitating the work of the various TGs. The TSC should be familiar with all EG and PT policies and ensure that each TG follows those policies.

Changes to PT and EG policies may be initiated by the TSC to better facilitate Technical Project operations provided such changes continue to follow the principles of open standards and do not otherwise violate the goals outlined in section 2.

The TSC is also responsible for helping various TGs coordinate their efforts and for ensuring that each has sufficient resources to make steady progress. This may involve suspending or dissolving some Project Teams or Exploratory Groups to avoid over-extending resources and to help focus standards development. Care should be taken that such suspensions and dissolutions do not violate the principles of non-discriminatory and democratic standards development.

2.4 Budget and Administration

The committee's budget is subject to Board approval. Committee expenditures are limited to those items included in the approved budget or separately authorised by the Treasurer.

The committee may appoint additional individuals to assist in TSC operation, such as maintaining the TSC web portal, running general membership voting on candidate standards, or other administrative activities as circumstances dictate. However, the TSC does not have the ability to appoint new voting members to the TSC.

3 Call for Paper Submissions

The TSC shall manage the FHISO's Call for Paper Submissions (CFPS). The CFPS exists to allow the FHISO members and the wider community to make technical proposals, suggest functional requirements, or otherwise comment of the technical work of the TSC and its Technical Groups. Papers submitted to the CFPS shall be made publicly available.

Authors contributing to the CFPS must agree to abide by the FHISO Code of Conduct. Authors who are not members of the FHISO shall be deemed Associates of the FHISO per Article 5 of the Bylaws.

The TSC may assign a CFPS paper to a Technical Group for consideration, who may produce a CFPS Response for approval by the TSC. The TSC can also produce CFPS Responses directly.

Once approved, a CFPS Response shall be communicated to the author of the CFPS paper and made public. The TSC may then choose to mark the CFPS paper as closed if the CFPS Responses has addressed all issues and proposals raised in the CFPS paper, and if TSC does not anticipate the need for any further response to the CFPS paper.

4 General Policies for Technical Groups

The day-to-day work in Technical Groups (being both Exploratory Groups and Project Teams) and in the TSC itself shall be consensus-based as assessed by each group's coordinator. Voting will only be used to resolve otherwise unsolvable conflicts within a reasonable time, and in last stages of the work where the results are approved.

All technical group work is governed by Executive Committee policies. These are expected to include at least (1) dispute resolution and appeals policies; (2) policies regarding the scheduling and conduct of meetings; (3) a style guide. Other policies may be enacted as Executive Committee deems appropriate. In cases where a FHISO-wide policy is not present, the TSC may institute interim policies at its own discretion.

Consensus building takes time. A member that joins the TSC or an existing TG, or that returns to activity in one of these groups after missing one month of meetings and at least two consecutive ballots of that group, is considered to be a Transitional Member of that group. Transitional Members become full members after being present for two ballots or participating fully for a period of one month, whichever comes first. The votes of Transitional Members are not counted when determining consensus.

During balloting, a voting or transitional member may state that they are abstaining from casting a vote. For the purposes of transitional status, actively abstaining is the same as casting a vote.

Additional policies are given in the TSC Operations and Policy Manual.

5 Additional Policies and Documents

The TSC shall develop a Policy on the Standard Development Process for approval by the Board as part of the Technical Standing Committee Operations and Policy Manual. Project Team work must be governed by that document, and PTs may not be formed before it is approved. Work may begin in Exploratory Groups before the production of this document.

The TSC may publish additional policy documents and style guides as circumstances dictate. If such additional documents conflict with policies or documents produced by the Executive Committee, the Executive Committee's documents supersede those of the TSC.