

Memorandum of Understanding for ERCIM Working Groups

1. Purpose

The purpose of an ERCIM Working Group (WG) is to *build and maintain a network of ERCIM researchers* in a particular scientific field. A working group is open to anyone who wishes to participate in the working group. The participation of a non-ERCIM person in a WG must be approved by the chair of that WG.

2. WG Activities

The activities of a working group can be subdivided into four areas: workshops, project proposals, mobility and fellows, and WG web page maintenance.

2.1 Workshops

It is expected that each working group organises at least one workshop each year. These workshops are open to any researcher in the field. They should primarily be organised aligning with the half-year ERCIM meetings. However, it is also acceptable to organise ERCIM workshops in connection with other venues, eg a specific conference normally attended by most workers in the field. Some financial support for organising a workshop can be provided by ERCIM, as described below in 3.1. In addition, travel support is given to ERCIM researchers by their institutes to participate in these workshops, particularly when they align with the ERCIM meetings.

2.2 Project Proposals

A major activity of any ERCIM working group is to search actively for project funding that crosses national borders. To be eligible for the financial support described below in 3.1, the objective of a related meeting has to be the preparation of a project proposal, where at least three ERCIM member institutes participate as associate partners to the ERCIM-EEIG, and the ERCIM-EEIG itself participates either as partner or coordinator.

Participants in the proposal preparation have to inform the chairman of the working group, whether (to the best of their knowledge) any proposal with similar content, with their involvement or the involvement of any of the partners in the consortium, is being submitted to an EU research program.

2.3 Mobility and Fellows

A working group is also the focus of internal mobility within ERCIM. ERCIM institutes have reserved resources to stimulate mobility, enabling work on collaborative research projects at other institutes for periods from 1 to 6 months. Working Groups will also be invited to identify topics of interest to be included in the half-year calls published for the ERCIM Fellowship Programme, and as a consequence can participate in this programme by hosting a fellow.

2.4 WG Web Page Maintenance

Finally, the WG leader maintains the web page accessible via the ERCIM server with a synopsis of its charter, members, and upcoming events.

3. Duties and Rights of WGs

3.1 General Activities

Each working group is expected to take care of the general activities described above.

3.2 Financial Support

Each working group receives support in the form of initial seed money, on application to the ERCIM Executive Committee, to set up a first workshop. After establishment, ERCIM supports the WG financially. Currently, the support is up to 2000 euros to set up the first workshop, with a similar amount in the form of an annual grant. This support is given by the ERCIM Office to the chairman of the working group or a person designated by the chairman, and can be used to cover costs caused by:

- travel and subsistence for the chairman or the designated person, for up to two ERCIM workshops or project proposal meetings (cf 2.2 above) that take place in Europe each year,
- travel and subsistence for invited speakers at ERCIM workshops, and
- organisational costs of ERCIM workshops.

3.3 Right for Title "ERCIM"

Each working group has the right to be called an "ERCIM WG".

3.4 ERCIM WG Award

Each working group has the right to apply for an ERCIM Working Group Award, whenever it is announced. To be eligible for this award, Working Groups must produce an annual report by the end of January. Currently the annual award is 20000 euros.

3.5 Reporting

Each working group has to report to the Executive Committee on their activities twice per year (in May and October). The Executive Committee forwards the reports (in abbreviated form) to the Board of Directors.

4. WG Formation

Any ERCIM institute can suggest to the ERCIM Executive Committee that a WG be formed on a particular topic. Normally a short case on the group's scientific goals and plans, including a tentative list of its members, will be circulated to Executive Committee, who then ask within their own institutes for any further interest in the topic. If at least 3 ERCIM members support it and are willing to participate in the new working group, then the application is considered by the Executive Committee, which on approval then recommends to the Board of Directors

that the WG be set up. A list of ERCIM member institutes participating in the working group is appended to the minutes of the Board of Directors meeting that approved its establishment. Note that there is no requirement that institutes belong to any WG; in addition, membership of the WG by any ERCIM institute may begin at any time at the ERCIM institute's discretion.

5. WG Chair

By default the ERCIM institute which raised the interest in a new WG topic takes the initiative and calls for a first meeting. It also takes the chair of that working group at least until the first meeting. The (interim) chair can decide to hold a kick-off meeting before the working group is officially approved by the Board of Directors, for example to find out whether there is sufficient common interest for a particular research theme under the general topic. However, the WG is considered an ERCIM WG only after the Board of Directors approves the request by the (interim) chair or his/her institute. If the initiating institute agrees to it, then the interim chair can be taken by another institute who volunteers to undertake the duties.

The chair of a working group will be decided by the members of that working group. It is anticipated that normally the initiating institute takes the chair, but this is not mandatory. However, if the working group wants to select a chair from a non-ERCIM institute, then the approval of the Board of Directors is necessary.

If there is insufficient activity from a working group, then the Board of Directors or the Executive Committee can decide to replace the chair in order to revive the working group.

6. WG Closure

A working group can cease being designated an ERCIM working group and therefore lose the benefits associated with its official recognition. This can occur if:

- (a) the working group so decides and notifies the Board of Directors, or
- (b) fewer than 3 ERCIM members remain involved in the activity of the working group, or
- (c) the Board of Directors officially decides that there is not sufficient activity within the working group (eg a report to the Board of Directors missing for the second time, or no workshops organised during two consecutive years)

19 December 2000