

## COMCIFS TERMS OF REFERENCE

Approved by COMCIFS 2005-11-28

Approved by EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE of IUCr 2006-01-27

### I. THE PURPOSE OF COMCIFS

The purpose of COMCIFS is to maintain on behalf of the International Union of Crystallography (IUCr) the integrity of the Crystallographic Information Framework (CIF) based on machine-readable compilations of names and attribute sets for individual data items (CIF dictionaries) and software implementations such as the Crystallographic Information File [Hall, Allen & Brown (1991). *Acta Cryst.* A47, 655–685 and subsequently documented in *International Tables for Crystallography* (2005). Vol. G. *Definition and exchange of crystallographic data*, 1st ed. Berlin: Springer]; and to establish such other standards as are necessary to ensure that electronic archives of crystallographic information can be held in a form that can be accessed and used by any discipline that may require this information.

This purpose includes, but is not limited to, the following activities.

1. To establish policies defining the use of the Crystallographic Information Framework (CIF).
2. To receive and examine all proposed amendments and extensions to the CIF standard. In particular, to ratify proposed data names and definitions, to ensure that the data structures conform to the basic CIF specifications, and to ensure that the definitions of data items are clear and unambiguous and conform to accepted IUCr usage.
3. To ensure that all accepted amendments and extensions to the CIF standard are announced in an appropriate publication or news item in an IUCr publication.
4. To ensure that adequate current documentation of the CIF standard is available to potential users.
5. To coordinate with related disciplines to ensure the maximum reuse of CIF dictionary content, to facilitate the integration of crystallographic information with related disciplines, and to facilitate the use of crystallographic data and dictionaries by software applications.
6. To manage the IUCr copyright of CIF dictionaries.

### II. MEMBERSHIP OF COMCIFS

#### 1. Voting members

COMCIFS should consist of about 6 voting members appointed by the Executive Committee of the IUCr on the recommendation of COMCIFS. Membership would normally be for a three year renewable term. A membership slate will be presented to the Executive Committee of the IUCr for approval following each IUCr Congress. Voting members will be knowledgeable in the area of electronic manipulation of information and representative of the various fields of crystallography.

COMCIFS will have a chair and secretary appointed by the Executive Committee. The secretary need not be a voting member.

## 2. Observers

Observers are individuals nominated by and representing other organisations, or individuals wishing to participate in, or be aware of, COMCIFS business. They will receive all COMCIFS mailings and are free to comment on any COMCIFS business. Observers will have no vote. Observers are appointed at the discretion of the chair of COMCIFS. There is no limit to the number of observers that may be appointed.

## III. ORGANISATION OF COMCIFS

1. COMCIFS is accountable to the Executive Committee of the IUCr and reports through the Executive Secretary.

## 2. Dictionary Maintenance Groups

For each approved CIF dictionary, COMCIFS will appoint a Dictionary Maintenance Group (DMG) to make recommendations on revisions to the dictionary. The DMG members will be appointed by COMCIFS. The groups will establish their own mode of operation, but will be expected to consult widely with the community served by the dictionary as well as coordinate their proposals with other Dictionary Maintenance Groups. Any proposed changes or additions to dictionaries will be circulated for comment prior to a final review by COMCIFS. All dictionaries and revisions to dictionaries only become official on formal approval by COMCIFS. The Dictionary Maintenance Groups will refer, for COMCIFS approval, any matters that involve a change in current COMCIFS policy.

## 3. Working Groups

Working Groups may be established by the Chair to report to COMCIFS on particular matters, including (but not limited to) the production of draft dictionaries in areas not currently covered by CIF dictionaries. The mandate of a working group ends when its report has been received by COMCIFS.

## 4. COMCIFS Policy

Decisions of the DMGs and Working Groups do not become COMCIFS policy until approved by COMCIFS.