

PROPOSED TERMS OF REFERENCE 2005-10-03

(All proposed changes to the COMCIFS Terms of Reference are shown in blue, the text of the original Terms is shown in black.)

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 in both printed and machine-readable forms.
5. To coordinate with other organisations proposing CIF related dictionaries using STAR files or compatible representations to ensure maximum compatibility between Crystallographic Information Files and related file structures.
6. To coordinate with other crystallographic organisations proposing non-CIF standards to ensure maximum compatibility.
7. To coordinate with writers of software intended to read and write data compatible with CIF.
8. To ensure that those using CIF are aware of its ownership by the IUCr and the conditions under which it may be used.
9. To establish standards in related dictionaries and software necessary to ensure the integrity of CIF.

10. To ensure that archives conforming to CIF can be made available in formats accessible to users in related fields.

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. Membership of each DMG will be approved 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 and to refer back to COMCIFS 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.