



INTERNATIONAL SPINAL CORD SOCIETY

EXTERNAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

TERMS OF REFERENCE

REPORTS TO	ISCoS Executive
REPORTER	Chairperson
CHAIRPERSON	To be appointed by President
TERM OF OFFICE:	3 (+3) years for Chair / 4 years for Members
ENDORSED BY	ISCoS ERC & ISCoS Executive DATE 2017
NEXT REVIEW	October 2019

1. BACKGROUND

At the ISCoS Annual Scientific Meeting in September 2016, the External Relations Committee (ERC) expanded its roles with creation of up to four subcommittees, being renamed accordingly. Prior to this, the ERC had been known as the World Health Organisation (WHO) Liaison Committee, reflecting the original and primary focus of this committee. However, over the previous three years, alongside the maturing relationship with the WHO, various changes and developments occurring in relations with other external societies, professional associations, networks and affiliated societies led to the reorganisation of this committee. The standing Disaster Committee and WHO-Liaison Committee were integrated as subcommittees into the ERC, along with the recommended formation of separate new subcommittees for External Societies (such as Handicap International and International Society of Physical & Rehabilitation Medicine) and ISCoS Affiliated Societies.

2. PURPOSE

The External Relations Committee will be responsible for engaging with key organisations, including WHO, other professional societies, associations and regional networks, governments and other partners to accomplish the Society's mission to advise, promote and support access to high quality care, education, prevention, research and innovation for persons with spinal cord injury (SCI). It is essential for ISCoS to increase its international presence and profile; develop, strengthen and leverage its collaborative relationships with external organisations; and identify and communicate strategic priorities to its committees, special interest groups, and affiliated societies and networks. The ERC will inform and advise the President and Executive Council on matters within the remit of the committee and its subcommittees.

3. FUNCTIONS

The ERC and its subcommittees have the following functions:

- 3.1** Promote close working relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), and in particular its Department of Disability and Rehabilitation (DAR), supporting the implementation of agreed collaborative work plan.
- 3.2** Develop and promote close working relations with other non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and professional societies to further the common goals of ISCoS, the WHO and NGOs in official relations for the prevention, acute care and rehabilitation, and long-term community integration, care and support of people with SCI.
- 3.3** Work in collaboration globally to support sudden-onset humanitarian disaster planning, preparedness, response and recovery for persons sustaining SCI, including those in low resource settings.
- 3.4** Collaborate purposefully with relevant ISCoS committees (eg. Education, Prevention, Scientific) to identify areas where shared expertise, resources, concurrences of approach and action plans will benefit the Society and its members.
- 3.5** Promote close working relations and partner with affiliated societies and regional networks to develop and/or strengthen services, care and supports for people with SCI.
- 3.6** Facilitate effective communication between ISCoS committees, affiliated societies and regional networks for coordination of activities that support global or regional SCI-related development and capacity-building.
- 3.7** Provide advice and recommendations to the President, Executive Committee and ISCoS Council in respect to global SCI-related policy, advocacy, leadership and strategic partnership issues.
- 3.8** Develop an annual work plan, aligned to strategic goals and objectives of ISCoS.

4. MEMBERSHIP

The External Relations Committee will be comprised of an appointed Chair, Vice Chair, Ex officio members from ISCoS, including the President, Immediate Past President, Chairs (or designated liaisons) of the Education Committee and Prevention Committee, and other external non-government organisations in official relations, with up to ten (10) general members. General membership will include one member each from the Subcommittees, as well as members providing global coverage of affiliated societies, networks and WHO regions. Standing subcommittees will include WHO-Liaison, Disaster External Societies and Affiliated Societies in the first instance. Advisory members may be invited to serve on the committee.

4.1 Chair:

- A maximum of two terms, each of three years.

- Appointed provisionally by ISCoS President after the vacancy or impending vacancy has been advertised among ISCoS members at least three months before.
- This position should be endorsed by the membership at the next AGM.
- A Vice Chair may be appointed from amongst the Committee members to deputise in the role of Chair as necessary.
- Succession planning will be undertaken in the last year of final term.

4.2 General members x10:

- Four-year term.
- These positions should be advertised to all members of ISCoS at least three months prior to appointment.
- The appointments would be on the recommendation of the Chair acting on advice from ERC members and endorsed by the membership at the next AGM.
- Other advisory members may be appointed at the discretion of the Chair for specific expertise or tasks. They shall only be able to vote on matters related to the reason for their appointment or otherwise at the discretion of Committee members.

4.3 Chair of Subcommittees:

- Appointed by the Chair of the External Relations Committee on the recommendation of its Committee members.
- The Chair will be appointed according to the relevant expertise and skills that they bring to the particular Subcommittee role to which they are appointed.
- Length of the appointment will be at the discretion of the ERC Chair.
- Subcommittees may be formed and dissolved as required on the recommendation of the members of the ERC.

Current membership list is included in [Appendix 1](#).

5. RESPONSIBILITIES OF MEMBERS

- To attend 75% of the meetings in person, by teleconference and correspondence.
- To complete actions as per noted responsibility within the nominated timeframe.
- To share and communicate information to and from the stakeholder group they represent.
- To seek advice from colleagues, stakeholder groups they represent (eg. affiliated societies, regional networks) and other relevant external parties as required to ensure the deliberations and determinations of the Committee/subcommittee reflect stakeholders' needs and opinions.
- To communicate opportunities for strategic development and partnerships within and external to the Committee as appropriate.
- To support and promote achievement of the ERC work plan initiatives.

6. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The External Relations Committee is expected to meet four times per year (including at the ASM), with the frequency of subcommittee meetings to be determined on need, but at least twice per year.

7. METHOD OF EVALUATION

- The performance of the ERC and subcommittees will be measured by progress made against annual work plan.
- Functioning and performance of the Committee will also be evaluated by on line self-assessment survey of satisfaction amongst members.
- Second-yearly review by the ERC Terms of Reference.
- Second-yearly review of the membership.

8. QUORUM

Half membership plus one.

If key business decisions or resolutions are required and a quorum is not present at a meeting, members present will vote and those entitled to vote but who are not present will be sent information by email after the meeting, summarising discussions and preliminary decision/s taken by those present, and requested to provide their feedback/confirm decision within 10 days.

9. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

If a member is deemed to have a real or perceived conflict of interest in a matter that is being considered at a meeting, he/she will be excused from discussions and deliberations on the issue.

10. MINUTES

- Minutes and agreed actions will be recorded by a member of the Committee/subcommittee and may be undertaken on a rotational basis.
- Minutes will be distributed to all members of the Committee/subcommittee within a month of the meeting.
- Agenda will be distributed to all members no later than one week before the next Committee/subcommittee meeting.

11. ACCOUNTABILITY

Each subcommittee reports through the External Relations Committee to ISCoS Executive.

APPENDIX 1

The External Relations Committee (ERC) is constituted initially with membership to include:

Chair of ERC / Chairs of subcommittees

- Professor James Middleton (Chair and WHO-Liaison)
- Professor Shinsuke Katoh (Chair of Disaster Subcommittee; also Ex officio as ISCoS Honorary Secretary)
- A/Professor Colleen O'Connell (Chair of External Societies Subcommittee and ISPRM-Liaison representative from ISCoS, being a current member of both ISCoS Disaster Subcommittee and ISPRM CRDR)

Regional representatives - covering affiliated societies, networks and WHO regions

- Dr Rainer Abel (Europe)
- Dr Susan Charlifue (North America)
- Professor Apichana Kovindha (South East Asia, includes ASCoN)
- Professor Federico Montero (Latin America and the Caribbean)
- Dr Ali Otom (North Africa / Eastern Mediterranean)
- Professor Jianjun Li (Western Pacific)
- Dr Raj Singhal (South Pacific)
- Dr Francois Theron (Sub-Saharan Africa, includes AfSCIN)

Note: It is intended that the affiliated societies within each of the geographical regions (which closely approximate the 6 WHO Regions) will be represented in the new ERC structure through a regional subcommittee, which will meet by teleconference twice per year and be chaired by the ERC representative for that region.

Ex officio Members (ISCoS)

- ISCoS President
- Chair, ISCoS Education Committee
- Chair, ISCoS Prevention Committee

Ex officio Members (NGOs who have MoU with ISCoS)

- Professor Jianan Li (ISCoS-Liaison from ISPRM)
- Eric Weerts (HI-Liaison, Disaster Subcommittee and SCI Minimum Standards for EMT)