European Print Initiatives Collaboration (EPICo) Terms of Reference

The vision of EPICo is to support the safeguarding of printed research collections across Europe and ensuring they are preserved in a reliable and sustainable way, supporting researchers both now and in the future.

The mission of EPICo is to facilitate shared print library collaborations across Europe by providing a forum for European research libraries (both national and academic) to share their collective expertise on storage, preservation, descriptive metadata and sustainability.

1. Membership

Membership of EPICo is by institution or regional/national collaborations. All EPICo Members are listed on the EPICo website (https://epico-libraries.eu/).

The following eligibility criteria must be met for membership of EPICo. Members must:
- have a main base in Europe
- focus on preservation of printed collections, mainly monographs and/or journals
- nominate at least one representative to the EPICo Core group
- agree to active participation in collaborative activities and contribute to EPICo planning

If a member institution wishes to leave EPICo and resign its membership, the relevant Core Group member should send written notice of the intention to leave to the EPICo Chair no later than 14 days before the next General Meeting.

2. EPICo Core Group

The EPICo Core Group consists of at least one representative from each member. The representative(s) is decided by each institution individually and to manage continuity and succession. All Core Group representatives are listed on the EPICo website (https://epico-libraries.eu/). In exceptional cases individuals with specialist knowledge or expertise may be invited to join the Core Group (however without voting rights).

Core group members are expected to actively participate in Core group meetings and in planning and delivery of collaborative work. All Core Group members have access to the collaborative space Stackfield.

Tasks of the Core group:

- to ensure the smooth collaboration of EPICo, including making changes and updating the Terms of reference
- to draft the EPICo 2-year plan. The plan states the prioritized areas of work for the coming years, in order to work towards the EPICo vision. The plan is decided at the General Meeting.
- to initiate new SIGs based upon suggestions from the members
- to set and update the EPICo communication plan (including the location of the upcoming conference, held every other year)
- to agree to and induct new members to the organisation

The EPICo Core Group normally meets four to six times a year, including one annual General meeting. Meetings are usually via online meetings with at least one 'face to face' meeting per year.

EPICo Core Group meetings are managed by the Chair, in consultation with the Deputy Chair. All decisions made at Core Group meetings are by majority vote. If a representative is unable to attend a meeting, they can send a substitute or proxy who will be authorized to vote on behalf of the institution. For any Core Group meeting to be quorate, at least one-third of all Core Group members must be present. Should a meeting take place with fewer Core Group members, any decisions will be ratified at the next quorate meeting or by majority email. Anything that requires a vote will be included in the agenda and shared at least one week in advance of a meeting for Core Group members' awareness. Meetings will be documented and minutes are made available on the shared platform Stackfield.

The General meeting is held in conjunction with the conference when possible. At the General meeting, the Core Group votes on the role of Chair and Deputy Chair, updates and decides on the EPICo 2-year plan and makes a decision of the upcoming conference location.

3. Roles and Elections

Chair
The Chair is elected by Core Group representatives (one vote per institutional member), serving a two year term of office.

Tasks for the Chair include:
- preparing and hosting Core Group meetings, including the General meeting, in consultation with the Deputy Chair
- inviting expressions of interest for the role as Chair and Deputy Chair, and conducting the elections
- facilitating the handover process to the incoming Chair
- serving as the main external contact for EPICO-related activity

Deputy Chair
The Deputy Chair is elected by Core Group representatives (one vote per institutional member), serving a two year term of office. The Deputy Chair assists the Chair with the work of EPICo and will deputise as required, including chairing meetings if the Chair is unable to attend.

Election procedure
The term of office begins at the General meeting held in conjunction with the conference.

At least three months before the end of the term of office, the Chair invites expressions of interest from the Core Group for the role as Chair and Deputy Chair. Individuals express their interest in writing directly to the Chair. In the case that more than one representative puts themselves forward, a ballot will be organised by the Chair, with each institutional member having one vote. Elections take place at the General Meeting with a view to taking up the role immediately after the meeting. Voting can be made in writing in advance to the Chair if the member cannot participate at the General meeting.

4. EPICo Functional Groups

EPICo has the following functional groups:

- Conference planning
  A designated Core Group representative will work with the Conference planning team to define, plan and deliver all aspects of the conference in collaboration with the local host institution. The local host institution is responsible for managing the budget in relation to the conference.
- Communication and web page updates

Functional groups are open to Core Group representatives, external experts and support staff. Other functional groups may be installed by the Core Group.

5. EPICo Special Interest Groups (SIGs)

EPICo runs Special Interest Groups (SIGs), set up to allow members to share knowledge, skills and experience on specific issues. SIGs may run for a defined period of time, as a 'task and finish' group, or may be a permanent group, looking to work together on shared projects across a specific topic.

SIGs plan their work to align with the EPICo vision and mission. All SIGs are invited to provide short updates at the Core Group meetings, outlining activities and future plans.

SIGs are open to Core Group representatives and external experts. The SIG coordinators are nominated and elected by the SIG. All participants in SIGs have access to Stackfield. For a list of current, active SIGs, see the website (https://epico-libraries.eu/).

6. Communications

EPICo has a Communications Plan that involves the following regular activities:
- EPICo website (https://epico-libraries.eu/)
- EPICo Conference (the EPICo / Kuopio conference)

7. Financial Regulation

EPICo does not have any common funds or finances. There are no membership costs or shared expenses. EPICo does not reimburse member expenses for travel etc. to meetings or conferences.

Membership and/or adoption of advice, learning and experience is at the discretion of the individual member. EPICo does not take any responsibility as a result of negative impact arising from involvement.

8. Dissolution of EPICo

EPICo will continue to operate as a going concern until it is no longer felt to offer value to its members. If at such time, there are less than four EPICo institutional members, it will dissolve. At the closure, any archiving of documents or other assets will be agreed by the remaining group.