

Business Practice Working Group

Terms of Reference and *modus operandi*



Background

The AGS Byelaws were totally rewritten and adopted by the Membership of the Association in late 2015 and will be amended in 2019. The Byelaws define, in general terms, the identification, composition and membership, duties and line of responsibility of the Working Groups, and outline the broad nature of their activities. In accordance with good business practice, the AGS Chair requires each Working Group to write its own Terms of Reference and *modus operandi* for approval by Senate.

The Byelaws further specify that the working groups will be given a brief by the AGS Chair. In support of the AGS Chair, the Business Practice Working Group (BPWG) has identified its proposed Activities for the current year, which are deemed to constitute the brief. The current year's Activities follow the Terms of Reference and *modus operandi* in this document, which has been drafted by its current Leader and agreed by its members, for approval by the AGS Chair and Executive Committee (nee Senate).

The Aims of the Business Practice Working Group

To promote business excellence and ethical standards in the geotechnical & geoenvironmental engineering professions for the public good. These aims are achieved through:

- a) The BPWG keeping under scrutiny the business practice of the industry and how that impacts on Members;
- b) promotion of the Association to the wider industry;
- c) continuously reviewing the business practice of the Association and how it can be improved; and
- d) managing the governance of the Association on behalf of the AGS Officers.

Terms of Reference

1 Identification

The BPWG is, until such times as a re-arrangement of the Association takes place, one of the Standing Working Groups. These permanent Working Groups have a long-term brief.

The second type of Working Group (WG) is an *ad hoc* Working Group which has a short-term brief to address a specific task or set of tasks over a limited time. It is likely that such temporary WGs will be attached to one or other of the Standing WGs, where its specific task comes within the purview of the latter. An instance of this arrangement is the *ad hoc* AGS Strategy Review Panel, which is hosted by the BPWG.

2 Composition and Membership [these paras apply to the BPWG – all other WGs have their own]

In common with all working groups, the BPWG consists of the WG Leader who shall be the Chair-Elect or if a Chair-Elect is not in place a person appointed from the Executive Committee, and who is supported by the AGS Officers, an appropriate number of Members of the Association, supplemented as necessary, by individuals from the wider industry, such that the WG can function efficiently and effectively.

Most members of the BPWG are appointed directly by the Working Group Leader from among the Practitioners within the Membership, to serve for a year at a time. They may be appointed for further terms.

The WG Leader will review the membership of his or her WG directly after the AGM – usually in March or April each year. At this review, those who have not significantly contributed to the work of the WG over the past year will be retired and new members will be sought to replace them.

In addition to those members of the WG who are appointed by the WG Leader, Members of the Association who wish to serve on any of the WGs may inform the Administrator of their interest, which will, in turn, be conveyed to the WG Leader for his or her decision to accept or decline.

There is no fixed number of members of the BPWG, but it would not normally exceed, say 20 members, unless the creation of a new *ad hoc* WG, for example, requires differing talents or areas of knowledge. Other WGs may have different optimum membership numbers.

BPWG Terms of Reference & *modus operandi*

3 Duties

The duties of the BPWG (and all other WGs) are:

- i) to fulfil the brief given to it by the AGS Chair, via its WG Leader, and
- ii) to communicate and engage with the Membership of the Association and the wider industry on matters relating to their Working Group.

The members the BPWG and all WGs and their various sub-committees are expected to participate actively and contribute to the work of their WG. Thus, membership of a WG is not a virtual sinecure – it will not be sufficient merely to be present at meetings – everybody should expect to have tasks assigned to them, for completion outside the meetings.

4 Line of Responsibility

All Standing WGs report to the Executive Committee via their WG Leader.

Modus operandi

- 1 The Byelaws require that each WG shall arrange to meet, in person, at least two times annually, and that the Administrator shall consult with the WG Leader and choose the location, date and time. The Administrator will communicate this with the members of the Working Group at least 30 days prior to the meeting. However, for the time being and until other arrangements are put in place, the BPWG will continue to meet in person in the morning of the same day that the Executive Committee will be meeting in the afternoon. At present this entails meeting in central London four times each year.
- 2 In the interval between physical meetings, the WG members will continue to communicate with each other by whatever means and at such frequency that will enable them to conduct their business efficiently. The WG Leader will co-ordinate such communication, with the assistance of the Administrator.
- 3 The Byelaws specify that the Leader of the BPWG (and Leaders of all other WGs) will make the decisions of their WG, having considered the arguments and advice given to them by the members of the Group.
- 4 Working with the Administrator, the BPWG Leader will formulate and finalise the agenda for all of the BPWG's meetings.
- 5 Each member of the BPWG who has an action from the previous meeting against their name, or a member who wishes to raise a substantial issue, shall provide a brief paper on their subject to the Administrator. These papers must be submitted in accordance with the published timetable of actions referred to in item 8, such that they can be issued with the Agenda for the meeting. The former practice of providing *ad hoc* verbal reports at meetings is now actively discouraged.
- 6 In an effort to streamline the proceedings of meetings, all papers will be taken as read and, if for information only, will be annotated thus and will not be discussed further in the meeting. Self-evidently, this does not apply to papers for further discussion or matters for decision.
- 7 The WG Leader shall arrange with the Administrator to organise, distribute and make available the records of all activities of the Working Group, as appropriate.
- 8 When the finalised record of a meeting is distributed to the WG members, it will, as a matter of routine, be accompanied by a list of actions arising from the meeting for members to progress, together with a timetable for those actions leading up to the next meeting.

BPWG Terms of Reference & *modus operandi*

Activities for the Current Year

- 1 To alleviate the AGS Chair's burden, the BPWG Leader will draft an outline programme of work or list of activities for the current year. This draft will be discussed with the AGS Chair and agreement reached on the final listing, after which the information will be conveyed to the BPWG members. There will be an opportunity for the WG members to see and add other business to the programme before it is finalised.
- 2 The Byelaws state that 'The Working Groups shall undertake such activities as enable them to fulfil their duties' and that the WG Leader will co-ordinate these activities, with the assistance of the Administrator.
- 3 The currently known activities of the BPWG for 2019-20 are listed below. They have already been seen by the WG members and agreed with the AGS Chair. Inevitably, there will be other activities added through the year, as they arise.

- **Strategic Review**
 - Monitor AGS Strategy
 - Create and Agree Marketing & Business Plans
- **Finance**
 - Budget Review
 - Monitor against Business Strategy
- **Governance**
 - Monitor industry practice
 - Review Complaints – Industry / Members
- **Marketing**
 - Manage the Marketing Plan
 - Review and Manage Marketing Activities
 - Annual Member's Day
 - Events/Seminars
 - AGS Magazine
 - Publications
 - Media / Social Media
 - Website
- **Membership**
 - Monitor against Business and Marketing Plans
 - Annual Review of Fee Structure
- **Hosting Industry Joint Projects**
 - Quality of Ground Investigation
 - Procurement in Ground Investigation
- **Liaison with Overseas Affiliates**

Julian Lovell ~ 22/01/2019
AGS BPWG Leader