

REAL Test Methods Working Group (TMWG)

Terms of Reference

1. GENERAL

- 1.1 The function of the TMWG is to support REAL in maintaining and developing test methods for quality assessment of organic materials.
- 1.2 REAL test methods used under, for example, Compost Certification Scheme (CCS) and Biofertiliser Certification Scheme (BCS) may be reviewed by the TMWG following stakeholder feedback, technological and scientific advancements, and evolving regulatory landscape. An existing test method may then be updated by the TMWG based on evidence or scientific data.
- 1.3 In addition to updating existing REAL test methods, the TMWG may develop new test methods. For example, following research carried out by a REAL Research Hub funded project(s).
- 1.4 Where evidence is lacking to make changes to a test method the TMWG may develop proposals to the REAL Research Hub for projects to generate evidence for change.
- 1.5 The TMWG will be chaired by an individual independent from direct involvement in the organics recycling sector.
- 1.6 The TMWG will comprise representatives from core relevant stakeholders, including:
 - (a) REAL
 - (b) Approved Laboratories
 - (c) Environmental Regulators
- 1.7 REAL will provide secretariat function to the TMWG including scheduling meetings, circulating agendas and papers in advance of meetings, minute taking and circulating minutes/actions to TMWG members after meetings.
- 1.8 REAL will provide brief updates of TMWG work to the relevant stakeholder groups, for example BCS/CCS Technical Advisory Committee.
- 1.9 All TMWG members have an obligation to ensure confidentiality of meeting discussions and shared information/documents.

2. TMWG PROJECTS

- 2.1 The TMWG will meet when a project has been identified and broadly scoped by REAL in the Project Plan.
- 2.2 The Project Plan will detail the method background, current test method issues (if applicable), indicative project timeline and anticipated outcomes of the project.

- 2.3 For a project assessing/updating an existing specific test method, or developing a new test method, the above TMWG core membership will be supplemented with an expert scientist(s)/researcher(s). REAL will identify and approach subject expert(s) with support from TMWG members as necessary.
- 2.4 The timescale of individual projects will vary depending on the number and type of technical changes to be considered for an existing test method or the complexity of a new test method.
- 2.5 The TMWG will aim to undertake one project in a 12-month period. A typical project is expected to last approximately six months with TMWG members committing to attend three meetings.
- 2.6 The technical author role will generally be undertaken by REAL, but another TMWG member may be appointed in certain cases¹ by REAL. With REAL predominantly taking the technical author role time commitment of non-REAL TMWG members outside of meetings will be minimised.
- 2.7 A TMWG project meeting will be quorate when, in addition to the independent chair and REAL roles/members, one approved laboratory representative and one environmental regulator are present.
- 2.8 An initial TMWG project meeting will be held face-to-face to help embed the project team. Subsequent project meetings will be held online or hybrid.
- 2.9 Papers and a meeting agenda will be circulated at least one week in advance of any meeting.

3. DECISION MAKING

- 3.1 Decisions will be made through consensus whenever possible.
- 3.2 The Chair will encourage investigation and discussion aimed at finding solutions acceptable to all members, even if not every member's first choice.
- 3.3 If consensus cannot be achieved, where appropriate, the Chair will determine the outcome based on a majority vote among core members.
- 3.4 Decisions made by the TMWG will be treated as formal recommendations to REAL, which will determine appropriate measures for their implementation.

4. CONFLICT OF INTEREST

- 4.1 TMWG members must declare any financial or other interests that could give rise to a conflict of interest.
- 4.2 TMWG must recuse themselves from discussions or decisions if a material conflict of interest is identified, either on their own initiative or at the request of the Chair.

5. LIABILITY STATEMENT

- 5.1 The TMWG is not responsible for any findings, conclusions, or opinions expressed in the outputs of its recommendations.
- 5.2 REAL holds sole responsibility for the final implementation, including any methodologies, assumptions, data, or approaches employed in subsequent projects.