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Contact:
Equitable Earth
info@eq-earth.com

Programme

Technical Advisory Board

Summary

This document outlines the role and functioning of the Technical Advisory Board (TAB), the independent governing body responsible for overseeing the Equitable Earth Programme. The purpose of the TAB is to provide scientific and technical insights to Equitable Earth and to guarantee the accuracy and robustness of its tools and methodologies. The TAB was launched in January 2024 and has been continuously active since.



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1 Introduction

1.1 Normative References

1.1.1 This document must be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#)
- [Equitable Earth Governance](#)
- [Programme Manual](#)
- [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#)
- [Terms & Definitions](#)



2 Technical Advisory Board

2.1 Role

- 2.1.1 **Submission.** The TAB can mandate the Secretariat to draft standard and methodology revision propositions in line with the [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#).
- 2.1.2 **Review.** Once the Secretariat drafts and submits a revision proposition to the TAB, it must assess all amendments and additions to the proposition. Depending on the TAB's decision, a revision proposition can be approved or sent back to the Secretariat for further revisions.
- 2.1.3 **Working groups.** In cases where specific scientific or technical expertise is required, the TAB may mandate the Secretariat to assemble a working group dedicated to reviewing or drafting a documentation section. The appointment procedure and role of working groups are specified in the [Working Groups](#) section of this document.
- 2.1.4 **Approval.** The TAB holds authority over any changes to the Standard documentation and is solely responsible for approving standard revisions – excluding direct revisions. TAB decisions are final and may not be overruled by Equitable Earth. A working group cannot make the final approval decision.

2.2 Appointment Process

- 2.2.1 The Executive team mandates the Secretariat to manage the appointment process for the Technical Advisory Board.
- 2.2.2 The Secretariat sources and interviews potential candidates according to the following criteria:
 - 2.2.2.1 The Secretariat must publish a call for applications for a minimum duration of 30 days.
 - 2.2.2.2 The number of candidates should be twice the number of seats available.



- 2.2.2.3 The TAB must represent a range of technical expertise, including, but not limited to, remote sensing, livelihoods, ecological restoration, and carbon markets.
- 2.2.3 Current TAB members are encouraged to submit potential candidates.
- 2.2.4 The Secretariat must shortlist candidates from the pool of applicants. The number of shortlisted candidates must be at least twice the number of available seats.
- 2.2.5 The Executive team reviews the list and selects TAB members based on the appointment criteria.
- 2.2.6 The regular appointment process to select new TAB members applies when:
 - 1) The mandate of a TAB member ends
 - 2) A TAB member is excluded or resigns
 - 3) Equitable Earth wishes to onboard additional TAB members.

2.3 Composition of the Technical Advisory Board

- 2.3.1 **Group members.** The TAB should be a group of up to ten independent experts.
 - 2.3.1.1 To facilitate TAB governance, two co-chairs are appointed by TAB members to:
 - 1) Organise discussion points and platforms among TAB members to review and propose standard revisions.
 - 2) Take the lead in the mandate of working groups.
 - 3) Take meeting notes when Secretariat Agents are not present.
 - 4) Report back and coordinate with the Secretariat.
 - 2.3.1.2 Co-chairs equally share those tasks and can delegate their powers to each other in case of unavailability.
 - 2.3.1.3 Co-chairs are appointed during the first TAB meeting of every calendar year.



- 2.3.2 **Mandate duration.** TAB members are appointed for two-year mandates and a maximum of three terms, whether consecutive or not.
- 2.3.3 **Appointment criteria.** The Secretariat appoints TAB members using the following criteria:
- 2.3.3.1 **Experience.** TAB members must have leadership experience.
 - 2.3.3.2 **Expertise.** TAB members must demonstrate strong technical expertise in fields aligned with at least one of the three Equitable Earth core pillars: Ecological Recovery, Carbon, and Livelihoods. Members should also show proficiency in related fields (such as carbon markets and remote sensing) to offer complementary perspectives and increase the legitimacy of the Standard.
 - 2.3.3.3 **Diversity.** The pool of candidates should include representatives from different stakeholder groups. Candidates must represent different genders and ethnicities and come from various continents.
 - 2.3.3.4 **Quotas.** To guarantee the representation of all relevant stakeholder groups, the TAB must strive to have at least one representative of the following groups:
 - 1) Researchers and academics
 - 2) Non-governmental organisations
 - 3) Project developers
 - 4) Local communities
- 2.3.4 **Conflicts of interest.** To guarantee the independence of the TAB, its members must avoid conflicts of interest with Equitable Earth and must sign a Declaration of Interest. Furthermore, if TAB members find themselves in a situation of conflict of interest, they should:
- 2.3.4.1 **Disclose the conflict.** TAB members should openly acknowledge their conflict of interest to fellow TAB members and the Secretariat.
 - 2.3.4.2 **Recuse themselves if necessary.** Depending on the nature and severity of the conflict of interest, it may be appropriate for TAB members to remove themselves from the decision-making process entirely.



- 2.3.5 **Duties.** In line with the appointing criteria, TAB members must comply with the Equitable Earth internal rules of procedure and the [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#) and agree to their role and mandate by signing the TAB Terms of Reference.
- 2.3.6 **Exclusion.** Members may be excluded from the TAB by the Secretariat upon the proposal of at least one other TAB member. TAB members can only be excluded on the following grounds:
- 2.3.6.1 They violate the provisions of the [Code of Ethics and Business Conduct](#) concerning conflicts of interest or confidentiality, or any other duty assigned to them.
 - 2.3.6.2 A court mandate restricts their ability to exercise their powers or rights.
 - 2.3.6.3 They missed two TAB meetings without prior notice.
 - 2.3.6.4 Criticism arises from their business reputation or involvement in commercial, political, or lobbying activities, which could harm the reputation of Equitable Earth.
 - 2.3.6.5 If one or more of these criteria are met, removal of a TAB member can be considered. TAB members cannot be excluded without substantial material evidence, and excluded TAB members must be notified of their exclusion at least 30 consecutive days in advance. TAB members may also choose to terminate their involvement with Equitable Earth before the completion of their term, provided there is mutual consent with the Secretariat. Once a TAB member is excluded, the Secretariat initiates a regular appointment process.

2.4 Working Groups

- 2.4.1 **Mandate.** Working groups can be formed whenever the TAB or Equitable Earth recognises a need for additional expertise in a specific field or when addressing a specific topic.
- 2.4.2 **Composition.** A working group must be composed of at least two independent experts.
- 2.4.3 **Appointment criteria.** The Secretariat appoints working group members using the following criteria:



- 2.4.3.1 **Expertise.** Working group members must demonstrate strong technical expertise in the specific area relevant to the working group.
- 2.4.3.2 **Diversity.** The selection process must ensure that invitations are extended to a diverse range of candidates representing various stakeholder groups. Efforts must be made to engage individuals of different genders, ethnicities, age groups, geographic backgrounds, and abilities. Consideration should also be given to supporting the participation of neurodivergent individuals and individuals with differing physical abilities by facilitating accessible applications and work processes.
- 2.4.4 Where relevant, TAB members can lead and/or participate in a working group. In such cases, the Secretariat must assign TAB members roles within the working groups.
- 2.4.5 **Appointment process.** The appointment process for working groups is as follows:
 - 2.4.5.1 The Secretariat may appoint members either by issuing a call for applications or by proactively reaching out to relevant stakeholders to apply to the working group, following the guidelines established in the section above.
 - 2.4.5.2 The Secretariat reviews the list and selects candidates for the working group based on the appointment criteria.

2.5 Meetings and Decision-Making

- 2.5.1 **First meeting.** During the first meeting of each year, TAB members read the annual agenda prepared by the Secretariat and make necessary adjustments.
- 2.5.2 **Frequency.** TAB members meet on a regular and ad-hoc basis. TAB members must participate in meetings unless they notify the Secretariat three weeks prior.
 - 2.5.2.1 **Quarterly meetings.** The Secretariat must present major advancements to TAB members and, when relevant, can discuss Standard and methodology revisions with them.



2.5.2.2 **Ad hoc meetings.** When necessary, TAB members may schedule ad hoc meetings to discuss specific topics, especially revisions to the Standard and methodologies.

2.5.3 **Minutes of meetings.** The Secretariat is responsible for drafting meeting minutes, which must be signed by all TAB members.

TAB Decisions

2.5.4 **Majority vote.** The TAB operates based on a majority voting system.

2.5.5 **Online.** The TAB may approve decisions online, during meetings, using live voting systems.

2.5.5.1 If a TAB member is unable to participate in the live decision-making process, they are required to delegate their voting authority to another TAB member.

2.5.6 **Offline.** The TAB may approve decisions asynchronously, using appropriate and secure voting platforms.

2.5.7 For both scenarios, the co-chairs are responsible for documenting the reasons behind TAB decisions using the appropriate templates, in line with the [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#).

2.5.8 If a TAB member fails to submit his/her decision within the required timeframe, it can be considered grounds for their exclusion.

2.5.9 The Secretariat cannot interfere with TAB decisions. As such, Secretariat Agents must not be present during decision-making processes.

2.6 Working Modalities

2.6.1 The working language is English for both written and oral communication.

2.6.2 The following elements regarding TAB members must be disclosed on the Equitable Earth [website](#):

- Name
- Position within the TAB



- Brief professional biography
- Portrait

2.6.3 **Remote work.** TAB members operate remotely. Equitable Earth is responsible for providing the appropriate technological solutions to allow the TAB to function properly.

2.7 Role and Independence of the Secretariat

2.7.1 **Organisation.** The Secretariat is responsible for organising the administrative and logistical aspects of TAB activities. This includes:

- 1) Scheduling meetings
- 2) Drafting the agenda for each meeting
- 3) Drafting the meeting minutes

2.7.2 **Independence and transparency.** Equitable Earth recognises that the Secretariat holds a potential influence on the TAB. To avoid any interference with the TAB's activities, the Secretariat must comply with the following rules:

2.7.2.1 The Secretariat must not interfere with the mission and decisions of TAB members. They should only interact with them for organisational and administrative matters, and answer their questions and/or remarks on revision propositions. Secretariat Agents are not allowed to attend meetings where decision-making or votes are conducted.

2.7.2.2 The Secretariat sends the minutes of meetings to all TAB members within seven consecutive days after the meeting. If a TAB member has not signed the minutes or raised a concern seven consecutive days after receiving them, the Secretariat can consider them accepted by default.

2.7.2.3 All versions of the [Standard Setting and Methodology Development Procedure](#) must be publicly disclosed on the Equitable Earth [website](#) to ensure full transparency of procedures. Any stakeholder may monitor Equitable Earth's activity and submit a standard-level grievance to Equitable Earth.

2.7.2.4 To guarantee the independence of the TAB, the following rules apply:



- 1) **Sovereignty.** TAB decisions are sovereign and cannot be challenged or opposed formally or informally by any Equitable Earth team member.
- 2) **Separation.** R&D, Certification, and External Relations team members are prohibited from participating in any TAB activity.

2.8 Compensation

- 2.8.1 Equitable Earth compensates TAB members for their services and intellectual contributions to the Standard. This compensation is decided on a case-by-case basis, depending on each TAB member's seniority and field of expertise.
- 2.8.2 TAB members can receive compensation for travel-related expenses following the Equitable Earth travel policy.
- 2.8.3 Equitable Earth occasionally calls for ad hoc meetings to tackle topics requiring TAB expertise. In such instances, TAB members may be asked to contribute to deliverables by joining or providing reviews and inputs. Compensation is determined on a case-by-case basis and clarified before TAB members are asked to participate in such activities.



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