



*The Intensive Connection*

## **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for Manuscript Endorsement Process**

1. Manuscripts, statements and guidelines that may be submitted for endorsement have essentially 4 possible origins:
  - a) ESICM sections, working groups or Task Forces,
  - b) Collaborative Task Forces/Roundtables with involvement of the ESICM since the beginning,
  - c) ESICM Systematic Review Group
  - d) Task Forces/Roundtables coming from external structures (e.g., other Societies) with no involvement of ESICM in the scientific process that has led to the development of the manuscript.

### **Decision-making process for ESICM taskforces or participation to external taskforces**

2. Initiation of the work leading to the production of manuscripts by ESICM Task forces follows a political endorsement of the Executive Committee. This endorsement is usually requested by a Society structure (Sections, Working Group, Task Force, etc...) that submit to the EPC Chair a proposal for activities that will result in the manuscript to be considered.

*The proposal must be a brief outline of the manuscript, underlying the subject and why it should be worthy of consideration, together with a brief description of rationale, methodology and potential practical implications (max 2 pages). Applicants must also declare potential conflict of interest and which Society structure (Task Force, Sections, etc.) or external agency will be involved in the data production, analysis and manuscript preparation. If any cost is expected, the budget requires concomitant formal approval by the Executive Committee.*

3. The EPC Chair communicates within 6 weeks to the authors the decision of the Society to accept the proposal or not. The acceptance of a proposal by the Society does not constitute, at the end of the process, in any case a commitment for the Society to endorse the manuscript and for ICM to publish it.
4. The authors are expected to write the manuscript within 12 months after completion of the work and submit the proposed manuscript to the EPC Chair for endorsement before submission to a Journal. If the manuscript cannot be drafted within 12 months, authors need to update the EPC Chair who will consider extension of the time for submission based on the authors' justification. For manuscripts that should be submitted to Intensive Care Medicine

based on the rules defined below, authors need to follow carefully the Journal's Instructions to Authors.

### **Endorsement process for manuscripts**

5. The endorsement of a manuscript (as defined in 1.a, 1.b or 1.c) by the Society implies a strong encouragement for the authors to publish it in the Society's journal, Intensive Care Medicine (ICM). In particular, the authors accept not to publish an endorsed manuscript in other specialty journals but ICM. The authors must be aware that a paper endorsed by the Society and published in any other specialty journal only will lose the endorsement. As "specialty journal" is intended any journal included in the "Critical Care Medicine" group of the ISI Journal of Citation Report. After validation by the Executive Committee, manuscripts of exceptional value that could be of interest to a wider readership may be submitted to one of the major general journals. The publication strategy of manuscripts described in 1.b and resulting from collaborative Task forces initiated by other Scientific Societies will also require validation by the Executive Committee before submission for publication.

*To ease the two processes of endorsement and publication in ICM, the endorsement process will be conducted in concert with the ICM Editor-in-Chief with a unified peer-reviewing process, as outlined below.*

6. The endorsement process for manuscripts defined in 1.a and 1.b has a political and a scientific level. Political endorsement is granted by the Executive Committee based on the following criteria : i) relevance of the topic to the discipline ii) adequacy of the proposed methodology iii) deliverables, iv) contradiction or duplication of previous documents, v) coherence with the scientific and strategic objectives of the Society, vi) adequate handling of conflicts of interests. The scientific endorsement is organised through external peer review under the responsibility of the Chair of the EPC. Manuscripts defined in 1.c. and 1.d do not require political endorsement by the EC but will be submitted to scientific evaluation. Scientific evaluation of manuscripts described in 1.c will be carried out following the same principles as manuscripts defined in 1.a and 1.b.

7. Together with the ICM Editor-in-Chief, the EPC Chair performs an initial pre-review and chooses at least 3 external reviewers among experts in the field of the subject addressed in the manuscript. The EPC Chair invites the chosen reviewers and asks them to perform a regular peer-review in 21 days to assess the scientific quality and to improve the manuscript.

*The reviewers' comments and recommendations are used both for the possible endorsement of the manuscript by the Society and, if endorsed, for ICM publication process.*

8. Based on his/her own review and the comments of external reviewers, the EPC Chair verifies that the scientific quality of the manuscript is appropriate and, after discussion with the ICM

Editor-in-Chief, formulates within 2 weeks a recommendation of acceptance or refusal of the endorsement. The manuscript is then forwarded, together with the EPC Chair's recommendation and the reviewers' comments, to EC members for final discussion and voting within 2 weeks.

*The final decision of acceptance or rejection is taken by a majority of votes. EC members involved in any way in the manuscript do not participate in the vote. Three possibilities are envisioned*

- *Overall evaluations are positive and minor revisions are required: endorsement is granted and the manuscript can be submitted to ICM with fast-track to R1.*
- *A major revision is required but the manuscript can be improved. Endorsement is withheld, the manuscript is sent back to the authors for revision. The EPC Chair, who will resend again for peer revision to at least 3 new reviewers, manages the revision process (three weeks from the resubmission). The manuscript is then re-evaluated and voted by EC members in the light of the new reviewers' comments. This procedure cannot be further repeated.*
- *Reviewers recommend rejection of the manuscript and comments indicate that the manuscript cannot be significantly improved. Those manuscripts cannot be endorsed by the EC and cannot be submitted in the name of ESICM.*

9. The EPC Chair communicates the final decision of acceptance or refusal of the endorsement to the authors.

*The decision to refuse the manuscript for endorsement is sent to the authors together with a summary of the main issues justifying the decision. The decision to accept the manuscript for endorsement is sent to the authors together with the reviewers' comments which are then used for the following publication in ICM.*

10. If the manuscript is endorsed by the Society, the authors revise the manuscript based on the EPC Chair's comments and the external reviewers' comments.

11. The revised manuscript, together with the original version of the manuscript and the reviewers' comments, is submitted by the authors to ICM.

12. The ICM Editor-in-Chief appraises the revised manuscript and decides to accept it or to perform additional revisions.

13. Any manuscript endorsed by the Society must contain the following statement: "This manuscript has been endorsed by the European Society of Intensive Care Medicine". In addition, the role of each author for the manuscript's preparation must be clearly indicated. Authors who have an official role in the Society must disclose it.

14. Manuscripts described in 1.d will undergo a fast-track (7-day) scientific review organised by the EPC Chair, with the help of the ICM Editor-in-Chief. These manuscripts will be sent by the EPC Chair to a) the Chair or Deputy chair of the competent ESICM section b) A deputy editor or a section editor of ICM. The EPC Chair will present those evaluations with a recommendation to endorse or decline endorsement. Criteria used are i) relevance of the topic to the discipline, ii) adequacy of the methodology used, iii) validity of conclusions, iv) contradiction or duplication of previous documents, v) adequate handling of conflicts of interests. The final decision will be taken by a majority of votes. EC members involved in any way in the manuscript do not participate in the vote.