

SAP Scientific Integrity Group: Terms of Reference

Version 3.0

Purpose of the SAP Scientific Integrity Group

The purpose of the SAP Scientific Integrity Group is to maintain and protect the integrity, coherence and impartiality of the SAP model.

SAP is an analytical model of the energy performance of dwellings in the UK, taking into account technical characteristics of the materials, products, and building services of which they are comprised.

Purpose of SAP

The Group should be mindful of the purpose of SAP, which is the assessment of the energy performance of dwellings in the UK to help meet energy and environmental policy objectives and for regulation.

- The accuracy of the SAP model should be no more than sufficient for this purpose, and over-complication should be avoided.
- The purpose of SAP is to provide an impartial assessment of the energy performance of a dwelling.
- It is not the purpose of SAP to support or promote the sale of energy saving products, nor is it the intention to block or impede them.

The terms of reference for the SAP Scientific Integrity Group

The Group will be expected to possess a clear understanding of the role and scope of SAP and decide the principles to be followed whenever it is to be altered. This will apply to any review of existing treatment and to any extension of scope as provided by the Appendix Q application route.

Terms of Reference of the SAP Scientific Integrity Group are:

- to safeguard the scientific integrity of the SAP model
- to ensure the SAP methodology is consistent and robust, within the limits of accuracy needed for the purpose of SAP (see above)
- to avoid uneven development (i.e. excessively detailed treatment in some areas while others remain relatively crude)
- to balance complexity against practicalities (the practicalities being cost of development and future maintenance, time and effort needed for a SAP assessment, training and skills level of assessors)
- to disregard specific commercial and political considerations.
- to work with Lots 1 & 3 contractors to amend existing processes.

Further details of the anticipated work of the Group and its operation in practice follow.

The work of the SAP Scientific Integrity Group

The Lot 4 contractor (RDL), who is responsible for the QA work of the Lots 1, 2 and 3 contractor (BRE) will agree the work for the group in consultation with BRE and BEIS.

Some of the work of the Group will be to consider applications for changes or extensions to SAP to cover new products, systems, materials and related data and make recommendations on proposals for handling such applications by the SAP contractor (BRE). It may have to do so in several stages:

- consider initial applications, understand the theoretical basis, assess the relevance of any evidence provided, and agree what approach (if any) should be taken to analyse performance in line with proposals from the SAP contractor
- after preliminary analysis, agree what test methods and data or other evidence should be called for
- read, understand, and approve or reject the analytical method once it has been fully developed.
- provide recommendations on the above to BRE and BEIS, which may include
 - approval of the proposal for handling the request put forward by BRE
 - approving the proposal subject to some proposed changes or further evidence
 - rejecting the proposed handling of the request
 - rejecting the handling of the request without some proposed changes or further evidence.

The consideration of the proposal for handling claims should also cover the issue of the proposed timetable for consideration.

These steps follow what has already been set out for SAP Appendix Q, details of which can be found at: www.ncm-pcdb.org.uk/sap.

Other wider work of the Group may involve making recommendations on matters of principle (such as deciding between options for calculation conventions) or on amendments that might be proposed in order to address possible changes to the requirements of SAP (such as a need to amend the treatment of cooling to reflect location). In general, these will be issues where BRE has identified a need for their consideration, rather than being issues that have arisen as a direct result of an application relating to a particular product.

Conflicts of interest

Group members must be technically proficient and behave in a scrupulously independent and impartial manner.

They must not represent the interests of any other body even if they are employed by such a body.

Before appointment, members will be required to sign the SPSIG membership acceptance form that sets out confidentiality, impartiality and conflict of interest requirements.

To avoid charges of bias the Group any members who have any prospect of direct or indirect commercial gain from its recommendations or decisions must both declare that interest and take no part in the discussion, unless asked to do so.

Should a potential conflict of interest arise at any time, the member concerned must notify the Group chair, who in turn will notify all other members, and this will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

Operation of the SAP Scientific Integrity Group

The Group will normally meet once or twice a year, subject to the amount of business requiring their attention. BRE will host these meetings and RDL will act as the secretariat.

A standing agenda item will be Impartiality and 'Feedback' (feedback can originate from any source).

Any correspondence from outside that is directed to the Group (e.g. concerning specific decisions that it makes) should be addressed to the secretariat.

In general, at the meetings BRE will be presenting options and making recommendations to the Group. The Group may choose to accept the recommendations or not, as described above. They may make alternative recommendations. RDL in turn, will convey the Group's recommendations to BEIS.

BEIS is the body that is ultimately responsible for the incorporation of the recommendations into SAP; notwithstanding that Building Regulations is the responsibility of MHCLG. BEIS is also the body from which the Group should seek recourse if it ever feels that its advice is not being unreasonably handled.

The names (but not email addresses) of the Group members will be made public. Documents recording minutes / actions / decisions of the meetings of the Group will also be made publicly available. However, documents intended for public view will be edited to preserve confidentiality where necessary. Meetings may involve discussions of confidential material, and that material and any associated notes from the discussions must remain confidential.

If applicable, sub-groups will be created, with a defined scope to assist the Group. Subgroups will be disbanded once their task has been completed.

The Group may also conduct elements of its work outside formal meetings (e.g. by exchange of e-mail) wherever this would be an appropriate and efficient option.

Funding of the Group is limited to the payment of travel and expenses claims for attending meetings. There is no funding for undertaking any new research work that the Group may identify and recommend. Nonetheless, the Group may still put forward recommendations to BEIS, RDL and BRE for such work and this might be considered for separate funding.

If a member feels that the Chair and/or Secretariat is behaving inappropriately, they can contact BEIS, in confidence to discuss their concerns. The BEIS contact person is Sarah Montgomery.

Deputies:

The concept of deputies to each member (where applicable) to ensure adequate attendance / representation at meetings will be considered.

Visitors:

At the discretion of the Chairman, a visitor may be invited to present / discuss a specific aspect or topic. A Confidential & Conflict of Interest Agreement will be signed. Visitors will not be able to vote on any decisions – thereby avoiding bias.

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