



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

DIRECTORATE-GENERAL FOR INTERNAL MARKET, INDUSTRY, ENTREPRENEURSHIP
AND SMES

Simplification and networks

B.4 – Industrial Forum, Alliances, Clusters

INFORMAL COMMISSION EXPERT GROUP

INDUSTRIAL FORUM

TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. BACKGROUND

In 2020 the New Industrial Strategy for Europe⁽¹⁾ announced the setting up of the Commission expert group ‘Industrial Forum’ as a forum for Member States and industry to exchange best practices aiming at the transformation of industrial ecosystems. The concept was to set up a new, inclusive and open mechanism for co-designing solutions with stakeholders, in order to support the Commission initially in its systematic analysis of the ecosystems and in assessing the risks and needs of industry as it embarks on the twin, green and digital, transition and the strengthening of its resilience, as well as contributing to the coordination of recovery efforts.

The tasks assigned to the Industrial Forum in 2020 are as follows:

- “ a) to advise the Commission on the implementation of the industrial strategy and to issue periodical reports on the implementation progress;
- b) to contribute to the Commission’s analysis of industrial ecosystems and to monitor their state of play, taking stock of their progress towards the twin transition and increased resilience, and identifying investment needs and interdependencies between the ecosystems; the group will contribute to the identification of areas for possible cross-border and cross-ecosystems collaboration, in particular with the aim to unlock the potential of new value chains and innovation-driven “locomotives” for the recovery;
- c) to provide recommendations on a “dedicated toolbox” (which could include regulatory action, unlocking financing or making the most of trade defence instruments) to foster the twin transition of relevant ecosystems, in line with the Industrial Strategy. It will facilitate the coordination between public and private stakeholders for the relevant investment and supporting measures; this could include providing views on and proposing the creation of new industrial alliances⁽²⁾, as well as a coordinated investment agenda, including – in case of significant market or systemic failures – Important Projects of Common European Interest⁽³⁾ ; the group will advise the Commission on possible match-making opportunities for projects and investments with a strong cross-border dimension to the extent that they pursue a

⁽¹⁾ COM(2020) 102 final

⁽²⁾ More information is available on: [Industrial alliances - European Commission](#)

⁽³⁾ More information is available on: [IPCEI - European Commission](#)

legitimate objective and are compatible with EU competition rules. “.

With the mandate of the Industrial Forum ending in December 2025, its mandate must be renewed.

In line with the Commission priorities for 2024-2029, the Industrial Forum shall continue providing support to the Commission with advice on EU industrial policy in general, as well as advice to the Commission on its activities related to competitiveness and prosperity, notably also linked to the implementation of the Competitiveness Compass. Thereby, the Industrial Forum will also continue building on, contributing to and complementing the work carried out by the COMPET Council ⁽⁴⁾ and the High-Level Group for Competitiveness ⁽⁵⁾. It will offer a sounding board for stakeholders and showcase the state of the European competitiveness – and the progress towards industrial transformation, bringing together the views of industrial stakeholders, public authorities, civil society organisations and investors.

2. TASKS

The specific group’s tasks shall be:

1. to advise the Commission on the implementation of the EU industrial policy;
2. to advise the Commission on activities related to competitiveness and prosperity, notably also linked to the implementation of the Competitiveness Compass with a focus on promoting the EU business case. This includes work on the following elements that are key for making the business case:
 - Inputs: raw materials, circularity, components, and European production;
 - Energy: clean energy and energy costs;
 - Energy intensive industries;
 - The transition to low carbon technologies;
 - Access to finance: funding, including European Competitiveness Fund, derisking, and investments;
 - Access to markets: boosting the Single Market, reduction of barriers, simplification, building lead markets, public procurement, permitting, trade and ensuring a level playing field.
 - Sovereignty: economic security and resilience, preparedness.
3. to provide the Commission with recommendations on a “dedicated toolbox” (which could include regulatory action, unlocking financing or making the most of trade defence instruments) to boost the competitiveness of the European industry;
4. to provide the Commission with valuable, first-hand information on major risks and opportunities encountered by EU companies (business intelligence) which helps inform and support the Commission’s policymaking.

⁽⁴⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/meetings/compet>

⁽⁵⁾ <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/council-eu/preparatory-bodies/high-level-working-group-competitiveness-growth/>

3. MEMBERSHIP

1. Members shall be
 - Organisations in the broad sense of the word, including industrial associations, NGOs, trade unions, research and technology organisations, organisations operating in the financial/investment sector, private associations of regions or of regional development agencies ('type C members');
 - Member States' authorities on national or regional level ('type D members');
 - The European Investment Bank (EIB) and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD) ('type E members').
2. Members shall nominate their representatives and shall be responsible for ensuring that their representatives provide a high level of expertise. DG GROW may refuse the nomination by a Type C organisation of a representative if it considers this nomination inappropriate in the light of the requirements specified in the call for applications. In such case, the organisation concerned shall be asked to appoint another representative.
3. Member organisations (Type C members) who are no longer capable of contributing effectively to the expert group's deliberations, who, in the opinion of DG GROW, do not comply with the conditions set out in Article 339 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union or who resign, shall no longer be invited to participate in any meetings of the group and may be replaced for the remainder of their term of office.

4. SELECTION PROCESS FOR TYPE C MEMBERS

1. The selection of the group's type C members shall be carried out via a public call for applications, to be published on the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups'). The call for applications shall clearly outline the selection criteria, including the required expertise and the interests to be represented in relation to the work to be performed. The minimum deadline for applications shall be four weeks.
2. Registration in the Transparency Register is required in order for organisations to be appointed.
3. Member organisations shall be appointed by the Director-General of DG GROW from applicants with competence in the areas referred to in point 2, and who have responded to the call for applications.
4. Members shall be appointed for entire duration of the mandate of the group.
5. DG GROW shall establish a reserve list of suitable candidates that may be used to appoint members' replacements. DG GROW shall ask applicants for their consent before including their names on the reserve list.

5. CHAIR

The group shall be chaired by a representative of DG GROW.

6. OPERATION

1. The group shall act at the request of DG GROW, in compliance with the Commission's horizontal rules for expert groups (the 'horizontal rules')⁶.
2. Meetings of the group shall, in principle, be held on Commission premises or virtually, depending on the circumstances.
3. DG GROW shall provide secretarial services. Commission officials from other departments with an interest in the proceedings may attend meetings of the group and its sub-groups.
4. The Chair person of the group may restrict participation to meetings on specific critical and sensitive policy subjects:
 - a) that are directly relevant for the security of the Union to entities and individuals not subject to control by a third country acting either directly or by way of measures addressed to a third-country entity [Control as mentioned in a) shall be understood as the ability to exercise a decisive influence on an entity or individual directly, including through national legislation or indirectly through other means including control over its corporate structure and decision-making process, its infrastructure, facilities, assets, resources, intellectual property or knowhow needed for the purposes of the Forum],
 - or
 - b) that concern commercial interests of companies or specific sector groups and that cannot be openly discussed with members who are not directly concerned.
5. In agreement with DG GROW, the group may, by simple majority of its members, decide that deliberations shall be public.
6. Minutes on the discussion on each point on the agenda and on the opinions delivered by the group shall be meaningful and complete. Minutes shall be drafted by the secretariat under the responsibility of the Chair.
7. The group shall adopt its opinions, recommendations or reports by consensus. If no consensus can be reached, such document shall be adopted by simple majority of the members, both for the group and for any sub-groups. Members who have voted against or abstained shall have the right to have a document summarising the reasons for their position annexed to the opinions, recommendations or reports.

7. SUB-GROUPS

1. DG GROW will set up a subgroup called "Focus group on industry". This subgroup will be composed of industry representatives only. It will enable to gather insights and discuss on risks and opportunities faced by EU companies with a view to making the EU business case.
2. DG GROW may set up other sub-groups for the purpose of examining specific questions on the basis of terms of reference defined by DG GROW.
3. All sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the horizontal rules and shall report to the group. They shall be dissolved as soon as their mandate is fulfilled.

⁶ C(2016) 3301, Article 13.1.

4. The members of sub-groups that are not members of the group shall be selected via a public call for applications, in compliance with point 4 and the horizontal rules⁷.

8. INVITED EXPERTS

DG GROW may invite experts with specific expertise with respect to a subject matter on the agenda to take part in the work of the group or sub-groups on an *ad hoc* basis.

9. OBSERVERS

1. The Committee of the Regions and the Economic and Social Committee shall be appointed as observers by direct invitation.
2. Additional public entities other than Member States' authorities, as well as stakeholder organisations, may be granted an observer status, in compliance with the horizontal rules, by direct invitation.
3. Observers shall nominate their representatives.
4. Observers' representatives may be permitted by the Chair to take part in the discussions of the group and sub-groups and provide expertise. However, they shall not have voting rights and shall not participate in the formulation of recommendations or advice of the group and sub-groups.

10. RULES OF PROCEDURE

On a proposal by and in agreement with DG GROW the group shall adopt its rules of procedure by simple majority of its members, on the basis of the standard rules of procedure for expert groups, in compliance with the horizontal rules⁸. Sub-groups shall operate in compliance with the group's rules of procedure.

11. PROFESSIONAL SECRECY AND HANDLING OF CLASSIFIED INFORMATION

The members of the group and their representatives, as well as invited experts and observers, are subject to the obligation of professional secrecy, which by virtue of the Treaties and the rules implementing them applies to all members of the institutions and their staff, as well as to the Commission's rules on security regarding the protection of Union classified information, laid down in Commission Decisions (EU, Euratom) 2015/443⁹ and 2015/444¹⁰. Should they fail to respect these obligations, the Commission may take all appropriate measures.

12. TRANSPARENCY

1. The group and sub-groups shall be registered in the Register of Commission expert groups and other similar entities ('the Register of expert groups').

⁷ C(2016), Articles 10 and 14.2.

⁸ See Article 17 of the horizontal rules.

⁹ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/443 of 13 March 2015 on Security in the Commission (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 41).

¹⁰ Commission Decision (EU, Euratom) 2015/444 of 13 March 2015 on the security rules for protecting EU classified information (OJ L 72, 17.3.2015, p. 53).

2. As regards the group and sub-groups composition, the following data shall be published on the Register of expert groups:
 - (a) the name of Member States' authorities;
 - (b) the name of other public entities;
 - (c) the name of member organisations; the interest represented shall be disclosed;
 - (d) the name of observers.
3. All relevant documents, including the agendas, the minutes and the participants' submissions, shall be made available via a link from the Register to a dedicated website, where this information can be found. Access to dedicated websites shall not be submitted to user registration or any other restriction. In particular, DG GROW shall publish the agenda and other relevant background documents in due time ahead of the meeting, followed by timely publication of minutes. Exceptions to publication shall only be possible where it is deemed that disclosure of a document would undermine the protection of a public or private interest as defined in Article 4 of Regulation (EC) N° 1049/2001¹¹.

13. MEETING EXPENSES

1. Participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall not be remunerated for the services they offer.
2. Travel and subsistence expenses incurred by participants in the activities of the group and sub-groups shall be reimbursed by the Commission. Reimbursement shall be made in accordance with the provisions in force within the Commission and within the limits of the available appropriations allocated to the Commission departments under the annual procedure for the allocation of resources.

Done in Brussels, on 17 October 2025.

¹¹ These exceptions are intended to protect public security, military affairs, international relations, financial, monetary or economic policy, privacy and integrity of the individual, commercial interests, court proceedings and legal advice, inspections/investigations/audits and the institution's decision-making process.