

Guidelines for conference presentations and publications by ITPA groups - 10 Dec., 2014

In order to respond to technical questions for ITER in a timely way, unpublished scientific results are often shared within the ITPA Topical Groups. The privilege of discussing and collaborating on unpublished data carries an obligation to treat such results as private communications, not to be distributed further without permission from the authors and their institutions.

On the other hand, it is desirable to release completed ITPA work to the community, through conference presentations or journal publications. The ITPA charter says “Groups are encouraged to make their work available to the broader fusion community in a timely manner.”

Therefore, when a subgroup within the ITPA Topical Group (such as a joint experiment or any other type of working group) wishes to give a conference presentation or publish a paper on work by the group, the following steps are strongly recommended. It is important to note that most of these steps would also be required for any other joint publication.

1. The leader of the subgroup should first obtain agreement from the members of the subgroup that a presentation or publication is appropriate. Consideration should be given to the scientific quality of the work to be published, the author list, and also to questions of priority (i.e. whether members of the subgroup should have the opportunity to publish their own work previous to the joint publication).
2. After the subgroup has agreed, the leader of the subgroup should discuss their plan with the chair of the Topical Group.
3. A proposal for the presentation or publication should be presented at a Topical Group meeting, for discussion by the members of the TG. This proposal should include an outline of the scientific content.
4. If it is not possible to discuss the proposal at a TG meeting (owing to a conference deadline, for example) the proposal should be sent to the TG leader for distribution to the official members of the TG for their comments. Sufficient time should be allowed for a response, before any further action is taken.
5. In preparing a presentation or publication, the use of unpublished material (including figures) must be approved by the original author of the material. This requirement applies even if the material has already been presented at a TG meeting.
6. In preparing a publication, the reproduction or adaptation of a previously published figure must be handled in accordance with the guidelines of the journal. Normally this means obtaining permission from the original author and also from the journal where it was originally published, and giving an explicit citation of the original paper in the figure caption. This requirement applies even when the original author is a co-author of the new paper.

7. The role of the ITPA should be recognized appropriately, in the author list (for example, "... and the ITPA Topical Group on X") or in an acknowledgement at the end (for example, "This work was conducted under the auspices of the ITPA Topical Group on X.").
8. When a new or updated draft of the presentation or publication has been prepared, it should be distributed to the members of the subgroup for their comments. Sufficient time should be allowed for comments by the members.
9. When a final draft has been prepared, it should be distributed to the members of the subgroup for their approval, with a reminder that the co-authors should obtain any clearance that is required by their home institutions. Sufficient time should be allowed for this clearance.
10. Simultaneously, the final draft should be sent to the chair of the Topical Group for approval. The chair should distribute it to the official members of the TG for their comments. Sufficient time should be allowed for a response.
11. The conference presentation or journal submission should not occur until the co-authors and other members of the subgroup have approved the final version, and have also notified the leader of the subgroup that the necessary clearances have been obtained.
12. The co-authors and members of the subgroup have an obligation to consider and respond to the drafts in a timely way, and to ensure that the final draft receives any clearance that is required by their home institution.
13. The TG chair and the leader of the subgroup are responsible for ensuring that these policies are understood and followed.
14. Occasionally delay, disagreement, or other factors may make it impossible to follow these guidelines in a timely way. In such cases, the TG chair and the leader of the subgroup should agree on an alternate course of action that preserves the rights of authors and their institutions to approve the use of their data, as well as the goal of timely publication.

Definition of terms:

"Agreement" or "approval" means explicit agreement from the people involved. Silence should not be interpreted as agreement.

"Comment" means an opportunity to provide input. In this case, an explicit reply is not required.