

# GUIDE: TOPICAL INTEREST GROUP (TIG)

## WHAT IS A TIG?

TIGs are subgroups of SAMEA consisting of members with common interests. TIGs may be formed around methodologies such as Needs Assessment, around work contexts such as Government Evaluation, around salient concerns such as Feminist Issues, or around professional status such as Independent Consultants.

## WHY SHOULD WE HAVE TIGS?

SAMEA TIGs facilitate discussion between SAMEA members on emerging trends in Monitoring and Evaluation. TIGs are separated into thematic areas, but given the nature of the field it is recognised that there may be overlap between TIGs.

It is envisaged that there will be several outcomes from TIGs:

- An increase in discussion around the thematic area
- The building of interest of SAMEA members in the thematic area
- An increase in members' capacity or understanding as a result of the discussions

We envisage that TIGs will become a network of professionals who share a common passion for expanding the role of M&E, and through regular discussions on relevant topics, improve the knowledge and expertise across the field.

In addition to discussions, the TIGs allow for networking between M&E professionals, establishing connections that move beyond talk into action.

The following purposes (taken from the AEA website) are also important

- Provide a structure and conduit for sharing knowledge about common evaluation interests.
- Provide an alternative mechanism for communicating and disseminating professional information.

## TERMINOLOGY

**TIG:** A Topical Interest Group. A group that meets virtually to discuss and explore areas of specific interest in monitoring and evaluation.

**Convener:** An individual who leads the TIG and is the main point of contact between SAMEA and the TIG.

**Member:** A member of SAMEA, in good standing (from 2019 onwards) – **for 2018 anyone interested in engaging in a SAMEA TIG**

- Provide a focal point for collecting and synthesizing the literature in a specific area of the profession.
- Increase awareness of current research in that area and track its evolution.
- Nurture new members and help them feel connected to the organization.
- Serve as a showcase for the intellectual diversity of the organization.
- Generate and try innovative ideas.
- Serve as a conduit for outreach to related professional organizations.
- Provide an organized means of raising issues to the leadership of the association.
- Facilitate opportunities for collaborative research and evaluation.
- Create opportunities for mentoring (especially of young evaluators), evaluation-related training and enhancement of member services.
- Cultivate, foster and develop association leadership.
- Play a major role in annual conference programming and coordination, including:
  - Serving as a primary vehicle for organizing and sponsoring conference sessions, through soliciting presentations and refereeing submitted proposals.
  - Serving as strong supporters of and contributors to the Presidential Strand.
  - Providing cohesion to and a vehicle for a natural clustering of similar topics for the conference program.

<http://www.eval.org/p/cm/ld/fid=102>

### WHAT WILL HAPPEN IN MY TIG?

Some TIGs will be very active, with vibrant online discussion lists, resource websites, and special networking events. Others may be quite low key and involve members asking questions and other members giving advice based on their experience and knowledge. We envisage that TIGs will try and meet either at the October workshops or biennial conference.

Communication with TIG members is almost exclusively electronic. Keep an eye on your email for TIG emails, discussions and useful resources.

**At the end of July** we will ask TIG conveners to put together a learning document to share on the SAMEA listserv – it will contain a list of key readings and some of the key learnings from the TIG. This will mean that all SAMEA members will learn from other TIGs as well.

### WHAT ARE MY OBLIGATIONS IF I JOIN A TIG?

You have no specific obligations as part of TIG membership. You may participate as much or as little as you like but we are assuming you are joining to learn more about an area and so offer what you know, read up and share as much as you can to get the most out of the TIG.

### HOW LONG WILL MY TIG LAST?

We envisage that TIGs will function for 6 months – with an option for renewal for a further 6 months or longer depending on level of engagement and interest. If it is going really well then the TIG may go for years. You can also move to a new TIG – just let your convenor know.

**TO HOW MANY TIGS MAY I BELONG?**

You may belong to up to 3 TIGS.

**HOW WILL CONVENER BE CHOSEN?**

We will send out a group email to those TIGS which have more than 8 members and then someone from the group should volunteer to convene the TIG.

**WHAT MUST I DO AS A CONVENER?**

The convener must then send an email to Kate at SAMEA Information [info@samea.org.za](mailto:info@samea.org.za) wiith the following information:

- 1. TIG Name
- 2. Some key issues to be covered in the TIG
- 3. Convener’s Name
- 4. Convener’s email
- 5. Convener’s photo

So that we can put up the table below on the SAMEA website and other people can join during the course of the next 6 months.

*Website information on the TIGS*

| TIG | Key issues | Convener name | Photo of convener | Email |
|-----|------------|---------------|-------------------|-------|
|     |            |               |                   |       |

**PLEASE FEEL FREE TO CONTACT SAMEA FOR MORE INFORMATION IF YOU NEED TO**