# Terms of Reference (ToR) - AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee

Applicable from: 01 January 2027

| Version | Date | Update | Who | Vote |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| V1.1 | 25.06.2026 | First version of the draft | M-P Meurville, F Tummon | |
| V1.2 | 07.09.2026 | Comments integration | M-P Meurville | |
| V1.3 | 18.11.2026 | Update after discussions and vote with the Expert Team | M-P Meurville, F Tummon | 21.09.2026 |

## 1. Purpose

This document aims to define the mandate, responsibilities, and authorities of the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee. This Committee is responsible for evaluation of site certification applications, re-certification as well as any potential suspension or withdrawal of certification.

## 2. Composition & Terms

- **Membership**: Four to five experts elected by the AutoPollen community each year at the annual meeting, among which one or two experts are not AutoPollen participants.
- **Eligibility**: Some experience in either automatic bioaerosol monitoring, instrumentation, data management, botany or QA/QC is recommended.
- **Term**: 3 years, renewable.

Secretarial support will be provided by the AutoPollen Scientific Coordinator and/or Programme Manager, who will serve as a single point of contact, collecting and preparing the applications and communicating directly with site managers and the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee.

## 3. Independence & Conflict of Interest

- In case a member of the Site Evaluation Committee has a conflict of interest for a specific site, they will recuse themselves from the assessment of this site and any related votes. They must inform the other members of the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee and the AutoPollen Scientific Coordinator via email of this conflict of interest before they meet.
- Conflict of interest declarations/recusations will be archived.

- External experts, i.e. non-AutoPollen participants, are included in the Evaluation Committee to ensure neutrality and independence.

## 4. Responsibilities

The members of the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee are required to:

- Review complete application packages, including the site description, logbook (when provided), as well as any maps and photos and other materials provided.
- Apply the official evaluation grid and scoring rubric to generate an evaluation sheet with a score, rationale, and decision, as described in the most up-to-date AutoPollen site certification manual.
- Provide clear, documented evaluation reports and recommendations for improvement to the site managers.
- Award site certificates.
- Assess suspension or revocation of certification, if needed.

The AutoPollen Scientific Coordinator and/or Programme Manager must:

- Invite non-AutoPollen experts to serve on the Site Evaluation Committee.
- Provide support to the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee, such as organization of meetings, communication with site managers, aiding with completing evaluation reports, etc.
- Maintain records of evaluations, decisions and minutes of all meetings, conflict of interest declarations, and appeals.
- Serve as a single point of contact and coordinate communication between the Site Evaluation Committee and site managers.
- Transmit the final evaluation report and site certificate to the site manager.
- Support the data transfer procedure between EBAS and the site, including helping to assess metadata and the NASA-Ames files.

## 5. Application & Evaluation Process

- A remote evaluation by the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee will be performed following the AutoPollen site certification Manual.
- The Scientific Coordinator and/or Programme Manager will send the formal decision and evaluation report to the site manager within five months after the application submission.
- The final evaluation report will be published on the AutoPollen website.
- Site certification is valid for three years. A reminder regarding re-evaluation will be sent by the scientific coordinator six months prior to expiry.

## 6. Decisions

- The AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee certifies a site by majority.

- Records of all decisions and votes, including dissenting opinions, will be archived for at least three years.

## 7. Appeals & Reconsideration

1. The site manager may request reconsideration of any decisions within 30 days of receiving the final evaluation report.
2. The AutoPollen Scientific Coordinator and/or Programme Manager will then arrange an online discussion including the site manager and AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee, moderated by the AutoPollen Programme Manager and Scientific Coordinator.
3. The final decision and rationale shall likewise be recorded and communicated; further escalation for a vote by the AutoPollen community at the annual meeting is possible, if the decision remains contested. No confidential data will be communicated.

## 8. Confidentiality & Data Retention

- Following the EU's General Data Protection Regulations, the site manager's information is confidential and will only be accessible to the Site Evaluation Committee, the Scientific Coordinator and Programme Manager as necessary. These data are treated following the AutoPollen confidential data policy.
- Evaluation reports and conclusions from the AutoPollen site evaluation committee will be made publicly available on the AutoPollen website.
- Records (applications, evaluations, conflict of interest declarations, decisions, appeals) will be archived by the AutoPollen Scientific Coordinator and can be consulted by the respective site manager and the Site Evaluation Committee.

## 9. Reporting & Transparency

- The AutoPollen Scientific Coordinator and/or Programme Manager will provide a summary of the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee's work at the AutoPollen annual meeting. This will include the number of applications received and evaluated, which sites have been granted certification or been denied or suspended and common issues.
- Significant updates to the AutoPollen site certification manual, application form and/or these Terms of Reference can be proposed by the members of the AutoPollen Community and Site Evaluation Committee. Suggestions will be discussed and voted upon at the AutoPollen annual meeting. Updated documents will be made publicly available by latest 1 January of the calendar year following their approval.

## 10. Meetings & Work Mode

- Three virtual meetings will be held per year for evaluations of applications. Additional ad-hoc meetings can be organized as required.

- Remote assessments are standard; in-person site visits are exceptional and require documented justification and logistical arrangements.

By proposing their candidature to the AutoPollen community, and once elected, members of the AutoPollen Site Evaluation Committee agree to respect the Terms of Reference detailed in this document.