



2026 ECFS WORKING GROUP ANNUAL REPORT

Please use this template for your annual Working Group report.

For more information, please read the following ECFS Working Group [Terms of Reference](#) document:

Group Info & Background

Name of Working Group:
Intestinal organoid working group (IOWG)

Date of initial approval of Working Group:
04/11/2026

Names and emails of chair/coordinators:
Jeffrey Beekman, chair,
Karin de Winter-de Groot, coordinator,
Sacha Spelier, coordinator & contact-person

Long term aims of the Working Group (maximum 100 words) including estimated achievement date:

1. Align current activities around organoid research and set up an international network of organoid-based researchers within the ECFS (08/06/2026, *after first in-person meeting*)
2. Standardize and implement organoid-based assays for research in a diagnostic and academic setting (12/12/2026, *publication of revised STAR protocol*)
3. Optimize implementation of intestinal stemcell (ISC)-based assays as predictive biomarkers, by optimizing ethical and juridical prerequisites for international collaborations & interacting with relevant parties such as the EMA (*deadline not possible to indicate*)
4. Organize annual meetings & develop a training program for ISC-based methodologies to disseminate expertise in PDIO culture and CFTR function assessment for researchers across Europe (*ongoing*)

Outcomes already achieved (maximum 100 words):

Achievements in last year per objective

1. Monthly trouble-shoot meetings started in September 2025 and are attended well (6-12 participants each). Bi-monthly core member meeting started in September 2025 as well.
2. Differences in wet-lab pipelines are discussed in trouble-shoot meeting. Improved standardization is expected, after finalizing of several experiments in which culture conditions or computational analyses are compared.
3. To improve collaboration, we aim to set up a database across labs with PDIO details and data. Discussions with the EMA are expected to start again this year.
4. Annual meeting is planned for 06/06 and PDIO masterclass (12 participants) is planned for 23-25/09.

Year Report

Report for this year (max 1000 words)

Report per objective

Objective 1: Align current activities and establish an international ECFS organoid research network (target: 08/06/2026)

Since September 2025, monthly troubleshooting meetings have been successfully established, consistently attracting 6–12 participants per session. In those meetings, questions are asked and best practices are shared. In parallel, bi-monthly core member meetings were initiated to facilitate more focused discussions on collaborative efforts. These efforts contribute directly to aligning ongoing activities and strengthening connections between organoid-based researchers within the ECFS network, building towards the first in-person meeting in June 2026.

Objective 2: Standardize and implement organoid-based assays in research and diagnostics (target: 12/12/2026)

A key focus of the troubleshooting meetings has been the comparison of differences in wet-lab pipelines across participating groups. These discussions, together with ongoing comparative experiments evaluating culture conditions and computational analysis workflows, are expected to lead to improved standardization of methodologies. These efforts will ultimately support the publication of a revised STAR protocol and facilitate implementation in both academic and diagnostic settings.

Objective 3: Enable implementation of ISC-based assays as predictive biomarkers through regulatory alignment (ongoing)

To further strengthen collaboration and prepare for clinical translation, we aim to develop a shared cross-laboratory database integrating PDIO-related metadata and experimental data. In parallel, renewed discussions with regulatory bodies, including the EMA, are anticipated later this year. These steps are essential to address ethical and juridical requirements and to support the implementation of ISC-based assays as predictive biomarkers in an international context.

Objective 4: Disseminate expertise through meetings and structured training programs (ongoing)

An annual consortium meeting is scheduled for June 6th, and a PDIO-focused masterclass for 12 participants is planned for September 23–25. These initiatives aim to promote knowledge exchange and provide hands-on training in PDIO culture and CFTR functional assays, thereby supporting capacity building and harmonization of expertise across Europe.

Current number of members & encouraging ECFS membership

There are 20 main members, but additional PhD students/technicians attend the troubleshooting meetings. Importantly, the main labs working with PDIOs are all represented (Leuven, Lisbon), as well as labs who are in a more starting-up phase.

To encourage membership, we mentioned this in our first bi-monthly meetings. Based on the ECFS membership analysis for 2026, we will contact non-members specifically to underline the need for membership.

Outcomes/achievements

We were happy to be invited to the ECFS Basic Science to present the IOWG. Reactions were very positive, and afterwards multiple new connections were made/new labs expressed interest in the model system.

Aims for the coming year (2026)

1. Continue these meetings. A live meeting will be organized in Lisbon after the ECFS conference.
2. We contacted STAR protocols, in which we published the PDIO/FIS protocol in 2020, to see if we can publish an updated version of this protocol. They are happy to receive this, so we will aim at publishing such an updated STAR protocol in 2026.
3. Set up this database and reinitiate contact with the EMA.
4. Annual meeting is planned for 06/06 and PDIO masterclass (12 participants) is planned for 23-25/09

Summary (maximum 100 words):

We are pleased to have established well-attended monthly troubleshooting meetings and bi-monthly core member discussions. These initiatives are important for aligning ongoing organoid research activities and fostering a strong, international network within the ECFS community. Continued efforts toward standardization and data sharing will further strengthen collaboration and translational impact. We are particularly looking forward to upcoming in-person interactions, including the annual meeting on June 6th and the PDIO masterclass in September (12 participants, 3 day wet-lab/lectures including Hans Clevers as keynote speaker), which will provide valuable opportunities for deeper discussion, hands-on training, and further alignment across participating groups.

Finances

Breakdown of expenses (please include total amount received as well as expenditure and, if applicable, the outstanding balance (Euros)):

At the moment of submitting this, we did not request funding. Our outstanding balance still is the full amount of €10,000.

Budget amount requested for next year (please give the amount in Euros and the year):

We will request funding this year for the:

- In-person meeting at the ECFS conference in June. Room rental and lunch, exact budget to be determined depending on number of participants.
- The PDIO Masterclass, for which we request €6640,-. A significant amount of the total ECFS funding, but this will not be a yearly event; but rather the big event of the IOWG.

The deadline for submission to the ECFS Office is 1st May.

The report will then be presented to the board prior to the summer ECFS board meeting and then a decision will be made at the next board meeting for approval before being distributed.

