Since the Commission for Basic Systems and the Commission for Instruments and Methods of Observation have been designated by the Executive Council as lead Technical Commission for the WIGOS implementation, most if not all elements of the CBS Working Structure and Work Plans have been impacted by the decision at Cg-XVI to implement WIGOS. Although all elements of CBS will contribute to WIGOS, the impact is felt most profoundly by the Open Program Area Group on Integrated Observing Systems (OPAG-IOS), since this OPAG has the overall responsibility within CBS for observing systems.

At its 15th Session in Jakarta, September 2012, the Commission for Basic Systems decided to stand up two new Inter-Program Expert Teams (IPETs) under OPAG-IOS: the Inter-Program Expert Team on Observing System Design and Evolution (IPET-OSDE), and the Inter-Program Expert Team on WIGOS Framework Implementation (IPET-WIFI).

The role of IPET-OSDE is to oversee and coordinate the Rolling Review of Requirements (RRR) for all WMO and co-sponsored observing systems under the WIGOS umbrella. Both the Terms of Reference and the Work Plan for IPET-OSDE are modeled on those used successfully for the Expert Team on the Evolution of the Global Observing System (ET-EGOS) during the previous two inter-sessional periods. However, where ET-EGOS was responsible for the GOS, IPET-OSDE extends to all observing systems under WIGOS and all application areas supported by WMO.

The team is already active in various observing system evaluation and design activities, e.g. the CGMS Tiger Team studying the impact of the various possible orbital configurations of the sun-synchronous part of the space-based component of the Global Observing System. The work of the team is helped very substantially by the excellent progress made by the Secretariat and reported at this meeting on developing the various databases supporting the RRR. Even though IPET-OSDE has grown substantially with respect to ET-EGOS, both in mandate and in membership, the strong track record of ET-EGOS and its predecessors should lead to some confidence in the ability of this team to successfully expand the scope of the RRR to all of WIGOS.

 Unlike IPET-OSDE, its sister team IPET-WIFI does not have an immediate predecessor within CBS and its creation reflects the important role that EC has assigned to CBS intention in the WIGOS implementation and the intention of the Commission to support the work of ICG-WIGOS and its task teams. The four primary activity areas for IPET-WIFI are (i) WIGOS Regulatory Material, (ii) WIGOS Metadata, (iii) WIGOS Quality Management, and (iv) WIGOS Information Resource. Due to the diversity of topical areas and the lack of overlapping expertise, four corresponding sub-groups have been created within IPET-WIFI. The list of core members of the team is relatively short, and given the current resource constraints it is anticipated that a flexible mode of operation will be employed both in terms of meeting schedule and meeting participants.

There are two particular issues regarding these teams that merit some discussion during ICG-WIGOS-2:

The first issue affects both IPET-OSDE and IPET-WIFI and is related to their position in the overall working structure of WMO. The current status is that both teams have been constituted by CBS, and their current respective memberships are therefore both heavily dominated by experts affiliated with CBS. This does not reflect any intention within CBS to “own” these teams. It simply reflects the fact that since no obvious mechanism could be identified through which two or more Technical Commissions could jointly stand up such teams, CBS decided to take the initiative to do so on its own at its last session. The hope is that CIMO and the other TCs will contribute relevant experts to the teams so that they will achieve the true Inter-Program status that WIGOS requires and that is reflected in their names.

The other issue is particular to IPET-WIFI, and regards the respective roles of IPET-WIFI and its sub-groups on one side, and ICG-WIGOS and its Task Teams on the other. The creation of IPET-WIFI reflects that fact that EC designated CBS to be one of the lead Technical Commissions responsible for the WIGOS Implementation, and this team was created specifically to take responsibility for those tasks and activities that could not naturally be accommodated within the existing Working Structure of CBS or OPAG-IOS. However, there are open questions regarding not only the interface with and contributions from the other TC, but also the role vis a vis ICG-WIGOS and its Task Teams. ICG-WIGOS operates under the direction of the Executive Council, and the expectation within CBS is that ICG-WIGOS will help direct the work of IPET-WIFI and that the work of the various ICG-WIGOS Task Teams will gradually be transferred to IPET-WIFI and its subgroups. Feedback from ICG-WIGOS on this notion is requested.