

25-Jan-21

ASB Best Practice Recommendation 142, Best Practice Recommendations for the Resolution of Conflicts in Friction Ridge Examination, First Edition.

#	Section	Revised section	Type of Comment (E-)	Comments	Proposed Resolution	Final Resolution
12	General		T/E	There are circumstances where shall statements are found in BPR documents. It is confusing to see "shall" statements in documents that emphasize "should" statements. There are many "should" statements that should be "shall" statements, but because this is a BPR the suggestion of turning a "should" to a "shall" will get rejected.	If "shall" statements are used in a BPR a reference standard where the "shall" statement originates should be given. If there is no reference document, additional context as to why a shall statement is being used in a BPR should be provided in a note. This comment applies to all of the friction ridge BPR documents that are currently up for comments.	Reject with modification. The ASB does not require a reference standard in a BPR if a "shall" statement is given. Three "should" or "must" statements have been changed to "shall" in sections 4.3.3 and 4.5.
25	Title		E/T	I object to the term "Conflict", a more appropriate term is "Difference of Opinion". Conflict implies a clash, quarrel or dispute. Latent print conclusions are opinions and often with additional information or consultation, the opinion is changed. There is no conflict, there is discussion between two examiners focused on the data that supports the opinions rendered.	Change the title to "Resolution of Difference of Opinions" and replace the term "conflict" throughout the document with "difference of opinion".	Reject. Proposed change is not persuasive enough to justify changing Title.
40	1		T	The fact that this standard does not address inconsistent conclusions at the "consultation level" undermines the goal of the standard to increase transparency, consistency, and quality.	The standard should cover all conflicts among examiners who reach different conclusions based on the same evidence, including consultations.	Reject with modification. This document does cover all conflicts among examiners who reach different conclusions. However, it does not cover "consultations" which are intended to provide additional points of view to the Examiner who is ultimately responsible for the reported decision. These are covered by BPR 145 and are not conflicts. The term "consult" has been removed from this document to clarify this.
30	1		T	We suggest careful thought be given to whether it is appropriate to call this proposed standard a "best practice" recommendation. We urge that the term "best practice" be reserved for describing the most rigorous scientific procedures that are designed to achieve the highest levels of reliability, accuracy and consistency. We recognize that it may not always be possible to achieve "best practices" due to resource limitations and other constraints, and that procedures that fall below "best practices" may nevertheless meet minimum standards of acceptability. We believe it is useful to distinguish between "best practices" (which may be aspirational for some FSPs) and minimal requirements, which all FSPs are expected to meet. Are the procedures set forth here intended to represent "best practices" toward which FSPs should aspire, or are they really minimal requirements that all FSPs are expected to meet?	Consider revising the title and text of this document in order to clarify whether the procedures set forth are aspirational "best practices" designed to identify methods that maximize scientific rigor and accuracy but may not always be achievable in practice, or are minimal requirements that all FSPs must meet.	Reject. View of FRCB is to move forward as BPR. Best practices are aspiration, not minimal requirements.
39	1		T	This standard's stated objective is to improve the quality and consistency of friction ridge examinations. This objective would be better served by making these provisions requirements instead of recommendations.	Change these from best practice recommendations to mandatory standards that implicate accreditation. This change would make these provisions more impactful by ensuring that FSPs adhere to sound practices.	Reject. View of FRCB is to move forward as BPR.
5	1		E		Would be clearer by removing 1st column and adding a conjunction: This document provides the best practice recommendations for how to resolve conflicts between examiners at any point during the technical review or verification process of conflicting suitability decisions or conflicting source conclusions, and documentation of conflict resolution.	Reject. Change is too minor to justify modifying the Scope.

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26	3.1		T	<p>This definition does not line up with the ISO 9000:2015 Quality management systems — Fundamentals and vocabulary. International Organization for Standardization, definition for "Verification" – ((1) a review and independent analysis of the actual evidentiary material to determine whether a positive association can be established and the conclusion of another qualified examiner;).</p> <p>It is not review "or" independent analysis, it is review "and" and independent analysis.</p> <p>Verification was previously defined by SWGFAST as "The independent application of the ACE process as utilized by a subsequent examiner to either support or refute the conclusions of the original examine."</p> <p>A review and a verification are not the same.</p>	Replace "or" with "and".	Reject. Not convinced that "or" is necessarily more inclusive than "and." Blind verification is explained in greater detail in section 4.3.3.1
	3.1			In response to a consensus body coment		decisions, conclusion" was replaced by "conclusion"
43	3.1		T	This definition allows for non-blind verification and should specify that all verification must be blind. Furthermore, this definition allows for a verifier to opt-out of a re-examination of the samples in lieu of documented data, which is undefined.	Define verification as a blind re-examination of the questioned and (if applicable) reference samples.	Reject. Document 144 covers verification, and does not require all verification be blind.
	3.5	3.6		In response to a consensus body coment		Definition for "observed data" was updated for clarity.
3	3.6		E	Using the OSAC standard for Friction Ridge Examination Conclusions , when there is a number of Latent Print Examiners that are not in agreement with the five possible results conclusion. This can be ethical line that many Examiners will not be able to agree with. Even if the Examiner used conclusion the Support for Same Source or Support for Different Source for some of the latent prints in examination the Technical Reviewer may not be able to agree with this outcome because it is subjective result. What makes a print more likely than not (51%) or more not likely than likely (49%) is an exercise in futility and can lead to more conflict in the review stage. The whole idea using the "probability" that the latent print and exemplar came from the same source or not, is watering down the result to the point that there is no point. If the answer is a best guess why would the court want to take that guess into account?	Use standard examination conclusions: Exclusion , Same Source, Inconclusive	Reject with modification. Document 013 covers conclusions. Section 3.6 deleted. Section 3.2, consistent with Document 016, added.
38	3.6		T	In this section, five source conclusions are listed. The committee seems to take for granted that this is the way things are going. We respectfully disagree. Again, five categories is confusing and useless to all our customers, per conversations with our customers. We agree that the three categories currently in use should be defined so as to conform with current scientific knowledge. But three categories is sufficient for purpose.	Get rid of the extraneous conclusions.	Reject with modification. Document 013 covers conclusions. Section 3.6 deleted. Section 3.2, consistent with Document 016, added.

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41	3.6		T	The inclusion of pseudo-probabilistic inclusionary/exclusionary statements in the definition of source conclusion is not supported by empirical data and is misleading. There is no attempt to define the differences between a categorical opinion and the "support" statements.	Without empirically derived, precisely defined criteria for each one of these propositions, such vague categories should not be used in casework and should be omitted from this standard. Instead, we recommend the adoption of the terminology previously submitted by defense and forensic organizations regarding ASB Standard 13. Furthermore, the term "inconclusive" should be defined, and the term "lacking support" should be defined and given their own definition category as they are by definition not source conclusions.	Reject with modification. Document 013 covers conclusions. Section 3.6 deleted. Section 3.2, consistent with Document 016, added.
36	3.8	3.8 was deleted	T	unclear why section 3.8 is broken out from 3.7 which also includes "suitability for comparison decisions" as part of its definition	suggest combining 3.7 & 3.8	Accept with modification. We deleted 3.8 as redundant to 3.7 and second sentence of 3.7 as not definitional. We also put "utility decisions" in parentheses. "Decisions" was changed to "decision" in two places in this definition.
31	3.9	revised to 3.8	E	The current language of Sections 3.9 and 4.0 does not make it sufficiently clear what the difference is between technical review and verification. The distinction may be clear to subject matter experts, but not to readers from the broader community of lawyers, academics and others who will rely on these standards. We suggest some possible language to clarify the distinction (as we understand it).	Revise Section 3.9 as follows: "A qualified second party's evaluation of reports, notes, data, and other documentation to ensure that appropriate and sufficient procedures have been followed."	Reject. OSAC Preferred Term is used.
42	3.9	revised to 3.8	T	Given that a technical reviewer is not called upon to conduct a second independent examination of the evidence, the technical reviewer is not in a position to ensure "sufficient support for the . . . conclusions. . . .". This overly expansive definition risks confusion between the technical review and verification roles.	Include language that clearly cabins the technical review to a review of the case file to check that the documentation adheres with FSP SOPs as opposed to a review of the ultimate suitability or feature comparison decision.	Reject. OSAC Preferred Term is used.
6	3.Ten	revised to 3.9	T/E	This terminology and definition imply (or actually states explicitly) that the initial conclusion will be confirmed.	It would be more objective to define this term as "examination of observed data by another examiner to determine if a conclusion or opinion conforms to specified requirements and is reproducible. Similarly, the more neutral term "examiner" or "reviewer" would be preferred over "verifier" throughout the document.	Accept with modification. Definition has been revised.
32	4		E	The current language of Sections 3.9 and 4.0 does not make it sufficiently clear what the difference is between technical review and verification. The distinction may be clear to subject matter experts, but not to readers from the broader community of lawyers, academics and others who will rely on these standards. We suggest some possible language to clarify the distinction (as we understand it).	Revise Section 4.0 as follows: "Re-examination of the same impressions evaluated by the initial examiner using the FSP's policies and procedures relating to analysis, comparison, and evaluation of friction ridge impressions. The goal is to compare the resulting decisions on suitability and source with the initial examiner's decisions in order to determine whether any substantial difference exists between them."	Reject with modification. The definition has been revised for consistency with Document 016 and Document 144.
21	4.2	it is now 4.1.1	E	This section states "A conflict may be resolved through a consultation among the conflicting examiners, or it may escalate to requiring blind verification, consensus opinion, or an outside agency review." The use of the word "consultation" here is problematic given the statement in the Scope ... "This document does not address differences of opinion that occur at the consultation level...". Consultation is a specific term that has different meaning & requirements than is being used in this section.	Replace "consultation among" in this section with "discussion between" to avoid confusion with other documents.	Accept with modification. Changed to "substantive discussion of the support for decisions or conclusions"

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44	4.2	it is now 4.1.1	T	Given the grave consequences for the accused that can result from the admission of unreliable forensic evidence, it is critical that conflicting conclusions be resolved with more formality and oversight than a mere "consultation among conflicting examiners."	Consultation among conflicting examiners should not be an available means by which inconsistent opinions are resolved. There is too much room for interpersonal dynamics, bias, peer pressure, and other improper influences over the ultimate determination. Instead, blind, enhanced verification by additional examiners should be the minimum action taken by an FSP in the event of conflicting conclusions.	Reject with modification. Changed to "substantive discussion of the support for decisions or conclusions." FRCB view is that substantive discussion of the support for decisions or conclusions is adequate for conflict resolution in some cases and not to require blind verification in all cases.
7	4.2	4.1	T/E		Although this is a best practice document, there needs to be a statement saying that FSPs shall require a policy for conflict resolution. This statement can be added to 4.2. The sentence could say "FSPs shall have a policy for conflict resolution."	Accept. This language was added as its own section, now section 4.1
22	4.3.2	now it is 4.1.2.2	E	This section states "The original examiner and the second examiner (verifier) should attempt to resolve the conflicting suitability decisions or source conclusions via consultation with an attempt to arrive at a mutually agreed upon decision or conclusion that is best supported by the observed data." As above, the use of "consultation" in this section may be problematic.	Replace "consultation" in this section with "discussion" to avoid confusion with other documents.	Accept with modification. Changed to "substantive discussion."
45	4.3.2		T	For the reasons listed above in 4.2, it is not appropriate for something as informal, unstructured and susceptible to bias as a "remediating interaction" to suffice for the resolution of inconsistent source conclusions among examiners.	Remove the FSP's discretion to ignore the casework error, include reporting requirements to the defense and prosecution, and mandate a quality assurance process be initiated.	Accept with modification. Sections 4.3.2.1, 4.3.2.1.1, and 4.3.2.1.2 were removed. Documentation in all cases is now covered by section 4.3
4	4.3.2.1.1		E	There appears to be a bias in the possible consequences for switch print of no value to print of value, "it shall be left up to the FSP to determine if there is a consequence (e.g. removed from casework, corrective action, etc.)". The same statement is not made for a switch of print of value to print of no value. Why are one of the results treated different than other, if the original value determination was deemed incorrect. Also the possible consequences are only for the original examiner not the verifying examiner, if the conflict resolution results in no change in the value determination. This whole section can have a chilling effect on open communication and willingness to compromise between examiners. The print in question most commonly is a complex low quality print. If the print is of high quality and there is a repeated occurrence then there should be some sort of action taken.	Either remove the statement about consequences or make the same statement for the change from value to no value. There should also be a consequence for the verifier if they want to change the value and it is determined that the original value should be retained.	Accept. Removed
8	4.3.2.1.1		T/E		Just as changes from "value" to "no value" should be documented in the case record, so should changes from "no value" to "value." Documentation of this change would be important for quality management reviews and can potentially impact the course of a case.	Accept with modification. Sections removed. Documentation in all cases is covered by section 4.3

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33	4.3.2.1.1		T	We noticed an asymmetry between Sections 4.3.2.1.1 and 4.3.2.1.2. The former suggests that examiners may suffer professional consequences (e.g., removal from casework) if they mistakenly fail to render a "value" decision; while the latter suggests no such repercussions would follow from a mistaken decision of "no value." From a human factors perspective, such asymmetries are problematic because they may create a bias in examiners' decisions (i.e., when in doubt, find "value" because doing so reduces risk of punishment). If that is what those drafting this standard intend, they should say so and offer justification. If, as we suspect, this not what was intended, then the language should be changed to eliminate the asymmetry. We suggest ways to do that. More broadly, some members of the Human Factors Task Group question whether it is ever appropriate to threaten examiners with professional sanctions for a single error. Professional discipline procedures are perhaps an issue needing separate standards.	Change 4.3.2.1.1 to read: "If the conflict resolution process results in the original examiner changing a "no value" decision to a "value" decision, it should be left up to the FSP to determine if there is a consequence (e.g., removed from casework, corrective action, etc.) to the original examiner for not rendering a source conclusion. The original examiner's "no value" conclusion shall be kept in the case record."	Accept with modification. Sections removed. Documentation in all cases is covered by section 4.3
46	4.3.2.1.1			Given that what this provision describes is akin to a false negative error occurring in casework, this amounts to exculpatory Brady evidence. Accordingly, the U.S. Constitution requires that the error be documented and that the FSP disclose the error to the affected parties. It is also of vital importance that such an error trigger the FSP's quality corrective action process in response.	Remove the FSP's discretion to ignore the casework error, include reporting requirements to the defense and prosecution, and mandate a quality assurance process be initiated.	Accept with modification. Sections removed. Documentation in all cases is covered by section 4.3
27	4.3.2.1.1			Discussion of consequences is outside the scope of this document and is stated in the scope. "This document does not address differences of opinion that occur at the consultation level or any organizational response once an error is discovered or the conflict(s) are resolved."	Remove 4.3.2.1.1	Accept
37	4.3.2.1.1/4.2.2.1.2		T	Suggest adding "the original examiner's source conclusion shall be kept in the case record" similar to 4.3.2.1.2. Also consider moving "it should be left up to the FSP to determine if there is a consequence (e.g., removed from casework, corrective action, etc.) to the original examiner for not rendering a source conclusion." to a foot note for the section	4.3.2.1.1 If the conflict resolution process results in the original examiner changing a "no value" decision to a "value" decision, the original examiner's source conclusion shall be kept in the case record. 4.3.2.1.2 If the conflict resolution process results in the original examiner changing a "value" decision (and resulting conclusion) to a "no value" decision, the original examiner's source conclusion shall be kept in the case record. It should be left up to the FSP to determine if there is a consequence (e.g., removed from casework, corrective action, etc.) to the original examiner for not rendering the correct source conclusion.	Accept with modification. Sections removed. Documentation in all cases is covered by section 4.3
13	4.3.2.1.1/4.3.2.1.2		T	Both are the same in terms of consequences. Perhaps even (wrong) a value > no value decision needs measures	same text (= sense, not 1-to-1) for 4.3.2.1.2 as for 4.3.2.1.1	Accept with modification. Sections removed. Documentation in all cases is covered by section 4.3
34	4.3.2.1.2		T	See comment on Section 4.3.2.1.1	Change 4.3.2.1.2 to read: "If the conflict resolution process results in the original examiner changing a "value" decision (and resulting conclusion) to a "no value" decision, it should be left up to the FSP to determine if there is a consequence (e.g., removed from casework, corrective action, etc.) to the original examiner for rendering a source conclusion. The original examiner's source conclusion shall be kept in the case record."	Accept with modification. Sections removed. Documentation in all cases is covered by section 4.3

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48	4.3.3	now it is 4.1.2.3		For the reasons stated in 4.2 and 4.3.2, it is important that this standard mandate institutional oversight in the event that two examiners reach inconsistent conclusions	While we agree that an examiner should not be coerced into changing their answer, this standard should set out procedures that protect against precisely that. As currently written, the standard fails to call for sufficient safeguards.	Accept with modification. Changed "should" to "shall" and made sentence more straightforward. We don't know what additional procedures we can implement to prevent this.
1	4.3.3	now it is 4.1.2.3	T	Should is being using inconsistently here with the listed definition of how "should" will be used in the document	Reword to something like "Examiners should not be forced or coerced into agreeing with, or writing a technical report in support of, a source conclusion with which they do not agree."	Accept with modifications. Changed to "shall."
28	4.3.3	now it is 4.1.2.3		An examiner should not be forced into agreeing with any conclusion/opinion, not just limited to "in support of a source conclusion"	Replace "in support of, a source conclusion" with "in support on any conclusion/opinion"	Accept
23	4.3.3.1.1	now it is 4.1.2.3.1	E	This section states " If the third examiner wishes to consult with either the original or second examiner,...". As above, the use of "consult" in this section may be problematic.	Replace "consult" in this section with "discuss" or "confer" to avoid confusion with other documents.	Accept. Changed to confer.
49	4.3.3.1.1	now it is 4.1.2.3.1		The three decisions of conclusions should be reviewed by a 4th person and the decision of how the case should proceed should be fully documented.	The three decisions of conclusions should be reviewed by a 4th person and the decision of how the case should proceed should be fully documented.	Reject. FRCB view is that this is too onerous.
14	4.3.3.1.1	now it is 4.1.2.3.1	T	text: ..should compare the friction... Not only compare but also analyze if there is a no value/value situation	add the 'analyze situation'	Accept. "Compare" changed to "examine"
35	4.3.3.1.1	now it is 4.1.2.3.1	T	If these are indeed "best practice" guidelines then we believe that the third examiner should also be shielded from any task irrelevant information about the case, such as police report, witness statements or other information that is not needed for interpreting the impressions.	Change: "This should be done blindly, i.e., the third examiner should be shielded from the decisions, conclusions and documented data of the other two examiners." Change To "This should be done blindly, i.e., the third examiner should be shielded from the decisions, conclusions and documented data of the other two examiners, and from any other task-irrelevant information (i.e., information that is not needed to interpret the impressions)."	Accept with modification. Change accepted and "should" changed to "shall."
47	4.3.3.1.2	now it is 4.1.2.3.1.2		Given what the provision describes is akin to a false positive casework error, it is necessary, but not sufficient, for the FSP to document the error in the case record. Because this is exculpatory Brady evidence, it would, in fact, be unconstitutional for the FSP to attempt to suppress such exculpatory information.	Require that the FSP initiate its quality corrective action process in response and disclose the error to the defense and prosecution.	Reject with modification. Corrective action is not within the scope of this document. Section 4.3 is responsive to the concern about disclosure. Section was updated
20	From CB Member	now it is 4.1.2.3.1.2 and 4.1.2.3.1.2		4.3.3.1.2 and 4.3.3.1.3 is supporting verification shopping. Conclusions reported should be those that are supported not those where two people are found that agree.		Reject with modification. How would the FSP determine which conclusion is supported? Assignment to the "winning" examiner is simply a practical measure to have the report prepared by the examiner who holds the position the report expresses. Section was updated.
2	4.3.3.1.3	now it is 4.1.2.3.1.2	T	if the original examiner agrees with the conclusion of the second and third examiner after consultation they should not have to be removed as the examiner in the case. When presented with new/conflicting data that is persuasive it is in line with science for the initial examiner to change their mind. all documentation should be retained in the case but it should not preclude the initial examiner from completing the case with the updated conclusion	Reword statement to say "If the third examiner agrees with the suitability decisions or source conclusions of the second examiner and the first examiner is still in disagreement, the case should be transferred to a supervisor/technical lead for review to determine additional testing as needed."	Reject with modification. Assignment to the "winning" examiner is simply a practical measure to have the report prepared by the examiner who holds the position the report expresses. Section was updated.
50	4.3.3.2	Now it is 4.1.2.3.2		This standard should specify the minimum number of examiners necessary for a consensus panel.	The consensus panel should include at least one senior examiner and at least one management level staff.	Reject with modification. FRCB view is that this is too onerous. Management personnel are not always the appropriate people to have on a consensus panel (for example, when they are not latent print examiners, or have not done casework in years due to their management position). Section was updated.

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15	4.3.3.3	Now it is 4.1.2.3.3	T	If an outside agency is needed, the agency should be accredited	complete	Reject. This will be required if FSP is accredited. FRCB view is not to recommend this if FSP is not accredited.
29	4.4	now 4.2	T	The "No Consensus Source Conclusion "approach should be listed as on option equal to Blind Verification, Consensus Review and Outside Review and not just available as a last resort.	Change to "It is acceptable to report that a consensus conclusion could not be reach after consultation between the original examiner and the verifying examiner."	Reject. "No Consensus Source Conclusion" is not an approach. It is an outcome. While FRCB recognizes a potential concern about "forcing" a consensus, our view is that stopping the conflict resolution process after substantive discussion is not a best practice.
51	4.4	now 4.2		In the event there are conflicting conclusions reached by examiners, FSPs are constitutionally mandated to provide these conflicting conclusions as Brady information to the prosecutor, who must then disclose it to the defense. This standard should not imply that anything less than full documentation and disclosure of inconsistent conclusions—regardless of how the FSP ultimately resolved the conflict-- is necessary.	This section should be re-configured and turned into a rule requiring full documentation and disclosure of conflicting source conclusions regardless of whether consensus is later reached. The conflicting opinions must be documented and provided to the prosecution and to the defendant.	Accept with modification. This section has been edited to make clear that all conclusions must be recorded in the case record. The case record is discoverable, but in some cases will have to be requested. FRCB does not support requiring all conclusions be included in the report. However, the section has been edited to make clear that the report must state that a consensus could not be reached, which may serve as notice to request the full case record in order to see the original conclusions.
17	4.5	Now 4.3	T	e) > the reason of the changes has to be documented	complete with 'document reason(s) of changes'	Reject with modification. The proposal is partly covered by the requirements of the Examination Standards and partially by 4.3.b. FRCB view is that further requirements are too onerous. Section was updated.
11	4.5	Now 4.3	T/E		Why is it optional for FSP management to have a procedure to track the causes and frequency of conflicts between examiners? This seems like a very important quality control measure that should be mandatory for FSPs. The "should" in the sentence should be changed to a "shall."	Reject. FRCB view is that this is not necessary.
18	4.5	Now 4.3	T	recommandation: the material has to be stored and used for further training	add	Reject. FRCB view is that this is not necessary.
52	4.5	Now 4.3		The language recommending documentation should be mandatory.	Proposed language is as follows: "the documentation must include the following"... "FSP management must have processes in place. . . ." "The types of conflict. . . shall inform the need for. . .".	Accept with modification. First statement changed to "shall." Second two statements stand.
9	4.5	Now 4.3	T/E		To follow the explanation of "shall" in the foreword, the "must" in the first sentence of this section should be changed to "shall.	Accept
10	4.5	Now 4.3		If the documentation recommendations listed are best practices for conflict resolution, what are the minimum requirements that a FSP must follow to document conflict? Will this information be captured in a standard?	The word "must" is used in this standard and implies that the action described is mandatory for FSPs. We are suggesting that must should be substituted with "shall." The minimum documentation standards should be identified and be made mandatory in this document.	Accept
16	4.5	Now 4.3	T	should include the following: for a transparent chain of custody and transparency: shall	should > shall	Accept
24	4.5 d)	Now 4.3 d)	E	This section states "d) dates and outcomes of consultations between examiners;" As above, the use of "consultation" in this section may be problematic.	Replace "consultations" in this section with "discussions" to avoid confusion with other documents.	Accept.
19	From CB Member			Voting Yes with one comment: It was brought up during at least one discussion that this does not read as a "how to" (procedure) as much as it is a policy document. Suggestion is to remove the how to portion of the statement and simply say: This document provides the best practice recommendations for the resolution of conflicts between...		Reject. FRCB view is that this document does contain some "how to." Proposed change is not persuasive enough to justify modifying the Scope.