



ABOUT THE STEERING GROUP | **SDG NETWORK SCOTLAND**

This short paper about SDG Network Scotland's steering group provides guidelines for the role of the group, how it is formed, and expectations of a successful group. The steering group helps make important decisions about the work and activity of the network

SDG Network Scotland

Steering group guidelines

This paper provides information about SDG Network Scotland's Steering Group and how you can get involved through the bi-annual nominations process or by being co-opted onto the steering group. Please review the network's [terms of reference](#) before reading this paper.

The document was updated on 14th October 2020 for the 2020-22 Steering Group period.

Purpose

The steering group exists for those interested in overseeing and supporting the development and coordination of SDG Network Scotland to engage individuals and organisations in implementing the 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals in Scotland and globally. It will give strategic direction and support the delivery of network activities.

Principles

Steering Group members have a particular responsibility to abide by and exhibit the network behaviours relating to members' perspectives, power, and participation as outlined in the network's terms of reference. They must support the key values outlined in the [UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#).

Roles and responsibilities

In order to achieve its purpose and principles, the Steering Group will carry out the following roles:

- Be accountable for strategic oversight of the network and associated activities
- Develop, monitor and update network objectives
- Be the point of contact for external strategic relationships, such as with government
- Regularly report back to all members of the network on meetings and decisions
- Engage with the network's membership as thoroughly as possible on matters that arise
- Actively support and promote the network, SDGs and sustainable development
- Encourage engagement through network channels, including social, web and forum
- Approve the creation of flexible collaboration groups as proposed by members
- Approve the use of network signatures, network consensus and coordinator's statement
- Contribute to identifying sources of funding and support for the network
- Actively support diversity and inclusion and consideration of equalities
- Select a Chair for the Steering Group
- Co-opt new members of the Steering Group as required
- Uphold the network's terms of reference and review these as required

Membership

- The steering group is made up of 8-10 nominated/elected members and no more than 3 co-opted members at a time (maximum number of 13 members).
- For nominated/elected positions, membership of the steering group will be determined by an open two-step nomination and election process through the network.

- Terms of nominated/elected members of the Steering Group are for the duration of two years, after which places are put up for re-selection.
- Terms of co-opted members of the Steering Group are for the duration of one year but co-opted members can be reselected for another term where there is clear benefit to the network. Co-opted members are selected by the Steering Group.
- The selection process for co-opted members seeks to support and improve the diversity of the group.
- The selection process for co-opted members also seeks to fill any skills gaps or needs the group may identify.
- The steering group will have a Chair elected by the members of the Steering Group for the duration of two years.
- The role of the Chair is to keep the network's purpose, mission and strategic direction in mind as the steering group pursues its course, and lead meetings and be the point of contact for the steering group.
- In line with network behaviours and supporting participation, the Chair must ensure all members of the steering group have the space to contribute to discussions.
- In the case of a member or the Chair standing down, the usual processes are adopted to find a replacement.
- Steering group members must use their membership to promote the public interest and nominees must declare any interests that may influence their representation on the steering group.
- The steering group should be as representative as possible across the 17 SDGs and bring a range of skills, experiences, and backgrounds. The selection process will support this aim as best as possible.
- Steering members should clearly highlight if they are representing an organisation or are unattached - members cannot do both and must be clear about their role. Where they are representing an organisation, they must have the endorsement of that organisation and relevant information about this connection should be shared with voters as requested in the nomination form.
- Individuals working at certain organisations or bodies should check their own codes to see if they are allowed to participate in the network in this way.

Diversity and inclusion

- A key role of the steering group will be to consider how it improves diversity in the short, medium, and long term, as part of improving governance. This includes both in terms of the steering group and the wider network membership.
- Best practice for the network's governance would be to form a diversity action plan with annual reporting on what actions have been taken to address diversity on the steering group and wider network membership. In doing so, the steering group should consider how they will ensure those designing an action plan have equalities competence by drawing on expertise within or outside of the network.
- Before the steering group is in place, efforts will be made to ensure that a diverse pool of network members are encouraged to put themselves forward for nomination. This will be communicated in the initial call for nominations and subsequent communications. At least one online information session should be held prior to the nominations deadline to encourage nominations and the answer questions about the roles.
- In the case of an election, when casting their votes members of the network will be encouraged to consider the diversity of the steering group and the range of skills sets needed for good governance.
- The steering group will conduct a skills and diversity audit upon appointment to understand the experience and backgrounds of those nominated/elected, to identify gaps and use this

information to inform the co-option process. The skills audit should include equalities competency.

- Members of the steering group are asked to support each other in a culture where all members of the steering group are able to participate effectively and for arrangements to be made to enable this as best as practically possible.
- Diversity is important at the governance level of any group. Not only should the network represent and have a deeper understanding of society and stakeholders, it must look to build a better sense of community as it develops further.
- All members of the Steering Group must be mindful of the different protected groups, they should be mindful of the specific barriers to participation, and be mindful of intersectionality, too.

Selection process

- Members will be selected through a two-step nomination and election process.
- All members of the network can nominate themselves or another member for a position on the Steering Group during a two-week nomination period.
- To support a broad membership of the steering group, all nominees will be asked to answer a series of questions to aid network members in casting their votes. This data must be handled in line with GDPR.
- In the case that there are just enough candidates to fill the vacant spots or less candidates than vacancies, those candidates will be appointed to the vacant roles and no election is required.
- Where there are more candidates than vacant spots, nominations will then be put to a vote by network members over a week-long voting period.
- The network will be notified of the outcome within the following week of the voting period closing.
- The steering group members will select a Chair for the group.
- The steering group members will be able to co-opt additional members to the steering group as per the guidance above.

Elections

- Where elections are needed, all members of SDG Network Scotland are entitled to vote to select Steering Group members from the network.
- Members of the SDG Network Scotland are classed as those with a registered email address on the network's online forum.
- The vote will take place as a Borda Count.
- On the online or plain text polling cards, all members of the network will be asked to rank the candidates by preference. A first preference is worth 4 points, a second preference = 3 points, third = 2, fourth = 1.
- At the close of the vote, candidates' scores will be totalled up, and those with the highest total scores will be elected onto the Steering Group.
- Key information submitted by nominees during the nomination process will be shared with those casting their votes to support their decision making, along with guidance to encourage members' votes to deliver a steering group as representative as possible across the 17 SDGs and a range of skills, experiences, and backgrounds.
- To ensure transparency, the results data will be published, minus any information identifying voters.
- Voters will be required to submit the email address that is linked to their SDG Network Scotland account. This is so we can check for duplicate votes.

Meetings

- It is likely that the Steering Group will meet once every quarter at a minimum. Members should be able to dedicate a few hours a month for the role.
- As part of supporting each other in a culture where all members of the steering group are able to participate effectively, the Chair must work with all members of the group to acknowledge barriers to participation (such as timings of meetings) to enable all members to participate.
- Steering Group members must report on the outcome of each Steering Group meeting and circulate items for discussion on the forum prior to the meetings.
- The activity of the steering group will be shared on the Network forum, and the steering group will convene a meeting open to all members at least once every quarter.
- All steering group papers, agendas and notes will be stored online for all members of the network to access.
- Members will also be able to observe meetings of the steering group. By joining a meeting you are not automatically on the steering group - elections and co-options must take place for this.
- Meeting minutes should be taken by different members of the steering group at each meeting and the meeting chair should also revolve.
- Decisions made by the Steering Group should normally be by consensus at Steering Group meetings. Where a vote is required each member shall have one vote.
- Where the vote is split, the Chair will have the casting vote.

Changes to this document

This document and the process it contains can be amended by attaining network consensus as per the terms of reference for the network.

2020 nominations process

We are opening nominations for 8-10 spaces on the Steering Group for SDG Network Scotland. The Steering Group is to be filled by members of the network.

Members can nominate themselves via this [form](#) (this form is only available on the network's forum) from midday Friday 16th October until midday 30th October 2020.

Members can also recommend another member of the network for a position on the steering group until midday Friday 23rd October 2020 to allow us to reach out to them.

Selection timeline

26th August	Review terms of reference with network
8th September	Interim steering group meets to discuss feedback
End of September	Final terms of reference shared with network
16th October (midday)	Nomination process opens
21st October	Online information session for nominations
23rd October (midday)	Closing date for recommending other members
30th October (midday)	Closing day for nominating candidates
3rd November (midday)	Election starts (if required) or results announced
10th November (midday)	Election ends
13th November (midday)	Results announced

Put yourself forward

The steering group needs members to help drive forward the development and delivery of SDG Network Scotland. If that sounds like you, please put your name forward via the [form](#) (this form is only available on the network's forum).

Recommend someone

We need your help in identifying good candidates. Use the same [form](#) (this form is only available on the network's forum) to suggest someone, and we will get in touch with them to recommend they apply.

Who can vote?

All members of SDG Network Scotland are entitled to vote to select Steering Group members from the network.

Notification of results

The results of the nominations process will be published on 3rd November and, if required, the election results will be published on 13th November.

Next nominations period

The steering group will ensure, as per the terms of reference, that the next formal nominations process will take place in October 2022, unless new nominations are required as the result of an existing member standing down mid-term.