



Steering Committee Terms of Reference

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Roles and responsibilities

The Steering Committee (SC) works to execute the Main Object of the IFNC (see Appendix). It acts as an expert advisory group to the Forum, meeting quarterly to critically assess the performance of the IFNC against the multiannual strategy, set by the Board, and the annual work plan. The Secretariat sets the SC meeting agendas and issues the minutes.

Each member of the SC also acts as a champion for the IFNC and the natural capital approach. For example, SC members are expected to engage in the following activities:

- Promote the IFNC and its work
- Advocate for the natural capital approach within their organisation and networks
- Contribute to IFNC communications by writing blogs, providing quotes for press releases, provide interviews to journalists, deliver presentations at conferences etc.
- Provide thought leadership on the development and application of natural capital concepts by contributing to the preparation of learning resources such as the [Quick Reads](#)
- Lead Working Groups¹ as appropriate activities and report results back to SC
- Where a member has applicable expertise, they are invited to contribute to the preparation of IFNC responses to government policy consultations e.g. the Marine Spatial Planning Framework, the National Adaptation Plan etc.

At the Q4 meeting each year, SC members will be invited to report back to the SC on the activities above.

Term

Elected representatives sit on the SC for a term of 2 years. There is no limit to the number of terms a person can serve, provided they are elected. To ensure continuity from one Committee to the next, a minimum of 4 members remain for a further 2 years.

Attendance

SC members are expected to attend all meetings. If a member cannot attend, they are invited to send a deputy from their organisation. Members should notify the Secretariat and Chair if they are unable to attend a meeting. If an SC member fails to attend two consecutive meetings without contacting the Secretariat or sending a deputy, the Chair will request a meeting with the SC member to review their participation. An attendance record will be issued at the end of each year. No organisation may have more than one representative, though additional representatives from the same organisation may attend meetings as observers, if agreed with the Secretariat in advance.

Members of the IFNC Board and the IFNC's Financial Officer may attend SC meetings at any time, but are not obliged to do so.

¹ Working Groups comprised of SC representatives and IFNC members may be established to complete tasks or develop IFNC policy. An example would be an SC member leading a Business Working Group made up of IFNC members with relevant business expertise. The Group would meet to complete a short project e.g. a briefing paper on business and natural capital, and report results back to SC.

Composition

The Steering Committee aims to bring together a diverse set of expertise and skills to support the ambitions of the Forum. Membership of the SC is limited to 20 people, and no organisation may have more than one voting representative.

Seven places are reserved on the SC for:

- Past and present funders of the IFNC. As of 2020, this includes the EPA, DCCAE, DAFM and NPWS.
- The Chair of the IFNC Board.

Sectors

A minimum of two places are reserved for each of the following sectors.

- Public sector
- Private sector
- Academia
- NGOs and Civil society
- Independents

Skills

The Steering Committee aims to achieve a balance between the following skills:

- Communications & marketing e.g. knowledge of PR and media engagement
- Scientific, technical and policy e.g. subject matter experts
- Government relations & fundraising
- Business & finance
- Strategic/organisational planning

Gender

The Steering Committee must achieve a minimum gender split of 30% / 70%.

Elections

The SC is elected by the IFNC membership. Any IFNC member can nominate themselves for election to the SC. To ensure continuity from one Committee to the next, a minimum of 4 members remain for a further 2 years. Any SC member wishing to remain on the SC must put themselves up for election (see above information on *Term*).

Elections take place every 2 years in December, so that the new SC members can begin their term in January. Nominations are submitted to the Secretariat by a given deadline, and then all members vote online. Nominees must indicate which of the sectors listed above they represent, and the primary skill that they bring to the SC. Voters must be members of the IFNC on the day that elections are opened in order to vote.

The elections are administered by the Secretariat, taking into account the considerations above relating to skills and sector representation. The decision of the Secretariat is final.

Chair of the Steering Committee

Role

The role of the SC Chair is to manage the SC and ensure that SC members can make the most of their time on the SC. Therefore, they are asked to understand the skillsets of SC members and assign tasks and projects accordingly. They oversee the composition of the SC and engagement levels of SC members. The Chair chairs the quarterly SC meetings and frequently oversees and reviews the work of the Secretariat to support them in achieving IFNC objectives.

Term and time commitment

The role requires a time commitment of approximately 3 hours per month and the SC Chair leads the SC for a term of 2 years.

Election

Every two years, at the first meeting of the new SC, nominations for the role of Chair and Deputy Chair are submitted to the Secretariat. SC members may nominate themselves in order to be considered for the role, or be proposed (with their consent) by another SC member. The Secretariat then organises the Steering Committee to vote on these nominations online.

Deputy Chair of the Steering Committee

The Deputy Chair deputises for the SC Chair at meetings when the Chair is not present. The Deputy Chair also supports the management of the Steering Committee and line management of the Secretariat as required.

Term and time commitment

The role requires a time commitment of approximately 3 hours per month for a term of 2 years.

Election

Every two years, at the first meeting of the new SC, nominations for the role of Chair and Deputy Chair are submitted to the Secretariat. SC members may nominate themselves in order to be considered for the role, or be proposed (with their consent) by another SC member. The Secretariat then organises the Steering Committee to vote on these nominations online.

Appendix

Main object of the Irish Forum on Natural Capital

The main object for which the Company is established (the "Main Object") is to carry on all the business of the Forum in helping to value, protect and restore Ireland's natural capital, ecosystem goods and services.

Subsidiary objects of the Irish Forum on Natural Capital

The following objects set out hereafter are exclusively subsidiary and ancillary to the main object set out above and these objects are to be used only for the attainment of that main object and any income generated therefrom is to be applied for the main object only.

- Support the adoption of natural capital concepts in public policy and businesses corporate strategy
- Promote informed public and private decision making in respect of natural capital
- Support and promote the establishment of natural capital accounting standards
- Raise awareness of natural capital with relevant organisations and groups and with the general public
- Cooperate and engage with relevant public and private organisations in the protection, valuing and restoration of Ireland’s natural capital, ecosystem goods and services.