

Elections Policy

Version history

| Version | Date Adopted | Facilitator | Note |
|---------|--------------|-------------|------|
| 1.0 | | | |

Document controls

| Action | Responsibility |
|----------------------|--|
| Approval of document | Secretariat and Plenary |
| Implementation | Secretariat, Plenary, Staff and Supervisory Working Group, Members |
| Review | Secretariat |
| Date of next review | |

1. Purpose and Scope

1.1 Purpose

The purpose of this Elections Policy is to set out a fair, transparent and consistent process for the election and selection of:

- members of the SDC PPN Secretariat, and
- PPN Representatives to external committees, boards and fora.

This policy supports democratic participation, accountability and good governance in line with the PPN Handbook and national PPN best practice.

1.2 Scope

This policy applies to:

- elections to the Secretariat, and
- the election, selection or ratification of PPN Representatives to external bodies.

This policy does not apply to the operation of linkage groups or the selection of linkage group facilitators or participants, which are addressed separately.

2. Principles

Elections within SDC PPN are guided by the principles set out in the PPN Handbook and national best practice. These include:

- openness and transparency in all election processes
- fairness and equality of opportunity for all eligible member groups
- democratic decision-making by the PPN membership
- accountability of elected representatives to the membership
- inclusion and accessibility, ensuring barriers to participation are minimised

Election processes are designed to be clear, proportionate and easy to understand.

3. Eligibility

3.1 Eligibility for Secretariat Membership

To be eligible to stand for election to the Secretariat, a nominee must:

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- be a member of an organisation that is a registered member of SDC PPN
- be authorised by their member organisation to represent it
- meet any eligibility requirements set out in the PPN Constitution and Standing Orders
- not be disqualified under any relevant conflict of interest or conduct provisions

Secretariat membership reflects the agreed composition of the PPN, including pillar and geographic balance, where applicable.

3.2 Eligibility for PPN Representatives to External Bodies

To be eligible to stand as a PPN Representative to an external committee or body, a nominee must:

- be authorised by a registered PPN member organisation
- meet any eligibility criteria required by the external body
- have the capacity to attend meetings and report back to the PPN
- agree to act in line with the PPN's Code of Conduct and representation requirements

4. Nominations

Individuals may self-nominate for election to the Secretariat or as a PPN Representative.

All nominations must be confirmed in writing by the nominating organisation to verify that the individual is authorised to represent that group. Confirmation must be provided by the organisation's main registered contact, as held by SDC PPN, and is normally provided by email.

Nominations that are not properly confirmed will not be accepted.

5. Election Method and Voting

Elections are conducted using a mixed approach to support accessibility, participation and timely decision-making.

Where possible, elections are held at a Plenary meeting, either in person or in a hybrid format.

Online voting may be used where appropriate, including:

- to fill vacancies

- where timing does not align with a scheduled Plenary
- to support accessibility and participation

All election methods must ensure fairness, transparency and equal opportunity for eligible member groups to participate.

6. Voting System

Elections operate on the basis of one member group, one vote.

Each eligible member organisation may cast one vote in any election, regardless of the number of individuals attending or participating.

Voting procedures are clearly communicated in advance of each election.

7. Oversubscription and Uncontested Elections

Where there are more candidates than available positions, a vote is held in line with the agreed election method.

Where the number of candidates is equal to or fewer than the available positions, candidates are deemed elected, subject to ratification where required.

This approach ensures clarity, efficiency and transparency.

8. Vacancies and Casual Vacancies

Where a vacancy arises due to resignation, ineligibility or non-attendance, the Secretariat may make an interim appointment to ensure continuity.

Where appropriate, suitable nominees may be identified through:

- relevant linkage groups, where they exist, or
- wider pillar or membership processes.

All interim appointments are time-limited and must be:

- ratified by the Plenary, or
- filled through a formal election,

at the next available opportunity.

The authority to elect or confirm representatives rests with the PPN membership.

9. Term of Office

Secretariat members and PPN Representatives are elected for a fixed term.

A maximum number of consecutive terms applies, as set out in the Constitution or relevant governance documents, to support renewal while allowing continuity where appropriate.

Individuals may stand again after a break in service, in line with governance rules.

10. Conduct of Elections

Elections are overseen by a Returning Officer, who may be a PPN staff member and must be independent of the candidates.

The Returning Officer is responsible for:

- managing the election process
- ensuring procedures are followed fairly and consistently
- overseeing voting and counting
- confirming and reporting election outcomes

The Returning Officer operates with appropriate oversight and in line with this policy.

11. Complaints and Appeals

Any complaints or concerns relating to election processes are dealt with in accordance with the SDC PPN Complaints Policy.

12. Review and Amendments

This policy is reviewed as required, including where there are changes to the PPN Handbook, legislation or governance arrangements.

Amendments are approved in line with SDC PPN governance procedures.