

## Secretariat Terms of Reference

### 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

The Secretariat operates as a governance and oversight body that supports the Plenary between Plenary meetings.

It is not an executive or management body and does not direct or manage staff day to day.

The Secretariat:

- supports the implementation of Plenary decisions
- provides governance oversight and guidance
- operates within the authority set out in the Constitution

## 2. Composition and Membership

The Secretariat is composed of members drawn from the Plenary, in line with the Constitution.

The Secretariat includes the following seats:

- Community Pillar: 3 seats
- Social Inclusion Pillar: 3 seats
- Environment Pillar: 2 seats
- Geographic Seats:
  - Lucan / Palmerstown / North Clondalkin
  - Rathfarnham / Templeogue / Firhouse / Bohernabreena
  - Tallaght

Where vacancies arise, these are filled in accordance with the Constitution and agreed procedures.

## 3. Term of Office and Rotation

Secretariat members serve terms of office as set out in the Constitution.

Rotation, eligibility for re-election and procedures for resignation or removal are governed by the Constitution.

These provisions are restated here for clarity and onboarding purposes only.

## 4. Role and Responsibilities of the Secretariat

The Secretariat's core responsibilities include:

- supporting and implementing decisions of the Plenary
- providing governance oversight between Plenary meetings
- overseeing compliance with agreed policies and procedures
- overseeing financial governance, risk management and accountability
- supporting elections, representation processes and governance structures
- acting as a forum for discussion, reflection and guidance

The Secretariat **does not**:

- manage the day-to-day operations of the PPN
- line manage or supervise staff
- act independently of the Plenary

## 5. Meetings and Decision-Making

The Secretariat meets regularly, as agreed, to carry out its role.

Meetings may take place:

- in person
- online
- or in a hybrid format

Quorum and decision-making arrangements operate in line with Standing Orders and the Constitution.

The Secretariat aims to work by consensus where possible.

Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions may be made by vote in accordance with agreed procedures.

Accurate records of meetings and decisions are maintained.

## 6. Relationship with Staff

The Secretariat works in partnership with PPN staff.

- Staff are responsible for the day-to-day operation and delivery of the PPN work plan

- The Secretariat provides oversight, support and guidance
- The Secretariat does not have a line-management or employer role

Staff are employed by the host organisation, and employment matters are managed through that arrangement.

## 7. Sub-Groups and Working Groups

The Secretariat may establish sub-groups or working groups to support specific tasks or time-limited pieces of work.

Sub-groups:

- are advisory in nature
- operate within a defined scope and timeframe
- report back to the Secretariat
- do not have independent decision-making authority

A standard Sub-Group Terms of Reference template is set out in Appendix 1.

## 8. Accountability and Reporting

The Secretariat is accountable to the Plenary.

It:

- reports on its work at Plenary meetings
- operates within the authority delegated by the Plenary and Constitution
- supports transparency and accountability in governance

## 9. Confidentiality, Conduct and Conflicts of Interest

Secretariat members are required to comply with:

- the SDC PPN Code of Conduct
- the Conflict of Interest Policy
- agreed confidentiality requirements

These matters are governed by those documents and are not duplicated in this Terms of Reference.

## 10. Review and Amendments

This Terms of Reference is reviewed periodically to ensure it remains appropriate and effective.

Amendments are approved in line with SDC PPN governance procedures and must be consistent with the Constitution.

## Appendix 1

### Secretariat Sub-Group / Working Group – Terms of Reference (Template)

#### Purpose

To support the Secretariat by undertaking specific, defined work on a time-limited basis.

#### Scope

The sub-group operates within the scope agreed by the Secretariat and does not have independent decision-making authority.

#### Membership

Membership is approved by the Secretariat and may include Secretariat members and other participants as appropriate.

#### Duration

The sub-group operates for a defined period and dissolves once its task is complete.

#### Reporting

The sub-group reports regularly to the Secretariat and submits recommendations for consideration.

#### Support

PPN staff may provide facilitation and administrative support as appropriate.

#### Review

The sub-group's work and continuation are reviewed by the Secretariat.