

# TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE INSPIRE STEERING COMMITTEE

## GENERAL PRINCIPLES & MANDATE

The Steering Committee is delegated by members to govern Inspire on their behalf during the year between AGMs. As such, it is the principal decision-making body and governance vehicle during the year. It is responsible, and accountable to the AGM, for ensuring the sound legal, financial and strategic functioning of the network. The committee operates principally at the strategic level. Operational matters can be delegated to working groups made up of one or more representatives from the committee, member organisations and staff from the Secretariat. The Steering Committee's role in strategy and policy positions is to translate the views of Inspire members, as well as the advice from the Chair, Inspire Lead and working groups/task forces into effective advocacy positions.

## RESPONSIBILITIES

The Steering Committee is responsible, inter alia, for:

### GENERAL

Ensure that Inspire fulfils its objectives as outlined in the multi-annual strategies and that the annual work plans are implemented.

- Provide guidance and instruction to the Lead and working groups as required.
- Monitor the performance of the Lead and ensure accountability to members.
- Attend meetings regularly, prepare for and contribute appropriately and effectively.
- After consultation with members, it decides on membership applications that meet Inspire's criteria.

### STRATEGIC OVERSIGHT

- Set the overall direction for Inspire and develop Inspire's strategies, including a proposed joint agenda for Inspire based on recommendations from members, working groups, Inspire Lead, and the Advisory Group.
- Review, on a quarterly basis, progress against Inspire strategy and joint agenda, and periodically review goals and priorities taking in consideration changes in the global context.
- Approve Inspire policy/advocacy documents (i.e. letters, statements, etc) and adherence to advocacy initiatives and campaigns.

## **PROGRAM OVERSIGHT**

- Make recommendations and approve annual work plans, prepared by the Secretariat.
- Prioritise annual activities and select specific focus areas to guide advocacy work.
- Ensure quality assurance including monitoring and regular evaluation.

## **FINANCE**

- Review and approve Inspire long term financial strategy.
- Review and approve annual budgets, specific activities expenditures, fundraising proposals and grant proposals. The Steering Committee has the ultimate responsibility for prudent, effective and efficient use of Inspire funds.
- Ensure that a MoU between host organisation and Inspire Secretariat is in place and followed.
- Steer the Lead to take any action required to meet budget targets.
- Identify suitable funding opportunities.

## **HUMAN RESOURCES**

- Appoint Inspire Lead and approve the creation of any new position in the Secretariat. The Lead is responsible for recruitment of all approved positions and consultants.

## **MEMBERSHIP**

- Based on membership consultation and recommendations, approve/reject membership application.
- Periodically propose to the AGM a revision of the membership fee levels.
- Take decisions including sanctions about member organisations who fail to pay their membership fees and/or who are perceived by the members as not in line with Inspire values and objectives.

## **FRIENDS**

- Invite and select entities to be friends of Inspire based on their added strategic value.
- Take decisions regarding friends who fail to invest time and resources to support Inspire.

## **REPRESENTATION**

- The Chair is the spokesperson of Inspire. It reports regularly and in written to the members regarding the representation's activities and no later than 4 weeks after attending an event on behalf of Inspire.
- According to needs and availability, a Steering Committee member, an Inspire member or an inspire Secretariat staff can be delegated ad hoc by the Steering Committee to represent/act as internal and external spokesperson for Inspire. To that end, they have a responsibility to be well informed of the activities of Inspire and to safeguard the good name and values of the action network, as well as to report back in written to the Steering Committee, no later than 4 weeks after attending an event on behalf of Inspire.

## DECISION-MAKING

- Wherever possible, the Steering Committee takes its decisions by consensus. When consensus cannot be achieved, a decision can be taken by a vote of the simple majority.

## TRANSPARENCY & ACCOUNTABILITY

- The Steering Committee is accountable to Inspire members. The minutes of the Steering Committee meetings and conference calls are distributed electronically among members and records are kept within the Secretariat. Minutes are prepared by the Secretariat and approved for circulation by the Steering Committee no later than four weeks after each meeting.
- The Steering Committee reports back to the members on activities and expenditures for the last year and work plan and budget for the next year at the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- The Steering Committee receives guidance from the AGM on priorities for the coming year.
- The list of Steering Committee members and their contact details are posted on Inspire website.

## MEETING & COMMUNICATION

- The Steering Committee meets face-to-face at least three times per year.
- The Chair calls the Steering Committee meetings and approve its agendas with support provided by the Secretariat.
- In addition to face-to-face meetings, the Steering Committee communicates regularly via email and through conference calls.
- Minutes of each meeting/conference call are taken by the Secretariat and circulated for approval to Steering Committee members in draft form no later than two weeks after the meeting has been held. Upon approval, minutes are circulated to Inspire members.
- At any given time, the Chair may request an ad-hoc extraordinary Steering Committee meeting to discuss an issue of significance.

## ELIGIBILITY

- The Inspire Steering Committee is composed of no less than five and no more than seven representatives from different member organisations, including the fiscal agent. Steering Committee members are appointed in their individual capacity during the Annual General Meeting (AGM).
- To ensure proper member representation, expressions of interest will be requested from individuals representing various types of member organisations (i.e. large, medium and small NGOs, civil society networks, academia, fiscal agent).
- Members with the following credentials will be sought:
  - A commitment to Inspire;
  - An understanding of the core values, beliefs and objectives of Inspire;

- A willingness to devote the necessary time and effort to their role;
- Integrity, sound judgment and a willingness to speak their mind.

And at least one of the following:

- Experience and understanding of governance of organisations in general, and networks in particular (management, finance, fundraising, governance);
- Expertise in advocacy, research, communication and capacity-building. In addition, the Steering Committee strives for adequate gender and age balance, as well as diverse geographical representation.

## **EXPECTED COMMITMENT**

In addition to participating in face-to face meetings, Steering Committee members are required to actively engage to the Inspire Steering Committee obligations between meetings. All Steering Committee members are required to actively engage in Steering Committee decisions and deliberations year-round. Steering Committee members who fail to attend two consecutive meetings of the Steering Committee and/or who fail to respond to Steering Committee communications over a period of four months or more will be evaluated and potentially asked to step down due to their inactivity. Steering Committee member do not receive any financial compensation for their service, but, they are reimbursed for their travel and accommodation to attend Steering Committee meetings, Inspire Conference/AGM, Inspire workshops as well as when traveling to represent Inspire externally.

## **ELECTION OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Prior to the Annual General Meeting elections, the Secretariat will circulate among the network an invitation for Steering Committee membership (“Expression of Interest”). Those wishing to join the Steering Committee will be required to do so by submitting a brief Expression of Interest document indicating their interest, merits, and anticipated contribution and join to the documents the support from two Inspire member organisations. To ensure proper member representation, expressions of interest will be requested from individuals representing the various types of member organisations (i.e. large, medium and small NGOs, academia, foundations and private sector). All documents will be brought before the Annual General Meeting. Steering Committee members will be elected by the membership at the Annual General Meeting for a two-year mandate, which can be renewed once.

## **TERM OF OFFICE OF STEERING COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

Elected Steering Committee members will serve for a term of two years, which can be renewed once. After this, there must be a break of at least one year before a former member in her/his personal capacity may be eligible for nomination again. Membership of the Steering Committee shall cease through one of the following: (1) Expiration of mandate (2) Resignation (3) Termination of membership of her/his organisation (4) Resolution for dismissal made by the AGM by two-thirds of the voting members present at that AGM. (5) Absence from three consecutive meetings of the Steering Committee without acceptable

reasons. If for the reasons mentioned above (2-5) a member of the Steering Committee serves for a period of less than two years, her/his place will be vacant until the next election at the AGM.

CHAIR OF THE STEERING COMMITTEE - See separate role description "Inspire Chair".