

# **National Steering Committee (NSC) Terms of Reference for Trinidad and Tobago**

**(Adopted by the NSC on 30<sup>th</sup> September 2009)**

## *NSC Functions and Duties*

1. The SGP National Steering Committee (NSC) composition and operation will conform to the relevant sections of the UNDP GEF SGP Operational Guidelines. Those sections may be appended to these TORs.
2. The principal functions and duties of the NSC include:
  - participation in the development and periodic revision of the Country Programme Strategy;
  - lead responsibility, along with the National Coordinator, for the Biennial Programme Review; and
  - review and approval of project proposals, submitted to the SGP by NGOs/CBOs and pre-screened by the National Coordinator, in accordance with established criteria and procedures.
3. NSC members are also encouraged to actively participate in site visits and ongoing monitoring and evaluation activities associated with the SGP and its projects, and to provide technical assistance and advice to SGP projects and NGO/CBO project proponents.
4. The NSC may wish to elaborate a set of project selection criteria based on the country programme strategy to help guide decisions and provide additional consistency to project selection.
5. As noted in Part III of the Operational Guidelines, the NSC shall decide whether it will consider and approve project concepts and planning grants, or will rather leave these tasks to the National Coordinator. In the case of the latter, the NC will keep the NSC informed about concepts received and approved and planning grants awarded.
6. The NSC members are encouraged to actively participate in the mobilization of resources to sustain the programme.

## *NSC Terms of Office and Appointment*

7. Members of the NSC serve on a voluntary basis and without financial compensation. Reimbursement of reasonable and necessary expenses such as long-distance travel to project sites and NSC meetings may be provided. Reimbursement of expenses such as travel should be approved prior to the actual expenditure and follow standard SGP procedures.

8. The NSC should consist of between six and twelve members, with the majority of members from the NGO sector. Efforts should be made to ensure gender and ethnic diversity in the committee.
9. Members of the NSC are appointed by the UNDP Resident Representative in consultation with the NC. Appointments to the NSC are subject to ratification by the SGP Global Manager. Members may also be removed from the NSC by the UNDP Resident Representative for cause.
10. The UNDP Resident Representative or his/her delegate, usually the UNDP Country Office SGP focal point, represents the UNDP on the NSC.
11. The SGP National Coordinator serves *ex officio* on the NSC, participating in deliberations, but not voting in the project selection process. The NC also serves as Secretariat to the NSC.
12. The term of office of each NSC member is for a period of two years. Ideally the NSC would have a two-year rolling membership with members serving staggered terms. In the event that a member fails to complete a full term of office, a new member shall be appointed by the UNDP Resident Representative. NSC members may be reappointed to serve additional two-year terms based on service and commitment to the programme.

#### *NSC Meetings and Rules of Order*

13. The NSC meets on a bi-monthly basis and all times necessary to address specific issues that require their attention and to review and approve grant proposals and to conduct other activities within its terms of reference. Every six (6) months, the NSC, in collaboration with the NC will decide on the upcoming meeting schedule date(s) and location.
14. Meetings of the NSC will be held at a time and place in order to ensure full attendance by members. At least one (1) meeting of the NSC is to be held in Tobago each year.
15. The NSC nominates a Chair and Deputy Chair from among its regular members, preferably by consensus. Neither the UNDP Resident Representative (nor his/her delegate) nor the SGP National Coordinator may serve as the Chair. The Chair presides at NSC meetings in accordance with the rules of order which have been adopted, and facilitates the process of consensus-building in NSC deliberations. Where the Chair is unable to attend or chair the meeting, the Deputy Chair shall preside. If the Deputy Chair is also unable to attend or chair the meeting, then a member shall be elected as pro tempore Chair from the members present. The position of Chair and Deputy Chair is not permanent and rotates every year.
16. Where possible, the NSC operates on the basis of consensus rather than formal voting. Every decision taken at a meeting of the NSC shall be determined by a majority of the votes of the members present at the meeting.

17. A quorum of fifty percent (50%) + one (1) of the total membership is required for the conduct of any meeting of the NSC, with at least one (1) NGO representative present.
18. Members who do not attend 3 consecutive meetings without notice or response after written correspondence will be deemed to have vacated their position and another member will be sourced as a replacement.
19. Regular meetings of the NSC ordinarily include the following agenda items:
  - Report on status and progress of the country and global SGP;
  - Status reports and updates on projects and activities in implementation;
  - Financial report on execution of grant allocation;
  - Presentation of project proposals for consideration
20. NSC minutes concerning meetings in which projects are approved should be as detailed and specific as possible, listing each project considered and including all NSC recommendations or observations about each project. The NSC decision about each project should be clearly noted, including any reformulations required before final approval. The list of approved projects should include the budget amount approved. The minutes should be signed by all NSC members present.
21. The NSC should review and sign-off on project proposals that are reformulated or adjusted after being provisionally approved by the NSC, prior to submitting them to the UNDP Resident Representative for MOA signature. A formal meeting is not required, and the review may be done on a no-objection basis.
22. Upon accepting appointment to the NSC, members commit themselves to ensuring the complete objectivity and transparency of the NSC, both in fact and in appearance. The NSC must avoid the appearance of self-dealing, conflict of interest, or undue influence. No member of the NSC shall participate in the review or approval of any project in which that member, or an organization with which that member is associated, has an interest. In such cases, the member shall be excused from both the discussion and decision on the project.
23. As a matter of principle, the NSC (and the SGP as a whole) must operate in as transparent a manner as possible. The NC should maintain an official record of each NSC meeting, which is available to the public. However, in order to protect NSC members from external pressures, neither the identities of NSC members, nor the attributed statements of NSC members during deliberations, shall be disclosed.
24. The NSC may, when necessary, revise the existing procedures governing its operation, or adopt any new procedure(s) that will enhance the role and function of the NSC and the goals of the Small Grants Programme.

*National Coordinator Responsibilities:*

25. The NC is the Secretariat for the NSC, and is responsible for managing communication between and among NSC members, for sending out notices of meetings, and for maintaining substantive records of all meetings and actions taken. In addition, the NC shall present to the NSC substantive reports on the status and progress of the SGP and its activities, as well as project proposals for consideration.
26. Meetings of the NSC shall be convened by the NC. Notice is to be given at least fifteen days in advance of the meetings, except in the case of special or emergency meetings, for which the notice requirement may be waived. Notice shall include the agenda for the meeting, a list of all projects to be considered at the meeting, and copies of all relevant documents and proposals.
27. The NC shall prepare and present meeting minutes for review and signature by the NSC after every meeting. Once signed by the NSC members involved, the original should be filed in the SGP office and a copy sent to the UNDP SGP focal point.

*Supplemental Procedures:*

28. Alternate members should be elected and attend meetings when the NSC Member for whom they act as alternate is unable or not present at the NSC Meeting. Alternate Members can make decisions regarding approvals of project proposals, once they have been ratified as the Alternate member by the SGP Global Manager.
29. Sub-committees of the NSC Members shall be created for specific and strategic tasks if and when needed.