

# **Rules of Procedure for Working Groups** *as amended and decided at ICM 2010*

## **1 Introduction**

1.1 The document has been split into 4 sections

- Setting up WGs: conditions for acceptance, membership, and the mission or political statement.
- General terms for operation: activities, communication, roles within WGs, staffing, relations to the International Secretariat (IS).
- Finances: budgets, financial reporting and fundraising.
- Control of WGs between ICMs and the winding-up WGs.

1.2 Since groups and branches of SCI participate in WGs on the same terms, every reference to branches also refers to groups. Partner Organisations (POs) participate on slightly different terms and so separate mention is made of POs when only they are meant.

1.3 The International Secretariat is referred to as the IS. By this is meant the permanent SCI staff working in the international office in Antwerp. When the International Coordinator is specifically meant, IC is used.

## **2 Setting up Working Groups**

### **2.1 Acceptance as a WG**

2.1.1. WGs can only be recognised by an ICM. Each ICM will vote on whether to recognise every WG for the following year. WGs, which fail to win the support of the ICM cease to exist.

2. 1.2. To be recognised by an ICM, WGs need to provide certain information and fulfil certain criteria. The following documents need to be submitted to the IS before the ICM for circulation to the branches: a Mission Statement, a Plan of Action and a Budget. WGs, which have existed in the previous year also have to submit a Report on Activities and Accounts. The IEC will set a deadline by which time this information needs to be in the designated office of the IS. The IS will be responsible for circulating the documents to branches so that they can decide whether they wish to support the WG or not. For an explanation of the various requested documents, see the sections on the mission statement, on activities and on finances.

2.1.3. WGs can only be recognised by an ICM if three branches of SCI declare their intention to be members of the WGs. For the membership criteria and the rights and responsibilities of members, see the section on Membership.

### **2.2 Mission (or Political) Statement, Policy Statements**

2.2.1. The purpose of the mission statement or political statement is to explain what the goals of a WG are. It should make clear the area in which a WG plans to work and what it sees as its purpose. Ideally, it will be something which remains valid for some years and against which annual plans of action can be measured. ICMs may object to vague or unclear statements. They may also be concerned if the goals of a WG suggest that it will overlap with another one.

2.2.2 The mission or political statement will be used to decide the areas of competence of WGs. WGs will in effect be given a mandate to develop SCI international activities in that area. To do this, they may need to develop policies within that area and are entitled to do so. However, only the ICM can make binding decisions for SCI. It may, therefore, make sense for WGs to bring important policy statements to ICMs to seek their approval. Policies decided by an ICM are binding for WGs.

## **2.3 Membership of WGs**

2.3.1 The membership of WGs is open to all branches of SCI and to recognised Partner Organisations (POs) of SCI. Every WG needs at least three SCI members. All members of WGs, including POs, participate within the WG on an equal basis.

2.3.2 Individuals cannot be members of WGs. However, WGs can decide to let individuals from branches which are not members of the WG participate in their meetings. Such individuals have no voting rights. Members should recall that such individuals bear no responsibility for the actions of the WG. Please note that individuals from non-member organisations may be elected to the steering group of a WG. However this election (of a steering group member) must be confirmed by the branch or partner organisation of this individual by becoming a member organisation of that WG. If the branch or partner organisation of the individual isn't ready to become a WG member, another member organisation can validate the election by supporting this steering group member. If no member organisation is supporting this individual the election is not considered as valid. The working group applications to the ICM should point out which member organisation supports this steering group member.

2.3.3 Branches can join WGs at any time. However, branches should note that if they join a WG in any year, they become liable for any debts run up by that WG in that year, even if it happened before they joined (see section on liability below). Any SCI branch or group can join any WG.

2.3.4 Partner organisations can only be admitted if a majority of the existing members of the WG agrees. A vote regarding acceptance/rejection of new POs as members takes place once a year during the WG's annual meeting. The ICM reserves the right to expel POs from WGs.

2.3.5 SCI branches pay no membership fee to WGs. WGs can decide if they want POs to pay a membership fee and set the level for this fee.

2.3.6 Except for clauses 2.3.4 and 2.3.5 POs enjoy exactly the same rights and bear the same responsibilities as all other members of WGs. All references to members in this document refer to PO members too.

2.3.7 Members are responsible for the actions of the WGs of which they are members. This includes financial liability. To prevent WGs running up debts, debts will be cleared at the end of each calendar year. The procedure under which this will take place is explained in the section under liability.

2.3.8 Because of this condition, members of WGs can only leave WGs at the end of the year. If they wish to do so, they have to indicate this at the time of the pre-ICM mailing on WGs. This way branches know which organisations wish to be members of which WGs when deciding about recognition (or rejection) of WGs.

## **3 General Terms for Operation for WGs**

### **3.1 Activities, Policies, Plans of Action and Reports on Activities**

3.1.1 WGs are about activities - these might be workcamps, longer-term volunteer programmes, seminars, study tours ... or something else, as decided by the WG. WGs should be a means by which branches can work together at an international level.

3.1.2 WGs may agree to practical procedures, mission or political statement that will be used within their areas of competence.

3.1.3 WGs are expected to present a plan of action each year to the ICM. This document provides a timeframe for the WG's activities planned for the upcoming year. If longer term plans (e.g. involving an external grant lasting over several years) exist, these are also to be mentioned on the plan of action. ICMs may refuse to accept a plans of action if it is felt to be inadequate.

3.1.4 At the end of each year, WGs have to present a report on activities and their accounts to the ICM. The activity report should also include a short evaluation of the actions.

### **3.2 Communication**

3.2.1 WGs must take steps to inform the whole of SCI about their activities. As mentioned in 2.1.2, all WGs (including WGs which do not intend to reapply for recognition) have to send a written report to the IS for circulation to SCI branches before the ICM. Furthermore, WGs may send a representative to an ICM at their own expense.

3.2.2 Minutes of WG meetings (if available) are to be sent to the IS for information. Also, these minutes are to be provided to branches upon request.

3.2.3 The IEC has a responsibility to the ICM to supervise all the international activities of SCI between ICMs. They will also need to collect information on the activities of SCI for annual reports and reports to funders. For these reasons, WGs will be expected to answer questions coming from the IEC and IS.

3.2.4 Papers sent to members and/or branches are to be written in one of the two official SCI languages, English or French.

### **3.3 Roles within WGs**

3.3.1 How WGs run their business is largely their own affair. However, several roles need to be clear. Every WG has to appoint a contact person who will be the "mailbox" by which the rest of SCI can get in touch with the WG. The address of this person will become the address at which the WG can be contacted. WGs dealing with financial transfers also have to appoint a treasurer. This person will be responsible for keeping accounts for the WG. Please note that costs (if any) related to these two positions must be included in the WG's budget. Furthermore, WGs may wish to define other roles.

3.3.2 Larger WGs may wish to elect/appoint a steering group who would be responsible for managing the activities between meetings of the whole WG. It is up to the WG to decide of a democratic procedure for selecting and supervising steering group members. Please note that related costs (if any) are to be included in the WG's budget. The names of the members of the steering group are to be provided on the annual document for the ICM. The minutes of steering group meetings (if available) are to be provided to the IS and to all branches upon request.

3.3.3 WGs can have their own internal rules of procedure, provided these do respect the present document as well as the constitution of SCI.

### **3.4 Staff & LTVs**

3.4.1 WGs are entitled to employ staff to run projects if they can show the IEC that the WG can afford, manage, and support the requested staff member. The IEC will require to see a clear job description, a viable budget for the position, and evidence of the following: (i) compliance with national employment law in the country in which the staff member will work, (ii) a timetable for appointment, (iii) clear arrangements for the management of staff (both in a strategic and on a day-to-day basis), (iv) clear financial guidelines, and (v) arrangements for follow-up work once the position ends.

3.4.2 All staff will be officially employed by SCI and the president will sign the contracts for all staff appointments. Staff will be appointed according to standard procedures formulated by the IEC. These procedures include the provision that all interviewing panels include at least one person appointed by the IEC as well as people from the WG. Conditions of service will also be standardised as much as possible in view of national legislation. The IEC will have the right to intervene where the standard procedures or the IEC's instructions are not followed.

3.4.3 Formally, all staff employed by WGs are accountable to the IC and through him/her to the IEC. Although staff employed by WGs will work with WGs on a day-to-day basis and will be accountable to WGs, the IC retains a general supervisory responsibility over all staff. Staff should be prepared to keep the IC informed of their work upon request.

3.4.4 Unless an ICM agrees to make exceptions, all WG staff are project staff. This means that the staff is employed to run a project and will probably be paid for from a project grant. The contracts will be fixed-term and will be related to the length of the project.

3.4.5 WGs can also appoint LTVs. Where LTVs are employed, clauses 3.4.1. and 3.4.3. will also apply, as will any general conditions set down by SCI for the employment of LTVs. Contracts will be with SCI and will be signed by the a representative of the staff or steering group of a WG, as agreed with the IEC.

3.4.6 WGs are entitled to pay for labour on a contract basis to complete specific tasks. WGs are to inform the IS when they intend to do this.

### **3.5 The International Secretariat**

3.5.1 WGs can get help from the staff working in the the IS. They may, for example, wish to use the IS resources to support the administrative aspects of their activities, for instance with putting together grant applications, financial administration or writing activity or financial reports. Where they wish to do this, they will pay for the time of the IS on an agreed rate. Typically, the IS charges for a fixed fee (set by the IEC) per IS working day<sup>1</sup>.

3.5.2 WGs may choose to do all the work on their applications themselves and not use staff in this way. If so, they will have to make sure to be following properly the rules for WGs on applying to European or international funders. (Please see also paragraph 4.7: Grants from International Bodies)

3.5.3 If WGs decide not to use staff time to help with administrative tasks, then they are responsible that these tasks are completed. If IS staff have to undertake work on applications or reports because WGs fail to deliver them to the office in a satisfactory condition and/or time, the IS can charge the WG for the invested time. Whenever possible, the amount to pay by the WG will be decided by negotiation between the IS and the WG. If no agreement can be reached, the final decision will lie with the IEC.

## **4 Finances**

### **4.1 Financial Administration**

4.1.1 WGs are responsible for their own financial administration. They must draw up budgets, keep books, administer any grants they attract, and present financial reports at the end of the year. The WG's treasurer has to supervise and take responsibility for all this work. In some cases, treasurers may do the bookkeeping. In other cases, they may delegate this task to a member branch, to a project staff, or, if agreed, to the IS. However, responsibility stays with the treasurer and with the WG. WGs are legally part of SCI International Coordination and so SCI International Coordination is ultimately responsible for their debts. Hence, WGs have to behave responsibly, to keep adequate accounts and to inform the IS and the IEC about what is going on (typically through their annual report).

4.1.2 In their bookkeeping, WGs are expected to conform to normal bookkeeping practices.

4.1.3. WGs are expected to follow SCI practice and use calendar years for bookkeeping. The accounts are to be kept in EURO. WGs finalised accounts of the year are to be presented to the IEC for acceptance by 30<sup>th</sup> of April of the following year. If the WG can not provide the accounts by then, they have to make other arrangements with the IEC.

4.1.4 Bookkeeping on projects: In particular, it is important that WGs assemble and retain adequate evidence to justify expenditure for any project-related costs. Receipts necessary to justify external grants are to be deposited at the IS. SCI has at times had to justify expenditure many years after the

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<sup>1</sup> The fee as set by IEC in August 2010: the IS can charge the WGs with 150 to 200 Euros per working day.

event, so such receipts need to be carefully archived. WGs may also ask the IS to archive their other (non-project related) financial documents.

## **4.2 Budgets**

4.2.1 WGs have to submit an annual budget to the ICM. The budget should include realistic estimates for the cost of all activities and administration as well as details on the sources of income. Budgets need to relate to the respective plans of action.

4.2.2 ICMs can reject WG budgets if they feel they are inadequate. Typically, budgets will include provisional income figures (for example depending on the unknown decision about submitted grant applications). In these cases, it may be useful to include details on different scenarios in the budget. ICMs will be anxious to see that (i) budgets have roughly equal income and expenditure, (ii) income sources are known, and (iii) (major amounts of) money is not committed before the success of applications is known.

## **4.3 Financial Reports**

4.3.1 At the end of the year, WGs have to present a financial report to the ICM. This report has to include an income and expenditure account as well as a balance sheet. A balance sheet shows how much money is left at the end of the year (or if there are debts) and where it is located. WGs will be able to transfer any surplus left in one year into the next. Refer to section 4.9. about handling losses.

## **4.4 Monitoring of WG Finances**

4.4.1 The ability of WGs to administer their finances properly is very important to SCI. If losses are run up, the member branches will suffer and if project grants are not spent or accounted for properly, SCI as a whole will have to answer to the funders. So that any coming problems can be identified early, the accounts of WGs will be monitored by the IEC for SCI. The accounts of all WGs will be monitored annually. If accounts are not presented for monitoring within the regular period, the IEC can and will block the disbursement of any further funds to the WG until accounts are presented.

4.4.2 In monitoring WGs, IEC members will wish to see information on the assets and liabilities of WGs and on their income and expenditure. If, as a result of these reports, the IEC is not satisfied that the WG is administering its funds properly, it will inform the member branches and take steps to ensure that the problems are sorted out. IEC members also offer advice to the WGs they are monitoring. If problems are encountered, WGs are advised to inform the relevant IEC member and the IS as soon as possible. It is particularly important that WGs inform the IS if any major deviation from the budget is expected.

## **4.5 Bank Accounts & Pink Slips**

4.5.1 Under certain circumstances, it may be useful for a WG to open a bank account. They should first get the approval of the IEC to do this. In other cases, it may be possible to use a branch account or an International SCI account. Where a new account is opened, someone nominated by the IEC must be one of the signatories. All information should be sent to the IS.

4.5.2 All WGs should, where appropriate, participate in the Pink Slip system. This will be by arrangement with the finance officer. They will be required to comply with the usual conditions governing the pink slip system.

## **4.6 Fundraising**

4.6.1 WGs will need to raise funds. Some WGs may choose to rely on funds provided by their members and for which only internal reports will be required. In these cases, it is up to the members to decide how money will be raised, spent and accounted for, except that these WGs will need to provide annual reports to ICMs.

4.6.2 Most WGs will need to raise money from external sources to pay for their activities. WGs are responsible for complying with the conditions attached to any grants they receive. This means both financial reports and reports on activities. However, often WGs cannot apply for a grant directly, but need to submit the application through a branch or through the IS. In this case, the formal responsibility of the project lies with the applicant (IS or branch). Of course, since the project was initiated by a WG, it is clear that the WG has to help with the reporting work. It is very important that

the WG and the IS/branch agree on who's responsible for what (finances, archiving, reports,...) before submitting a grant application. Please note that evaluation and reporting of projects is time intensive and represents hard work once the project is finished unless adequate records exist.

4.6.3 WGs are entitled to apply for funding at national and at international level. Where national funds are applied for, it is essential that the WG gets the approval of the branch within that country. It will almost certainly make sense to cooperate with this branch in making such an application.

#### **4.7 Grants from International Bodies**

4.7.1 When a WG intends to apply to international funds, it is essential to inform the IS beforehand. Applications to the same fund from different parts of SCI (WGs or branches) may be in competition with each other. The IS is able to pool information on applications being made. If the IC decides that two applications are in competition, the IC, in consultation with the IEC, will decide the priority between the different projects. The IC will communicate if one of the applications should be withdrawn, delayed or placed elsewhere. WGs are expected to follow this advice. If possible, the guidelines set by the most recent ICM are used for the prioritisation. However, prioritisation may also take account of technical factors such as whether procedures have been complied with or not. The IC will explain decisions on prioritisation. In exceptional circumstances, the IC can forbid the submission of a grant application which is so poorly presented that it will not attract funding and is most likely to affect SCI's reputation.

4.7.2 Applications on national level are the business of branches and WGs. However, a copy of the submitted grant application and a short English summary of the project are to be sent to the IS for information.

4.7.3 The IC sends out a call for projects about 2 months before the submission deadline of important international funding sources (for example the executive agency of Youth in Action). This call includes the conditions to submit a project through the IS, especially the deadlines to respect. The IS staff will use their expertise to check applications before sending them in. If the IS staff feel changes should be made to applications they will discuss them with the WG. However, this is only feasible if there is a contact person in the WG responding quickly. If there is none available, the IC ultimately decides on changes by him/herself. WGs are expected to listen to the advice of IS staff. Applications will be made in the name of SCI and will be signed by the IC. In exceptional circumstances, and only with the agreement of the IC, WGs or branches acting for WGs will be permitted to submit applications directly on international level. Applications to international bodies are not to be submitted without the approval of the IC.

4.7.4 If a WG wants to use the time of the IS, they are expected to pay for it. The payment for the used staff time should be agreed upon case by case beforehand based on the rates mentioned in 3.5.1. A final decision on the requested contribution (in working hours) for a grant application is taken by the IC, if necessary in consultation with the IEC. If the IS decides to support a WG with the application for a grant from International Bodies and the grant is not approved, the working group is exempted from the payment of the fee to the IS

#### **4.8 Liability**

4.8.1 On their foundation, every WG will receive a loan of 600 EURO. At the end of each financial year, their accounts and balance sheets will be monitored and approved by a member of the IEC. If in this check it appears that their debt to SCI does not exceed the amount of this loan, they can carry it forward into the next financial year.

4.8.2 Where the debt to SCI does exceed this amount, the members of the WG will be expected to clear it. How the members of the WG divide this liability is up to the WG, but they are strongly advised to decide on a system before they need to use it. If no other system is agreed, WGs will divide up the debt equally among all members.

## **5 The Supervision and Winding-Up of WGs**

### **5.1 Supervision of WGs between ICMs**

5.1.1 The IEC has an overall duty to overview the activities of WGs between ICMs. If there are any concerns about the activities or administration of WGs which are not answered by the WG, these should be addressed to the IEC.

5.1.2 The IEC must act when it receives a complaint about a WG from a member branch or the IC. The IEC will then take steps to investigate this complaint. Except where confidentiality is required, the first step of this investigation will be to inform the members of the WG of the grounds for investigation and to request clarifying information. Members are required to respond to such requests for information within the timetable set by the IEC. Depending on the nature of the complaint or concern, this timetable may be brief.

5.1.3 If the provided information fails to answer the raised concerns, the IEC may take further steps. Again, members of WGs are expected to answer requests for information from the IEC. In particular, any staff employed by SCI in whatever capacity is required to comply with the requests for information.

5.1.4 If the IEC is not satisfied that the complaint has been answered, it will inform the ICM of the complaint and of the results of its investigation and will recommend a course of action to the ICM. The ICM has full power to act on these recommendations as it chooses.

5.1.5 In exceptional circumstances – for example where the investigation reveals that the WG is in breach or is likely to be in breach of the SCI Constitution or relevant national legislation – the IEC has the power to suspend the WG until the next ICM. Where it decides upon this course of action, it will immediately inform all members of the WG and all branches of SCI. It will take over responsibility for administering the activities and finances of the WG until the next ICM. The next ICM must decide on the appropriate future course of action.

### **5.2 Winding Up WGs**

5.2.1 WGs can choose to wind up at the end of any year. The easiest way to do this will be for them not to apply to the ICM for a renewal of their mandate. WGs, however, will not formally be wound up until this is agreed by the ICM. Where WGs leave uncleared debts, ICMs may refuse to formally wind them up. Please note that even if a WG does not want to apply for the status of WG for the upcoming year, it still has to provide a report about its activities and finances for the current year.

5.2.2 The ICM can in effect wind up any WG by failing to renew its mandate. In deciding not to renew the mandate of a WG, the ICM will pay particular attention to its compliance with Article 2 of the SCI Constitution and the present document. As the supreme body of SCI, however, the ICM has unrestricted freedom to decide not to renew the mandate of a WG for any reason whatsoever.

5.2.3 Where a WG is wound up either from its own decision or by the decision of the ICM it must repay the original loan of 600 EURO made by SCI. Any further funds left revert to SCI except where there are POs which are members of the WG in which case they will receive a proportionate share of the funds, subject to the approval of the ICM. If there are any debts, these will be divided between the members of the WG according to the procedures of the WG.