

Collaborative Stewardship Starter & Builder Kit

Example: Steering Committee Charter

GGBN GOVERNANCE COMMITTEES

Steering Committee

Summary Description

Note: This is a living document and will be reviewed annually by the Steering Committee for any updates or modifications.

Committee Purpose & Structure:

Purpose: The purpose of the Steering Committee is to provide the overarching strategy, guidance, direction, and decision-making for the GGBN so that it can effectively meet its mission and fulfill its strategic work plan activities. It also serves as an important forum for relationship building and coordination at the leadership level of member organizations.

Direction & Activities: The Steering Committee oversees the development of the annual/biannual work plan, to include identifying necessary resources and capacities. Work plans are developed through coordination with GGBN Working Groups and the broader membership.

The Steering Committee can designate new working groups or time-bound task forces to accomplish the Network's priorities and specific activities. For example, the hiring of a Network-based staff member could be done through an appointed Selection Committee in partnership with the Network's fiscal sponsor.

Convening & Communications: The Steering Committee will meet remotely monthly, as well as participate in one in-person retreat annually. Meetings are scheduled through the GGBN's Network Coordinator.

Monthly meeting notes (including actions and decisions) are saved within the Steering Committee file structure in the GGBN Google folder. Meeting notes are distributed by the Partnership Coordinator within two weeks of each meeting, with highlights shared with the larger membership as appropriate.

Anticipated Duration: Membership of the Steering Committee is two years, with the potential to extend for up to two additional terms, for a total of six years. If a Steering Committee member leaves their job (transfer, retirement, etc.) then a replacement will be found through the selection process outlined below.

Decision-making: The Steering Committee makes decisions about the Network's strategic direction, work plan priorities, financial commitment and opportunities, and overall day-to-day operations.

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The Steering Committee will provide an annual overview of the Network's work plan, funding, governance structure and proposed commitments at a member summit or via a virtual webinar to seek alignment. Members shall provide input and guidance to the Committee during this time. During that following year, the Steering Committee shall also notify, and seek input and alignment from the members regarding any significant changes in strategic direction, how the GGBN conducts business as a Network, or issues resulting in financial impacts to the Network. If the members are not aligned on the proposals put forward, the Steering Committee may abandon or table the disputed issue or decide to proceed with the preferred decision of the majority. All major decisions will be documented, with responsible individuals and deadlines identified, as appropriate.

The Steering Committee does not have the authority to direct any member organizations; nor can it grant one organization authority over another. This includes project identification and design, deliverable determination, environmental decision documents, regulatory permits, regulatory review, or project implementation. Network members are responsible for decision-making related to their individual organizations.

Committee Member Selection Process: Both Steering Committee members and the broader GGBN membership (through an open call to all members) can bring forward name(s) to consider via email or during Steering Committee meetings. Steering Committee nominees should fulfill at least one of the following: broaden the GGBN's geographic representation, strengthen the GGBN's organizational/disciplinary/sectoral representation, and/or diversify its lived experience and cultural perspectives.

If active Committee members are aligned in further engaging the nominee, then two Steering Committee members and/or the Network's Coordinator will reach out to the nominee to conduct an interview that ascertains (1) how the nominee's interests and experience will contribute to the vision, goals, culture, and roles outlined in the Steering Committee position below and (2) how the GGBN can advance the nominee's interests and work in the GGBN.

At the next Steering Committee monthly meeting following the interview, interviewers will debrief the Steering Committee on the key takeaways and offer a recommendation about inviting the individual to join the Committee. The Steering Committee will then hold a second vote to determine whether to invite the nominee to join the Steering Committee.

Committee Leadership & Participation:

Participation: The GGBN Steering Committee is comprised of senior leaders (or their designee) of the Network's members, and one "special affiliate" organization who serves as the Network's fiscal sponsor:

The desired expectation is that each Steering Committee member attends no less than 80% of the monthly meetings plus the one annual in-person retreat. If their attendance is not possible at a meeting, they will notify the Network Coordinator to provide input on that month's proposed agenda items. If they can no longer fulfill their Steering Committee duties, they will discuss possible alternatives with the larger Steering Committee, or resign from their position, providing 60 days' notice if feasible.

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Committee members shall strive to actively contribute to coordination, knowledge-sharing, and collaborative work. The anticipated time commitments will range from 2-8 hours monthly, depending upon what an individual member has agreed to work on and which Working Groups they support.

Committee Member Roles: The following is a summary of anticipated Steering Committee responsibilities and roles.

- Overseeing the implementation of the GGBN’s strategic work plan, collective projects and activities, and the Biosphere Reserve’s Periodic Review.
- Providing guidance and leadership to Network working groups and task forces to advance focal areas and seek synergies across working groups.
- Overseeing the program development and delivery of Network convenings and membership meetings (in-person and virtual) with the Coordinator’s support, from purpose, goals, and major themes to individual program elements.
- Actively supporting peer exchange and sharing best practices.
- Acting as spokesperson and figurehead for the Network with decision-makers, funders, and other stakeholders.
- Overseeing the development and implementation of GGBN materials and products (*e.g.*, white papers).
- Overseeing the information-sharing and other communications efforts to Network members and overseeing outreach to new partner organizations.
- Continuing to shape and adapt Network governance structure to meet its needs.
- Pursuing strategies for sustaining the Network.

More than any of the above, the Steering Committee strives to embody a culture of fun and joy to create a space for inspiration, rejuvenation, and camaraderie.

Leadership & Leadership Roles: There are two Co-chairs of the Steering Committee who are also considered the Network’s Chairs. Steering Committee members also provide leadership for the following committee positions: (1) Co-Chairs¹ of the Network Coordinator’s Success Committee; and (2) Chair of the Budget & Fundraising Committee.

Co-chair roles include:

- Championing the work of the GGBN and cultivating relationships within and among the member and affiliate executives,
- Providing leadership and strategic guidance in support of the GGBN’s vision,
- Fostering organizational commitment and participation to achieving the member’s collective vision and work,
- Leading and providing agenda setting for the Steering Committee meetings with the support of the Partnership Coordinator,

¹ One Success Committee Co-Chair position is held by the Stewardship Network – the Network Coordinator’s legal hiring entity.

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- Providing direction regarding partnership cohesion and GGBN work plan goal and priority setting,
- Providing high-level guidance to the Partnership Coordinator and Working Groups as needed.

Co-chair positions will extend for two years, on an alternating one-year cycle. Those interested in this role will self-nominate upon notification of an upcoming opening. If there is more than one member who self-nominates, the Steering Committee will vote via email following the meeting.

It is estimated that the Co-chair role will average 8-12 hours/month.

Suggested Committee Size: 7-9 individuals representing the senior managers (or their designee) from the member organizations, along with one representative of the special affiliate.

Committee Support:

Coordination Capacity: The Steering Committee receives assistance from the Network's Coordinator for meeting scheduling, note-taking, facilitation, action/task tracking and any coordination and research between meetings, as per the Partnership Coordinator's position description.

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