

Terms of Reference

Background

What are the Mission, Vision, priorities and structure of the organization? How does this committee fits within the overall structure and what is the history of the committee to date?

Objectives

What are the specific results that this committee must achieve? Be very specific.

Composition & terms

Who serves on this committee and for how long?

Appointment

How is someone appointed to the committee? How are they removed?

Commitment

What is the expected commitment of persons serving on this committee? Include time commitment for actual committee work, specific meetings, preparation, report writing etc. If there are costs associated with doing this committee work, i.e. travel, meals, phone calls etc. they should be outlined here as well. What happens if someone cannot meet their commitments?

Duties and responsibilities

What are the specific duties, responsibilities and critical milestones for this committees work? Are there things that are specifically not the role of this committee?

Again specify as much as possible but remember that successful and satisfying committee work, for most people, includes the ability to control ones' own work and have significant input and control into processes.

Meetings

How many meetings are there? What format are they? How long are they? Remember to include both committee meetings as well as other meetings that the committee (or some members) may have to attend.

Rules of order & decision making

Does the committee have certain rules on how it has to function? Does the committee make decisions? How does the committee make decisions? Are they reviewed? Are they final?

Reporting

Whom does the committee report to? How are they expected to report to that person or group? How frequently should they report? What will happen with those reports?

Support

What supports are provided to this committee to do its work? Is there staff support or support from other volunteers? Is there funding support or a budget for the committee? Can the committee access resources from other areas of the organization or from outside the organization? Whom does the committee or its members go to with questions or problems?

Review and evaluation

How is the performance of the committee reviewed and evaluated? When is this done?