

Association for Project Management

Volunteer Steering Group (VSG) Terms of Reference

Approval

Updated at the 20 January 2020 Board meeting.

Status

The VSG is not a Board Committee and has no delegated authority except as set out in these terms of reference. VSG is established in accordance with the APM Regulations and supported by the Chief Executive. The Board sets the overarching framework for the support of volunteers in the Regulations and approves these terms of reference on the recommendation of the VSG. The relevant section from the Regulations is attached at **Annex 1**.

Scope

The VSG's scope covers all volunteering activities. Volunteering is any APM activity that involves spending time, unpaid, doing something that aims to benefit its charitable objectives.

Governance Matters

1. The Board Champion for volunteers will Chair the VSG. In the absence of the Chair, another member of the group may chair an individual meeting.
2. All members of the group (including staff) have the right to attend, speak and vote at meetings. Other individuals may be invited to attend any part of a meeting as and when appropriate but may not vote or count towards the quorum.
3. The Volunteering Manager or their nominee shall act as Secretary. The Chief Executive is the group's executive lead. S/he may choose to delegate functions and/or be represented at meetings by another member of staff.
4. Minutes and actions will be recorded and reported to the next meeting for approval. The Board Champion for volunteers and Chief Executive will provide reports as necessary on the work of VSG to the Board. The wider volunteer community will be kept informed of the work of the group.
5. The quorum is three, or one third of the members (rounded to the nearest whole number), whichever is the greater. The quorum must include a minimum of two elected or appointed volunteers.
6. The VSG shall meet as required and is expected to meet quarterly. Meetings may be held in person, by telephone or video conference.
7. Where the Chair agrees, minor decisions may be taken 'out of meeting' via email approval. Such decisions will be noted in the minutes of the next meeting.

Membership

The composition of VSG, the eligibility for membership, terms of office and arrangements for elections and co-options are as set out in **Annex 2**.

Role and Duties

The overall role is to assist the Chief Executive and volunteers with **co-ordinating, promoting, overseeing, challenging & supporting volunteering activities**. It acts as a link between volunteers, APM staff, the Board and other stakeholders. It assists in advising on, and resolving, substantive issues arising from volunteer groups.

In fulfilling that remit, the group shall have the following responsibilities and duties and may take decisions within that context:

1. Co-ordinate areas of common interest and issues across volunteering activities. Assist senior staff, on facilitating and promoting the targeted areas of activity that volunteers should undertake for APM. This to include guidance on annual business plans and changes thereto.
2. Monitor the impact of volunteer groups, encouraging and facilitating improvements where necessary. Keep an overview of volunteer activity and report to the Board and executive as necessary on all issues of substance.
3. With the CEO, take a lead on actively reviewing volunteering activity. Where necessary, recommend any substantive suggested changes to the Board.
4. The VSG may be asked to review proposals for the creation or closing of new volunteering groups.
5. Promote consistency, efficiency and common approaches. Comment on and oversee the preparation of guidance and advice, including maintenance of the Volunteers' handbook (or equivalent support materials). Issues of substance or contention in the handbook may be escalated to the Board by the Board Champion for volunteers or the Chief Executive.
6. Monitor dormant or lapsed groups and activities. Encourage them to recover or disband as appropriate.
7. Consider and recommend to the Board as required on whether branches, chapters, or SIGs should be created, maintained, abolished or re-categorised.

Extract from APM Regulations on Volunteering - Section D – Volunteering**20 Reporting lines and accountability**

- 20.1 Volunteers are integral to APM and recognised as an invaluable resource and support. Volunteers may work through branches, specific interest groups or in any other approved capacity.
- 20.2 Volunteers have no executive authority except insofar as detailed within these regulations or the *Volunteers' Handbook*. Volunteers are accountable to the chief executive, and through him/her, the board. The chief executive will seek to resolve any issues of contention or disagreement through the structures detailed in these regulations and may escalate matters for consideration to the board. The chief executive and board may direct the affairs of the volunteers.
- 20.3 The board will appoint a board champion for volunteers. The role will be undertaken in accordance with Regulation 6.5 and **Appendix 7**.
- 20.4 Volunteers will act in accordance with the APM Community Charter. Breaches of this may be dealt with by the Chief Executive, or if more applicable, through the APM Code of Professional Conduct.
- 20.5 The chief executive will arrange for the preparation and maintenance of a *Volunteers' Handbook*. This document will set out detailed information to assist volunteers in their work with APM as well as procedures to regulate the business of the branch and SIG infrastructure. Nothing in the handbook shall conflict with or override these regulations or any other approved APM policy or procedure which, unless otherwise stated, will apply to volunteers. The volunteer steering group will be asked to review and maintain the handbook. The group or the chief executive may refer substantive updates to the board as necessary.

21 Branches and chapters

- 21.1 Branches shall be established and maintained to provide opportunities for individual members living or working in a defined area, and for corporate members with facilities in that area. All new APM members will be automatically enrolled into a branch. The *Volunteers' Handbook* will set out in more detail the activities and role of a branch. Branches and SIGs will promote each other's activities.
- 21.2 The board must approve the formation (or removal) of a branch, including its defined area. Branches may, with the approval of the Volunteers Steering Group, form chapters. Chapters shall operate as subsidiaries of the branch (with or without their own committee) to complement branch activities. Chapters shall not have a separate budget allocation.

22 Specific Interest Groups (SIGs)

- 22.1 Specific Interest Groups can be established to:
- a. provide opportunities to discuss a particular aspect of project management;
 - b. further the understanding and practice of tools and techniques within that area of interest;
 - c. develop and publicise findings and guidance in relation to that area.

Branches and SIGs will promote each other's activities.

- 22.2 The board must approve the formation (or removal) of a SIG, including its defined scope and remit.

23 Branch and SIG committees

- 23.1 Each branch and SIG will form a committee to oversee its affairs. The composition of the committee, elections and appointments to it and arrangements for the appointment of its chair will be set out in the *Volunteers' Handbook*. The arrangements must provide for a maximum term of office for key office holders, a regular refresh of membership and the opportunity for all members to put themselves forward.
- 23.2 The Branch or SIG Committee will ensure that an annual report is made to members of the branch or SIG on activities undertaken.

24 Branch and SIG budgets, business plans and activities

- 24.1 All branch and SIG expenditure will be undertaken and managed by APM's full time staff in accordance with APM approved policies and procedures. Volunteers must not commit APM to any financial liability. They may be personally liable for any commitments made without authorisation.
- 24.2 Each branch and SIG will submit annually a business plan to the volunteering manager. The plan should be robust and deliverable. Plans will be reviewed by APM staff and submitted to the VSG for comment. The chief executive will prepare spending plans for inclusion in the the overall APM business plan for approval by the board.
- 24.3 Branches and SIGs must ensure that planned activities are shared with APM staff. Activities will be supportive of APM's overall business plan and objectives. As necessary, APM will provide reasonable support and promotion to the activities of volunteers.

25 Other Volunteering Activities

- 25.1 The chief executive may authorise and manage a range of other volunteering activities and opportunities beyond branches and SIGs. These activities will operate informally and may be on a task and finish basis. The VSG may review and be briefed on such activities and may maintain guidance and arrangements to support such activities in the *Volunteers' Handbook*. The chief executive and volunteers champion will keep the board apprised of such activities and developments.

26 Volunteers steering group

- 26.1 APM will establish a Volunteers Steering Group (VSG) [Note: Branch and SIG chairs may separately hold advisory calls, meetings or webinars to discuss common areas of interest]. The board will approve the terms of reference for the VSG on the recommendation of the group. The group will:
- a. Co-ordinate common activities and issues across all volunteering activity.
 - b. Promote consistency, efficiency and common approaches.
 - c. Maintain guidance and advice, including the *Volunteers' Handbook*.
 - d. Act as a liaison between volunteers, staff and the board.
 - e. Monitor dormant or lapsed groups and encourage them to recover or disband.
 - f. Make recommendations to the board in respect of proposals to create or remove a

branch or SIG.

26.2 The VSG chair will be the board champion for volunteers. (See Regulation 20.3 above).

26.3 The chief executive and volunteers manager will be members of VSG. Additional members will be as set out in the VSG terms of reference together with procedures for elections and appointments.

26.4 The chief executive will administer the steering group and provide reasonable support to it and its chair.

27 Volunteers' Forum

27.1 A Volunteers' Forum will be organised by the chief executive (in conjunction with the VSG) where matters of importance to the direction of the volunteer community and other strategic and operational business may be discussed.

VSG Composition and Elections

1 Composition

The overall principle is that VSG membership should include a majority from the volunteer community. The composition for VSG is therefore as follows:

Volunteers' Champion (Chair)	1
Elected members	4
Appointed members	2
Chief Executive (or appointed nominee)	1
Volunteering Manager	1
Total	9

Note: the VSG is entitled to invite any individual to attend meeting(s). Such invited guests can participate fully, except they would not count towards a quorum or be able to vote. The VSG may also decide to appoint up to 2 members directly in order to represent the wider activities of volunteers outside the branch and SIG community.

2 Eligibility

The Chair will be the Volunteers' Champion and approved by the Board. The two staff members will be the individuals holding those roles. Elected members must be an individual member in the full or fellow grades. VSG will maintain a role profile with some desirable criteria.

3 Terms of Office

- The Chair's term is determined by his/her Board appointment to the role.
- No elected member shall serve for more than six years.
- Elected terms of office will be set to allow for a planned succession and rotation of members. The usual arrangement will be for two year terms.
- If staggered terms of office are required for the elected members then the options for agreeing this include the drawing of lots or deciding that those with the highest number of votes should have the longest term.

4 Elections

- An annual call for nominations will be issued by the Volunteering Manager.
- Vacancies occurring during the year will normally be held over to the next annual call.
- Nominations must be received by a given deadline.
- Nomination forms must be completed and will provide an opportunity for the candidate to submit a statement of up to 200 words.
- In the event of there being more nominations than vacancies, an election will be held.
- Candidate statements would then be circulated to all branch and SIG Committee members. Branch and SIG Chairs are expected to consult their Committees before casting their votes. Each Chair will be able to cast the same number of votes as there are vacancies arising.
- Those candidates with the highest number of votes will be elected to VSG.
- Elections will be organised electronically.