

DOSI



DEEP-OCEAN STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

GOVERNING DOCUMENT

Reviewed and approved by the DOSI Core Team (December 2023)

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INTRODUCTION

The Deep-Ocean Stewardship Initiative (DOSI) is an unincorporated non-profit network associated with both the University of Southampton (UK) and Scripps Institution of Oceanography (USA). DOSI comprises a global network of experts who integrate different science disciplines – as well as technology, law and economics – to advise on ecosystem-based management of resource use in the deep ocean, and on strategies to maintain the integrity of deep-ocean ecosystems within and beyond national jurisdiction.

DOSI is designed to be a relatively informal network with the flexibility to be adaptive and responsive, while maintaining the ability to evolve.

AIMS

DOSI's aim is to support the maintenance of healthy, resilient deep-ocean ecosystems, able to contribute to the wider Earth system through their sustainable and equitable management, informed by robust scientific knowledge.

DOSI works towards this aim by:

- Promoting the sustainable use, management and conservation of the deep ocean, its biodiversity, ecosystem structure, function and services.
- Providing robust deep-ocean science in a timely and relevant format accessible to policy makers and other stakeholders.
- Empowering scientists and other experts globally to engage in policy processes relevant to the deep ocean through improved understanding and facilitation.
- Fostering the next generation of deep-ocean stewards to achieve global impact and effective transformational change.
- Building awareness of the value of the deep ocean by communicating deep-ocean knowledge and providing expertise.
- Strengthening regional deep-ocean management capacity and increasing participation in global deep-ocean decision-making fora, especially for countries that currently lack, or have limited deep-ocean expertise.

DOSI's activities are conducted in accordance with the following values:

- Expertise.
- Independence and impartiality.
- Transparency and open access to information.
- Social equity, inclusivity and representation of diverse voices.
- Respect, mutual support, trustworthiness and collaboration.
- Environmental responsibility and justice.

DOSI MEMBERSHIP

DOSI functions via thematic expert Working Groups and Task Forces established on the basis of (i) a current pressing issue in deep-ocean management or governance, and (ii) sufficient voluntary interest from DOSI members to sustain the leadership and work of the group. Details of the current Working Groups and Task Forces can be found [on this webpage](#).

Membership of a Working Group or Task Force is voluntary, and is open (upon request via an [online form](#) and subject to approval) to individuals from different disciplines and sectors from any nation. There is no time limit to DOSI membership. Members can terminate their membership by request to the DOSI Office, who will action their request.

Individuals may subscribe to receive DOSI communications without becoming a DOSI member. These individuals are referred to as the DOSI subscribers.

DOSI membership is conditional upon agreement by each member to apply DOSI principles in all dealings within and on behalf of DOSI, and to adhere to relevant policies communicated to members, including the DOSI Code of Conduct. The Steering Committee reserves the right to withdraw or suspend membership where they determine there is good cause to do so, including in instances of breach of DOSI policies or code of conduct, or other behaviour that risks compromising DOSI values or bringing DOSI into disrepute.

DOSI members may receive regular updates from the leads of the Working Groups and Task Forces to which they have signed up, and can participate in events and activities, contribute to the drafting of outputs, and take part in surveys aimed at providing broad community views. DOSI members may also propose and lead new activities and outputs in coordination with other Working Group or Task Force members and their Leads. A DOSI member may apply to represent DOSI in its activities, in accordance with the DOSI Code of Conduct and Ambassador Selection policies.

There is no direct financial benefit attached to DOSI membership other than for DOSI Office staff. DOSI members may receive *ad hoc* honoraria and expenses for specific tasks, funds permitting. Members may receive notice of DOSI or external funding or other professional opportunities through DOSI communications.

Any DOSI member who wishes to voice a concern about the work of DOSI may do so in accordance with the DOSI Complaints, Grievances and Whistleblowing Procedure.

DOSI CORE TEAM

DOSI is governed by three bodies, collectively referred to as the DOSI Core Team:

- The DOSI Steering Committee
- The DOSI Advisory Board
- The DOSI Working Group and Task Force Leads

The Core Team is supported by the DOSI Office, which is led by the Executive Director.

Members of the Core Team must be supportive of the aims of DOSI and willing to commit time and attention to the role.

Core Team members may be removed in accordance with DOSI Disciplinary Procedures. Any Core Team member wishing to resign during their term may do so in writing to the Steering Committee, giving as much notice as practically possible.

Core Team members are not remunerated for performing their functions in this role, but may claim reasonable expenses for travel, accommodation and incidental costs that are

specifically required to discharge their duties as Core Team members, and in line with the DOSI Sustainable Travel Policy.

All members of the Core Team agree as a condition of their appointment to adhere to all relevant DOSI policies, including the DOSI Code of Conduct.

THE DOSI STEERING COMMITTEE

The Steering Committee consists of between five and nine members at one time. Appointment of Steering Committee members is on a tri-annual basis, as well as when required, and may be renewed for up to three terms whilst ensuring continuity among DOSI founding members to maintain historical insight. Appointment to the Steering Committee shall be based on criteria developed to ensure broad representation across disciplines, geographic distribution and range of experience.

The Executive Director will instigate regular and *ad hoc* meetings of the Steering Committee in conjunction with the Chair of the Steering Committee. The meetings of the Steering Committee shall be led by the Chair of the Steering Committee.

All appointees to the DOSI Steering Committee are required to sign the DOSI Code of Conduct, and to abide by DOSI organisational policies and procedures.

Current Steering Committee membership can be found on the [DOSI website](#).

The responsibilities of the Steering Committee and the Executive Director are as follows:

- Strategic planning as well as periodic reassessment and update of DOSI priorities and resource allocation, including Working Group/Task Force topics and communications.
- Develop and oversee the DOSI programme of work, monitor and assess progress towards DOSI aims, and provide advice and direction.
- Determine and maintain the membership of the DOSI Office, Advisory Board and, to some degree, Working Group and Task Force Leads.
- Set strategic direction for collaboration and linkages across Working Groups and Task Forces.
- Chair Core Team meetings as and when required.
- Approve and keep under review relevant policies, risks and protocols for DOSI governance.
- Ensure DOSI principles are upheld throughout the DOSI programme of work.
- Investigate and manage any complaints or conflicts of interest amongst members of the DOSI Office.
- Withdrawal or suspension of DOSI membership if required.

THE DOSI ADVISORY BOARD

The Advisory Board consists of a minimum of 10 and maximum of 18 DOSI members selected by the Steering Committee in consultation with Working Group and Task Force Leads, following a call for interest, and taking into account motivations, expertise, career stage, gender and geographic location. Current membership of the Advisory Board can be found on the [DOSI website](#).

Advisory Board members serve for staggered two- to three-year terms to ensure some continuity in the membership and its thinking. Advisory Board members may be asked to provide independent oversight over Working Groups and Task Forces; to avoid conflicts of interest, Advisory Board members cannot simultaneously be Working Group or Task Force Leads.

The Advisory Board reports to, advises and is accountable to the Steering Committee.

The responsibilities of the Advisory Board are as follows:

- Support and advise the Steering Committee, Working Group and Task Force Leads on strategy, progress, risk management and future directions for DOSI and its programme of work, upon request.
- Promote DOSI aims and principles, and champion the DOSI network and its activities, including with a view to increase participation and membership from underrepresented groups.
- Bring new opportunities for DOSI engagement to the attention of the Core Team.
- Advise the Steering Committee and DOSI Office on DOSI policies and plans.
- Represent DOSI when appropriate at high-level meetings, development of DOSI outputs, policy discussions and workshops.
- Support the Steering Committee with fundraising and partnership development, where requested.
- Attend DOSI scheduled online meetings approximately every three months, or as urgent matters arise.

THE DOSI WORKING GROUP AND TASK FORCE LEADS

Working Group and Task Force Leads are selected, following expressions of interest from the DOSI membership, based on DOSI values and taking into account motivations, expertise, career stage, gender, and geographic location. There are usually two or more co-leads per Working Group or Task Force to share the workload. Working Group and Task Force Leads serve a term of two years, after which time their progress is reviewed by the Steering Committee and may either be confirmed in post for another term or replaced at their request, and at the Steering Committee's discretion.

The responsibilities of Working Group and Task Force Leads are as follows:

- With support from the Executive Director, develop and implement plans of action for the Working Group or Task Force, including activities, events and outputs, such as drafting of policy briefs and manuscripts, attending relevant fora, hosting side events or media events.
- Report on progress of the Working Group or Task Force to the Core Team.
- Communicate relevant updates (e.g., policy developments, opportunities, events to Working Group or Task Force members) in a timely and accessible manner.
- Provide regular (e.g., monthly) and inclusive opportunities for dialogue and engagement within the Working Group or Task Force, including transparent workflow for Working Group/Task Force outputs.
- Work with DOSI Office to communicate externally about the Working Group/Task Force, its outputs and activities.
- Promote DOSI aims and principles within the Working Group/Task Force and externally.
- Ensure compliance with DOSI internal policies around, for example, DOSI Ambassador Selection.

Working Group and Task Force Leads may also establish *ad hoc* sub-committees to deliver specific activities.

THE DOSI OFFICE

The Core Team is supported by the DOSI Office of paid staff, who manage the day-to-day running of DOSI. DOSI Office staff are appointed by, accountable to, and supervised by the Executive Director.

All DOSI Office positions must be subject to a contract or Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed by the Executive Director, or by a member of the Steering Committee in the case of the Executive Director's contract. The contract or MoU will contain general contractual terms and conditions, as well as terms of reference specific to that position. DOSI Office positions are remunerated in accordance with the terms and conditions of the contract for the position.

All appointees to the DOSI Office are required to sign the DOSI Code of Conduct, and to abide by DOSI organisational policies and procedures.

The responsibilities of the DOSI Office are as follows:

- Coordination of, and support for, members of DOSI and the Core Team, to deliver the DOSI programme of work and progress towards the DOSI aims.
- Budget control and financial administration, in collaboration with relevant Working Group and Task Force Leads, including proposed allocation of funding for DOSI activities – unless a potential conflict of interest, in which case control will be referred to the Steering Committee.
- Fundraising (Steering Committee can assist or lead if opportunities arise).

- Donor reporting.
- Donor relations (Steering Committee can assist or lead if opportunities arise).
- Internal monitoring and reporting (highlights reports, risk register, monthly bulletins, etc.), including to the Steering Committee.
- Implement and review internal and external DOSI communications strategy and protocols, including quality checks – coordination of messaging and outreach materials for policy meetings, events and social media.
- Investigate and manage any complaints or conflicts of interest, unless involving DOSI Office staff.
- Approve use of DOSI branding based on criteria developed with the Steering Committee based on DOSI strategic objectives and priorities.
- Oversee DOSI compliance with donors’ requirements and update the Steering Committee on a quarterly basis.
- Identify and promote opportunities for collaboration and linkages across Working Groups and Task Forces.
- Development and oversight of operational mechanisms, outputs and activities, including updates to internal policies and risk register.
- Managing/hiring DOSI Office staff, with final approval by Steering Committee.
- DOSI membership management.
- Promote DOSI principles and maintain awareness of, and adherence to, DOSI policies across the DOSI membership.

MEETING AND DECISION-MAKING PROCEDURES

DOSI meeting arrangements reflect the international nature of the DOSI membership, as well as the DOSI Sustainable Travel Policy.

The Core Team conducts its business primarily by email and via online conferencing. Core Team meetings take place at least four times a year offered in two time zones via online conferencing.

The Steering Committee meet every month via online conferencing. Additional meetings may be called at the request of the Executive Director or by at least one-third of the Steering Committee giving as much notice as possible.

The DOSI Office meets via online conferencing at least weekly or as and when required to fulfil its day-to-day business. The DOSI Office is responsible for providing administrative and meeting convening assistance to the Core Team and Steering Committee. Meetings must be minuted and/or recorded.

An in-person and/or hybrid DOSI general meeting will be held each year at a suitable time for the majority of Core Team members, preferably in parallel to a relevant formal event on the international ocean science-policy agenda. This will be open to all DOSI members and subscribers.

DOSI bodies should aim for consensus where decisions need to be taken. Where consensus cannot be reached, matters may be taken to a three-quarter majority vote where there is a quorum. A quorum requires at least half the members of the relevant body to be present.

Where a Working Group or Task Force proposes to make a submission to a consultation or policy process, or a publication in DOSI's name, the Working Group/Task Force Lead – before submission or publication – must:

- work with the DOSI Office to ensure adherence to DOSI formatting standards, correct logo use, and appropriate acknowledgements to DOSI and funders; and
- where requested by Working Group/Task Force Leads, obtain the approval of the Steering Committee (which may be provided via email), who may also request the views of the Advisory Board.

POWERS

The Steering Committee has responsibility for DOSI and can act in any lawful way to fulfil the work programme and aims of DOSI. As core funding for the majority of DOSI activities is managed via two associated academic institutions (in the UK and USA), it is those associated institutions that have the ultimate legal responsibility and liability for DOSI activities. Where discrete grants are received to cover specific DOSI activities and their costs that are not managed by the two host academic institutions, a full and comprehensive insurance policy must be obtained to cover any activities funded by those grants for the duration of the grants.

The Steering Committee, aided by the DOSI Office, shall establish such rules, policies and procedures as may be required to assist with the day-to-day running and good governance of DOSI, though no content of such documents may contradict anything in this Governing Document.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT RULES

DOSI activities are supported financially by funding awards and collaborative grants from partners and benefactors. Fundraising takes place in accordance with the DOSI Fundraising Policy.

DOSI funds are managed in accordance with the DOSI Financial Management Policy and Procedure and the Allocation of Funds Policy. DOSI funds are generally used to fund DOSI staff and activities directly, but on occasion funds may also be granted to DOSI members for use in activities aligned with DOSI aims.

HOW CHANGES CAN BE MADE TO THE GOVERNING DOCUMENT

This Governing Document shall be reviewed by the Steering Committee at least every five years.

The Governing Document can be amended by consensus of the Steering Committee. Where consensus cannot be reached, matters may be taken to a three-quarter majority vote where there is a quorum. A quorum requires at least half the members of the relevant body to be present.

DISSOLUTION

In the event of DOSI being terminated, any assets remaining after the payment of debts and liabilities will be donated to a not-for-profit organisation within similar principles and aims to DOSI, to be decided by a vote of remaining Steering Committee members.