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## Task Force, “Reviewing Ethics and Safeguarding”

### Terms of Reference

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#### **Purpose:**

The World Scout Committee (WSC) will appoint a Task Force to review Ethics and Safeguarding Structures within WOSM. After six years of implementation of Ethics compliance within WOSM, alongside the Safeguarding initiatives, the WSC would like to conduct a comprehensive review and assessment of ethics and safeguarding processes within WOSM and use those learnings to inform the EC’s mandate and operation.

The Task Force will aim to address challenges faced by the WSC’S Ethics Committee and WSB Safeguarding Teams and will provide a detailed report to the WSC with improvements according to best practice and actionable recommendations to strengthen WOSM's processes related to ethics, safeguarding, complaints handling, legal liabilities and governance.

The Task Force review will focus on matters impacting WOSM’s legal entities and structures, ensuring alignment with its obligations and policies. It will also cover challenging areas faced by the WSB Safeguarding team related to reported NSO concerns that currently fall outside the mandate of the Ethics Committee and Complaints Policy and the actions of individuals within NSOs.

#### **Remit:**

#### **Process and Methodology**

The Task Force will:

- Develop a structured process to capture inputs and engage with various stakeholders, including previous Ethics Committee members, relevant WSB Ethics and safeguarding Staff Regional Committee Representatives, experts from external organisations to gather input as well as NSO Leadership (including Chief Commissioners or International Commissioners as stakeholders to provide insights into NSO-level challenges). The process needs to ensure consultations include diverse perspectives and that all stakeholders and individuals share relevant information, experiences and best practices.
- Focus strictly on ethics and safeguarding matters affecting WOSM's structures and cover instances where reported concerns to the Safe from Harm case management team relate to NSO matters or individuals in NSO's and the impact and limitation and ramifications of the extent of involvement by WOSM.
- Assess the liability and implications of any proposed changes in terms of professional and volunteer or external staffing / resources to realise the proposed changes to the process
- Review existing policies, procedures related to ethics, and cases within WOSM for compliance and effectiveness.
- Review the decision-making process on EC recommendations to consider the question raised by the WSC in terms of the ability to delegate some matters to either the EC or an external body.
- Review and clarify the overlap between the mandates of the SfH case management team and the Ethics Committee.

## **Review and Analyse**

The Task Force will review and analyse:

- Ethics policies, case management practices, and their effectiveness in addressing risks and ensuring robust and transparent practices are in place for WOSM structures.
- Current complaints handling mechanisms and process and governance frameworks challenges, identifying gaps and opportunities for improvement.
- Assess WOSM's exposure to legal liability issues concerning ethics and safeguarding within WOSM's legal entities. Focusing on what the organization's obligations are and how to mitigate risks associated with reported ethics and safeguarding concerns.
- Discuss the boundaries of WOSM's involvement, particularly in Safeguarding matters, where the team frequently receives complaints regarding NSO-related issues and outline how WOSM should practically address concerns related to NSOs that are brought to its attention and what actions specifically and practically can be taken by WOSM and the limits to those actions.
- Evaluate how WOSM's policies compare with global best practices in regarding ethics (e.g., UN guidelines, NGO frameworks).
- Acknowledge and account for variations in legal frameworks, cultural norms, and safeguarding practices across regions to ensure recommendations are practical and context-sensitive.
- Review and evaluate how Host Organizations of World and Regional Events, including their leadership and appointed officials, can be brought within scope of the WOSM Complaints Policy & WOSM Code of Conduct.
- Review how "WOSM Team members", as described within the WOSM Code of Conduct, can be held accountable to the Code for their actions across the different roles they might hold at different levels in Scouting and beyond.

## **Define Roles and Responsibilities:**

The Task Force will recommend to the WSC:

- The tasks, reporting and scope of the Ethics Committee and Safe from Harm Case management teams.
- Whether "Safe from Harm case management oversight" should be included in the Ethics Committee's mandate.
- The areas requiring delegation to external experts, organizations staff, or specialised teams.
- Guidelines for governance and decision-making processes to ensure accountability and clarity.

## **Formulate Recommendations:**

The Task Force will recommend to the WSC:

- Actionable recommendations to enhance WOSM's safeguarding, governance, and ethics frameworks.
- The alignment of recommendations with WOSM's Policy review and Triennial Plan framework.

## **Membership:**

The Task Force will be comprised of a globally diverse group of internal and external experts, chosen based on their technical expertise, experience and ability to contribute meaningfully. Members must be impartial. They should act as independent members and commit to have capacity and time availability to support the review as required to complete the remit and the expected deliverables within the timeframes envisioned. All members must sign confidentiality agreements.

**Composition:**

The Task Force shall comprise:

1. Chairperson preferably a WSC member appointed by the WSC on the recommendation of the WSC Chairperson;
2. Up to seven other Members, appointed by the WSC Chairperson on the nomination of the Chairperson of the Task Force, having taken into consideration the competences and expertise of the proposed appointees and, insofar as possible,
  - Regional diversity,
  - Gender balance (50-50), and 20% of appointees below the age of 30;
  - The WSC Chairperson and the WOSM Secretary General, in an ex-officio capacity.

Staff support will be provided by WSB staff members who will provide expertise and support, so appointed by the Secretary General. In addition, the Task Force may need to call on relevant experts to inform discussions/decisions as and when necessary.

The composition of the Task force should preferably include:

- Two (2) Representatives from international organizations or NGOs.
- Five (5) volunteers from within the movement with appropriate subject matter expertise required.

**Expertise:**

- Members of the Task Force reviewing ethics and case management should have a well-rounded skill set that includes a deep understanding of both ethical principles and safeguarding practices.
- Legal expertise is essential, particularly in areas of compliance, human rights, and data protection.
- Knowledge of ethical frameworks and industry standards, along with experience in safeguarding vulnerable individuals, is crucial to ensure that policies are protective and aligned with best practices.
- Members of the task force should have an understanding of the specificities of the Scouting context and institutional frameworks.
- Members of the task force should have experience working in a global environment and have an understanding of diverse cultures and norms.

**Term of office:**

Membership and performance of members of the Task Force will be reviewed by the Chairperson and the staff support of the World Scout Bureau so appointed by the Secretary General. The Task Force will complete its work and its mandate by submitting a final report and recommendations to the World Scout Committee by September 2026.

**Quorum:**

50% of the members will make a meeting of the Task Force quorate.

**Frequency of meetings:**

The Task Force will conduct regular virtual meetings preferably on monthly basis, with in-person meetings as required and dependent on budget constraints.

**Expected Outcomes:**

- A comprehensive report detailing findings and actionable recommendations, to be presented to the WSC no later than September 2026.
- Recommendations designed to complement ongoing work within the Triennial Plan framework and align with the Policies review timeline.

- Guidance for the Ethics Committee and Safeguarding Team on role clarity, delegation, and operational improvements.

**Attendance**

The following have right of attendance:

- Ex-officio Member (WSC Chairperson);
- Ex-officio Member (Secretary General);
- Support staff so appointed by the Secretary General; and
- Relevant experts or consultants called on by the Chairperson to participate in discussions as and when necessary.

**Timeline and Deliverables**

- **March 2025:** WSC approval of ToR.
- **August 2025:** Task Force formation and initial meetings.
- **October 2025:** Begin stakeholder consultation process.
- **January 2026:** Interim progress report submitted to the WSC.
- **February 2026:** Stakeholder consultations completed.
- **March 2026:** Interim draft report submitted to the WSC for feedback.
- **September 2026:** Final report submitted to the WSC for approval.

**Reporting and Accountability**

The Task Force will:

- **Report Progress to the WSC:** Provide updates on progress at the WSC's bi-annual meetings, including both written reports and, if requested, in-person presentations by Task Force members.
- **Submit Final Recommendations:** Deliver a comprehensive report to the WSC by September 2026. \*

**Authority:**

The Task Force has delegated authority from the World Scout Committee to:

- Liaise with other Standing Committees, Work Streams and Task Forces.

**Practicalities:**

The following practicalities will apply to the work of the Task Force:

- The Task Force is directly accountable to the World Scout Committee.
- A WSB staff member so appointed by the Secretary General will coordinate staff support to the Task Force.
- An agenda and accompanying papers will be circulated to members 7 days in advance of a meeting taking place.
- The minutes and actions of a meeting will be circulated to members within 7 days after a meeting takes place.
- Progress updates on the work of the Task Force as well as the minutes from Task Force meetings (redacted where appropriate in the case of confidential items) will be shared openly with interested parties.
- Further rules governing the functioning of the Task Force shall be decided by the Task Force itself and advised to the WSC Chairperson.
- These Terms of Reference, and any amendments thereto, shall be approved by the WSC.

**Annex A- Knowledge, Skills, and Competencies List**

The profile of the different members of the Task Force will aim to cover the following skills and expertise:

1. Ethics and compliance
2. Safeguarding
3. Legal
4. Governance
5. Stakeholder engagement

\* The Task Force acknowledges and understands the timelines outlined herein and will make every effort to meet them. However, it wishes to emphasize that the quality, depth, and thoroughness of the work are paramount, and that timelines may need to remain flexible to ensure a responsible and well-considered process

**Approved World Scout Committee 22 March 2025  
Amended by World Scout Committee on 5 October 2025**