



Explanation

By following guidance in the [Stakeholder Engagement and Steering Groups](#) tool and the [Developing a Vision and Food Charter](#) tool you will hopefully have developed a clear idea of your Food Partnership's structure and function. Now you can start discussing Terms of Reference (TORs) – your joint agreement on rules, procedures, processes and the way you want to behave towards each other.

There are plenty of examples of Food Partnership TORs on the SFP website. Have a good look through before you start.

What to include:

- TORs typically include information on the following:
 - Name of Food Partnership
 - Aims / Purpose of the Food Partnership
 - Membership
 - Steering Group Structure (E.g. maximum number; representatives from different sectors, what is expected of Steering Group Members)
 - Decision Making
 - Conflict Resolution
 - Appointment of Chair
 - Meeting Arrangements Terms of reference top tips
- It might also be useful to include a section in your TORs detailing the **values and principles** of your Food Partnership. Wells Food Network for example lists its values and principles in the TORs:
 - Values:** Passionate; Inclusive; Collaborative; Inspirational; Solutions oriented; Challenging the Status Quo; Celebratory and Fun.
 - Principles:** For the public benefit; Independent; Accountable; Transparent; Ethical; Focused on addressing priority needs; Aiming for lasting beneficial impact.
- If you wish to operate in an open and transparent way you can give details of this in your TORs. For example, you may decide to include that you will:
 - publish your annual accounts;
 - hold Annual General Meetings;
 - have a percentage of your steering committee or board elected from within the membership.
- It is valuable to use your TORs to outline the type of organisation you are.

Introduction

- This tool provides guidance on a process that can help you to develop your TORs for the Partnership Steering group. This in turn could provide the basis for sharing and agreeing the Terms of Reference for the Partnership as a whole.
- The degree to which you use the process of a [TORs survey](#) (see tool) of individual perspectives followed by a participatory **TORs workshop** (below) will depend on the character and size of your Steering Group.

Smaller, cohesive groups already used to working together may be able to informally discuss and find consensus on the suggested key themes over 1 or 2 meetings without the need for the survey and workshop approach.

Larger, more diverse groups with a wide range of perspectives may benefit greatly from following the survey and workshop approach to ensure a fully participatory and democratic decision-making process

- This tool is focused on **4 key themes** related to developing TORs, that have emerged from experience working with different SFP members
- These themes provide the basis for the preliminary fact-finding **TORs survey** as well as the structure for the facilitated **participatory workshop** based on the survey's outputs
- The **four themes** are:
 1. **The role of the Steering Group**
What is the main purpose of the Steering group?
 2. **How you want members of the Steering Group to behave**
What principles should be adopted to shape how members of the Steering Group behave towards one another?
 3. **How you want to run the Steering Group**
Key skills, membership procedures, expectations, the Chair etc.
 4. **What you want to do about meetings and decision making**
Protocols and responsibilities

What to do

- The process should ideally be led and facilitated by the Partnership Co-ordinator. Alternatively identify a partnership or Steering group member with survey and/or facilitation experience
- Distribute the survey, using the [Terms of Reference Survey](#) Excel spreadsheet tool, at least 2 weeks before the workshop and allow enough time to analyse key outputs to feed into the workshop
- Allow at least half a day to run the workshop – and recognise that it may need more than one meeting to cover all 4 themes.

Terms of Reference Workshop Programme

1. Welcome and Introduction

- Welcome
- Purpose and aims of the session:
 - Focus on governance
 - Strengthening partnership working
 - Drafting of the Terms of Reference
- How it will work:
 - Sort out and explain the way you want to do things
 - Determine your own rules and procedures
 - Approach used with other SFC partnerships
 - Applying this to your own context
 - Workshop structure based on the **TORs SURVEY** sent out last week
 - Survey responses provide a starting point for discussions – seeking consensus
- Expectations:
 - Respect each other's opinions
 - There are no right and wrong answers
 - Aim to seek consensus but allow for disagreement
 - Aim to complete in one half-day workshop but acknowledge that more time may be needed

2. Who's who

- Quick go round
 - Who you are
 - Your role in the Steering Group/Partnership

3. Terms of Reference discussion

- Workshop will be based on the 4 themes and questions included in the survey:
 - 1. The role of the Steering Group**
 - 2. How you want members of the Steering Group to behave**
 - 3. How you want to run the Steering Group**
 - 4. What you want to do about meetings and decision making**
- For some themes survey indicates there is already strong consensus
- Need to verify this – hopefully quite quick!
- For others there are different perspectives and opinions which we will discuss and hopefully address here by:
 - Sharing perspectives
 - Clarifying differences of opinion
 - Seeking common ground
 - Determining how to deal with disagreement

Theme 1: The role of the Steering Group

Feedback survey responses:

- Purpose
- Functions
- Relationship with the Partnership

Discussion:

- Are any responses contradictory?
- Are any responses unclear?
- Does anyone disagree with any of the responses? If so – why?

If there is consensus this part of the TORs can be confirmed by the wider Partnership.

- Is there still disagreement?
- If yes, is the disagreement significant – a deal-breaker? Or could people live with it?

If no – the issue needs to be discussed with the wider Partnership.

Theme 2: Behaviour of the Steering Group

Feedback survey responses:

- Principles
- Values

Discussion:

- Are any responses contradictory?
- Are any responses unclear?
- Does anyone disagree with any of the responses? If so – why?

If there is consensus this part of the TORs can be confirmed by the wider Partnership.

- Is there still disagreement?
- If yes, is the disagreement significant – a deal-breaker? Or could people live with it?

If no – the issue needs to be discussed with the wider Partnership.

Theme 3: How you want to run the Steering Group

Feedback survey responses:

- Skills (or roles)
- Steering Group membership procedure
- Expectations of members
- Chair's role
- Chair's appointment procedure

Discussion:

- Are any responses contradictory?
- Are any responses unclear?
- Does anyone disagree with any of the responses? If so – why?

If there is consensus this part of the TORs can be confirmed by the wider Partnership.

- Is there still disagreement?
- If yes, is the disagreement significant – a deal-breaker? Or could people live with it?

If no – the issue needs to be discussed with the wider Partnership.

Theme 4: Meetings and decision making

Feedback survey responses:

- Decisions for Steering Group to make
- Decisions for Co-ordinator and line manager
- Finance decisions
- Quorum
- Meeting protocol
- Working group (sub-group) protocol

Discussion:

- Are any responses contradictory?
- Are any responses unclear?
- Does anyone disagree with any of the responses? If so – why?

If there is consensus this part of the TORs can be confirmed by the wider Partnership.

- Is there still disagreement?
- If yes, is the disagreement significant – a deal-breaker? Or could people live with it?

If no – the issue needs to be discussed with the wider Partnership.

4. Next steps

- What happens with the outputs from this session?
- What decisions can now be put to the Partnership for verification/agreement
- What decisions need to be discussed further with the Partnership?
- Are you happy that these draft TORs cover both the Steering Group and the Partnership?

5. Conclusions and final thoughts

- Quick go round the group to hear final thoughts: headlines, highlights, unfinished business.