To: Chairs and Deputy Chairs of SIG Steering Committees:

- Business Families
- Charities-Sydney
- Charities-UK
- Contentious Trusts & Estates
- Cross-Border Estates
- Philanthropy Advisors
- Philanthropy Advisors Hong Kong
- Mental Capacity

Consultation Paper: Special Interest Group (SIG) Development
Forward Strategy Proposal of SIGs to Faculties

Aim

The purpose of this paper is to outline development plans to migrate appropriate SIGs to a faculty structure.

Definition

**SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS**

‘Groups’ of individuals organised around a common interest in a given area’

A special interest group (SIG) is a community with an interest in advancing a specific area of knowledge, learning or technology where members cooperate to affect or to produce solutions within their particular field, and may communicate, meet, and organise conferences. They may at times also advocate or lobby on a particular issue or on a range of issues but are generally distinct from Advocacy groups and pressure groups which are normally set up for the specific political aim.

**FACULTIES**

‘Groups’ of individuals with a high level of technical expertise within the same profession who share a common interest in developing the technical expertise in their field’

A faculty is a group of members of a particular profession regarded as a specialist body. Faculties offer members networking opportunities, influence and recognition within clearly defined areas of technical expertise. As well as providing accurate and timely technical analysis, they lead the way in many professional and wider business issues through stimulating debate, shaping policy and encouraging good practice. They exist to enhance professional development and provide members with the technical resources needed to carry out their specific positions to the highest standard, and stay ahead of the competition.
Consultation

The STEP Board has agreed in principle the direction and core elements of the proposed special interest group to faculty strategy detailed in this paper. Discussions are now to be taken forward with the SIG Steering Committees to ascertain their views and ideas for strategy moving forward, and for comprehensive plans to be developed for the individual groups, as per timetables specified by the SIG Steering Committees.

Background

The current STEP offering for SIGs is at the level of the offer from STEP Worldwide 11 years ago, so effectively, we are at a very early stage of development. The offer varies by group. Some groups are only just beginning to expand their offer outside a few centres; other groups have a focus only in one centre and do not provide any material support to members beyond.

In aiming to provide an international offering, the SIGs have embarked on a development phase to better serve the needs of a global membership base. Such development will take time and challenges to this include:

- needs differ by jurisdiction, region and country, as do market situations; the market is not always ready and knowledge needs/levels differ, leading to a lack of development of specialist interests across all regions of the STEP world; there is a danger thin a ‘one size fits all’ approach
- extent of current use by members of new learning technologies to globalise the offering
- integration of the SIGs into STEP’s global education framework takes time to develop; a detailed development timeframe will be required before members can easily see a globally structured professional education framework to each group to give clear purpose and career development
- some SIGs work well solely on a local level and don’t require or desire a structured framework imposed by STEP Worldwide. Therefore it is difficult to justify much application of Worldwide resource in these instances
• volunteer and local staff resources. Current STEP staff resource limited to one person; current remit involves day-to-day running of the groups rather than a dedicated strategic development and planning remit

The core special interest groups at present are Business Families, Charities, Contentious Trusts and Estates, Cross-Border Estates, Mental Capacity, and Philanthropy Advisors. Possible future groups are in the areas of Private Wealth, Sole Practitioners and International Practice. It was decided some months ago that no new groups would be launched in the near future (outside that of the newly formed Contentious Trusts and Estates Group) allowing current staff resources to focus efforts developing the current SIG group offering.

Turning SIGs into Faculties to align them with the STEP global mission

Researchers suggest it is the niche value inside the core STEP proposition that will be the key to success going forward. The existing SIGs actively reflect key STEP niches, but need to be developed into a global membership offering and need to be placed within the overall context of the Society’s primary purpose – education and professional development.

This paper proposes very broad principles to begin a deeper development programme for the SIGs moving forward. It is aimed for SIGs to undergo sufficient development to see them cater to the needs of a global membership base and for them to be intensely marketed to members in 2013/14 to raise their profile and remit within the STEP membership base.

The core of this proposal is for SIGs to provide a clear global offering structured within STEP’s education framework, supported by CPD, events and webinars, such that the groups become core to STEP learning opportunities throughout members’ careers.

Part of the development proposal is for appropriate SIGs to be evolved into faculties to associate their work with a full professional development programme. Exploring what other professional bodies refer to their niche-focussed groups as, ‘special interest group’ is commonly used to reference organisations’ groupings of members by focussed areas of interest; ‘faculties’ however, have a strong academic foundation and describe groups of people with a collective area of interest in furthering education in a given professional area. To emphasise an academic focus, it is proposed that suitable SIGs at STEP be developed into ‘Faculties’.
Faculties: a cohesive offer

It would be important that faculties be seen as a top-end element of STEP participation and equally a cohesive part of the member service offering. Thus a global structure, including leadership places on Council, inclusion in the global qualifications framework within key target areas will all need to be considered. Research has shown most other professional bodies make such an offer. It is suggested that any SIG offering a strong professional development structure, and doing so on a global basis, becomes a ‘faculty’ since this branding appropriately represents its academic focus and character.

A cohesive offer based on identified member needs for education and professional development might consist of the following:

- Professional qualifications form the key framework, providing members with opportunities to extend their knowledge and obtain recognised diplomas and certificates within a professional field
- Clear-focused content and meeting- and networking points, provided through STEP conferences, social media, forums and meetings
- The use of new media and platforms to ensure programmes are available to members throughout the world
- An inclusive governance structure within the STEP framework that might in time, for instance, mean that a certain number of places on Council went to the leaders of the Special Interest Groups or Faculties
- Enhanced staff resource allocated to this remit
- A cohesive governance structure for each group which provides access for members no matter where they are based in the world. This would include steering committees comprising a more assorted jurisdictional representation in line with the growing diversification of the groups’ membership.
- Providing a content stream aligned with the groups’ areas of focus within the new format STEP Global Congress programme

For each of the groups STEP wish to establish an offer at a level which would merit each of the groups embarking on a much more serious marketing campaign to members to
encourage them to join, and over time, once the offer is taken further, to look to ask members
to pay a fee for Special Interest Group subscription. Most other professional bodies see
sufficient enough value in their special interest groups to charge for belonging. STEP too
would like to see the groups develop to such a stage where it is merited to charge to
generate some more cash to employ more staff to support the groups as they develop.

Getting from here to there: SIG to Faculty

The current Special Interest Group Terms of Reference make it clear that membership should
be opened globally and the governance structure should likewise be global; this has little
bearing until a global offer is available.

It would not be a positive to stop activity for groups that do not fit within the faculty
structure, so it is perfectly reasonable for some groups to continue to associate more
informally and follow a particular interest, retaining the identity of a special interest group.

For those existing Special Interest Groups wishing to move towards a faculty model they
must develop a plan within their current steering committees to provide a global offering
and will be requested to detail actions for making their offer truly international.

Change will be incremental, gradual and based on a needs analysis by
region/country/jurisdiction.

Request for feedback

SIG Steering Committees are requested to provide their thoughts and feedback by 22nd
March 2013 as follows:

• Comment on the direction of development for STEP special interest groups and faculties
• Consider the possible detail for their own SIG around a STEP ‘special interest group’
  versus a STEP ‘faculty’.
Next steps

- SIG Steering Committee feedback will be fed into discussions and further consultation at the STEP Council meeting on 19 April 2013.

- Existing special interest groups in turn will meet to discuss their plans and determine whether they plan to move towards a faculty model, or remain as a special interest group. These plans should be the subject of a detailed paper presented to the Board early June 2013 outlining the proposed direction for the group and a set of actions.

Development and direction of the special interest groups, and in turn faculties, will be a gradual process with on-going consultation. STEP’s Special Interest Groups Executive will keep SIG Steering Committees informed of developments.

Accompanying papers:

1) Membership breakdown for Business Families, Cross-Border Estates, Mental Capacity and Philanthropy Advisors (*data points for Charities not held by STEP head office and Contentious Trusts and Estates were newly launched on 27 February)

2) March 2013 SIG member offering: where we are now (member benefits as they currently stand. Where categories are marked as currently not being available, these are benefits anticipated to be part of the future offer)

3) STEP’s new global Qualifications Framework (approved by the Board and due to launch in the UK initially in mid-2013 (implementation 2014). It will enable students to gain a STEP diploma through different topic combinations. Students will be required to take certain core papers, but will be able to specialise with other papers, the special interest group areas of focus envisaged to feature as option streams.)

4) Possible actions to further internationalise special interest groups

5) Special Interest Group Terms of Reference/Governance Guidelines
### Business Families

**GOVERNANCE**

Committee Members (not including STEP staff): 27

Jurisdictional representation: Australia (1), Bermuda (1), Canada (1), Hong Kong (1), Liechtenstein (1), Singapore (1), Switzerland (1), United Arab Emirates (1), United Kingdom (19)

**MEMBERSHIP DATA POINTS**

- Figures at 6.12.2011: Members: 555
  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (320), Canada (60), Switzerland (21)
  - Membership in: 27 countries
  - 9% membership increase from Dec 2011 --&gt; Dec 2012

- Figures at 5.12.2012: Members: 605
  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (370), Canada (63), Switzerland (23)
  - Membership in: 29 countries

**MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN (at 5.12.2012)**

- STEP Members: 513 (85%)
- Friends of STEP: 1
- Non-members: 91

### Cross-Border Estates

**GOVERNANCE**

Committee Members (not including STEP staff): 14

Jurisdictional representation: Germany (1), Switzerland (1), The Netherlands (1), United Kingdom (11)

**MEMBERSHIP DATA POINTS**

- Figures at 6.12.2011: Members: 315
  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (183), Switzerland (29), Canada (14)
  - Membership in: 29 countries
  - 12% membership increase from Dec 2011 --&gt; Dec 2012

- Figures at 5.12.2012: Members: 355
  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (220), Switzerland (27), Canada (16)
  - Membership in: 32 countries

**MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN (at 5.12.2012)**

- STEP Members: 320 (90%)
- Friends of STEP: 0
- Non-members: 35

### Mental Capacity

**GOVERNANCE**

Committee Members (not including STEP staff): 11

Jurisdictional representation: Australia (3), United Kingdom (8)

**MEMBERSHIP DATA POINTS**

  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (294), Australia (16), Ireland (6)
  - Membership in: 15 countries
  - 14% membership increase from Dec 2011 --&gt; Dec 2012

- Figures at 5.12.2012: Members: 388
  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (343), Australia (18), Ireland (7)
  - Membership in: 15 countries

**MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN (at 5.12.2012)**

- STEP Members: 370 (95%)
- Friends of STEP: 0
- Non-members: 18

### Philanthropy Advisors

**GOVERNANCE**

Committee Members (not including STEP staff): 12

Jurisdictional representation: Switzerland (1), United Kingdom (10), United States of America (1)

**MEMBERSHIP DATA POINTS**

- Figures at 6.12.2011: Members: 290
  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (200), Switzerland (9), Canada (8)
  - Membership in: 22 countries
  - 16% membership increase from Dec 2011 --&gt; Dec 2012

- Figures at 5.12.2012: Members: 344
  - Top 3 Member Countries: UK (240), Switzerland (11), Canada (10)
  - Membership in: 23 countries

**MEMBERSHIP BREAKDOWN (at 5.12.2012)**

- STEP Members: 239 (69%)
- Friends of STEP: 1
- Non-members: 104
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SIG Sub-groups (Regionally focussed groups)</th>
<th>Business Families</th>
<th>Cross-Border Estates</th>
<th>Contentious Trusts and Estates</th>
<th>Mental Capacity</th>
<th>Philanthropy Advisors: Charities: UK</th>
<th>Sydney</th>
<th>Philanthropy Advisors: Hong Kong</th>
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**SIG service and member benefits**

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<th>Governance</th>
<th>Terms of Reference/Governance guidelines to provide formal structure to the set-up, running, and governance of the groups and the committee running them</th>
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<td>Networking opportunities</td>
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<td>Jurisdictional reference guides</td>
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<td>Useful publications</td>
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<td>✓ Subscription to Alliance magazine, Philanthropy series of books</td>
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<td>✓ SIG events free of charge (included in membership fee)</td>
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## The Matrix

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<th>Advanced Certificates supporting Specialist Diploma Route</th>
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<td>Estate Administration (C)</td>
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<td>England &amp; Wales</td>
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<td>Investments</td>
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**ADVANCED CERTIFICATES**

30 credits @ Level 6

**CERTIFICATES**

30 credits @ Level 4

**AWARDS**

3-5 credits @ Level 4

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<th>Trusts (C)</th>
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<th>Estate Admin (C)</th>
<th>Wills</th>
<th>Accounts</th>
<th>Asset Management</th>
<th>Anti Money Laundering</th>
<th>Power of Attorney</th>
<th>International Issues</th>
<th>Regulatory Environments</th>
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The Matrix
Framework

**ENTRY TO DIPLOMA**
60 credits @ Level 4

**INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMA**
120 credits @ Level 6

**SPECIALIST DIPLOMA**
120 credits @ Level 6

**LOCAL DIPLOMA**
120 credits @ Level 6

**Two years relevant trusts and/or estates experience**
60 credits

**Ethics Programme**

**TEP**
240 credits required

**OR**

**ENTRY TO DIPLOMA**
60 credits @ Level 4
How to make offer ‘international’ – actions for 2013/14

- Events outside of London/UK
  - An event series – same event, 4 or 5 different locations
- Website
  - Regularly updated content from international sources
- Webinars
  - Events on offer, regardless of location
- Education
  - Courses held at international centres
  - Web-based/e-learning
  - Mapping out and sharing education streams as part of the new framework, both for entry into STEP and for continuing professional development
- More representational governance (steering committees with multi-jurisdictional representatives)
- Local points of contact/network
  - Online directory of local contacts
  - SIG Chair/local representative/STEP staff member
- Newsletter/e-mailings with international appeal (‘keeping in touch’ with members)

Ways/means of doing it

- SIG topics at global conferences (event already up and running)
- Agree a local annual sponsor and supporter who will host event and help organise
- Think to arrange annual sponsor/supporter for the SIG in local jurisdiction
- Identifying local/regional leaders and branches to ‘champion’ the offering
- Local committee
- International committee with at least 1 representative/liaison for each region with a group
- Local STEP staff / STEP member of staff with oversight for a given region
- Local partners/contacts for discounts, web-content/news
- Working with branches
- Funding
- News link-ups with foreign media organisations
- Content in languages other than English?
- Mapping to the global Congress at an early stage

Where next

- Business Families
  - Canada, Switzerland, USA, Hong Kong/Singapore
- Philanthropy Advisors
  - Canada, Switzerland, Jersey, USA (already a group in Hong Kong)
- Mental Capacity
  - Australia, Ireland, USA
- Cross-Border Estates
  - Switzerland, Canada, USA, Hong Kong, Jersey
- Charities
  - (groups currently in UK and Sydney)
Terms of Reference

These guidelines are intended to be a quick and easy reference on all matters related to the running, governance and operation of Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

These guidelines are not inflexible but departures from them should be agreed in advance by the STEP Worldwide office, or if significant, by the Board.

1. Creation of a Special Interest Group

Purpose: SIGs exist to support professional development and deepening of networks in focused areas of STEP practice on an international basis.

Groups should be constituted in order to enable members of STEP – wherever based – to achieve the following:
- establish and participate in a programme of activities which further educate and promote technical understanding on the given area of focus
- develop the membership of the group on an international basis (not necessarily restricted to the membership of STEP)
- operate on the basis of financial self-sufficiency

Who can set-up a SIG: Proposals for new SIGs may come from STEP membership or secretariat.

Process: To set up a new SIG, evidence of a need for such a group must be presented to STEP’s Board of Directors in the first instance. A membership survey is one of a number of recommended methods for demonstrating the level of member interest. Alongside demonstrated levels of interest, it is a requisite that any aspiring group present to the Board a 1-year business plan.

The business plan must:
- detail the purpose, mission statement and vision
- demonstrate how the group will benefit and involve members on an international level
- detail a targeted programme of proposed activities
- provide detail as to how the group will fund itself and evidence to show financial viability, on a break-even or profit basis, together with a budget for year 1
- show how it will continue to grow its membership numbers and membership of STEP at large
- state who will sit on the initial steering committee
In compiling a business plan, the applicable SIG should work with the Special Interest Group Executive at STEP Worldwide. Finalised business plans will be submitted to the Board for consideration and approval.

Related documents:
SIG Authority, Reporting and Review - Business Proposals for New SIG Initiatives

2. Authority, Reporting and Review

Authority: SIGs are answerable to the Board. Establishment and dissolution of SIGs is a decision to be taken by the Board alone. The Board will determine reporting arrangements for each SIG.

Provision of Reports and Plans: The SIG steering committee will (usually commencing the calendar year) make a brief one-page report to the body to which it reports together with the business plan (with budget, where appropriate) for the coming financial year starting 1 April. In compiling such reports and a business plan, the applicable SIG should work with the Special Interest Group Executive at STEP Worldwide. Reports and plans will be submitted via STEP Worldwide office to the appropriate reporting body for approval and subsequently passed to the Board. At the end of each calendar year an annual general meeting of the Special Interest Group shall be held. This shall be open to any STEP member as well as members of the SIG and any interested parties. A summary and review of the year’s activities shall be presented at this meeting.

Review: It shall be for the body to which the Special Interest Group reports to determine a programme of review. Reference will be made to delivery against targets and objectives set in the original business plan, although success will not be measured exclusively against these. Subject to the outcome of the annual review guidelines may be introduced to steer the group. Review detail and outcomes will be reported to the Board.

Related documents:
- SIG Authority, Reporting and Review - Provision of Annual Business Plans
- SIG Authority, Reporting and Review - Provision of Reports

3. Steering Committee

Composition:
- The steering committee shall normally consist of between 6-12 members, who must be members of STEP.
- Other individuals may be invited by committee officers to part of a committee meeting, or a committee meeting in its entirety, in a non-voting capacity as an observer or advisor for a particular activity.
- Of the committee members, two or three positions will be those of core officers:- a chairman and either one or two deputy chairmen
It is recommended that further officer roles be considered for the positions of Policy Liaison Officer and Events Liaison Officer.

Not counted within the above 6-12 members, it will be normal to have one STEP Worldwide staff member on the committee as secretary (in a non-voting capacity).

The steering committee should aspire to comprise a mix of individuals from different jurisdictions to reflect and represent the international membership.

Committee decisions should be taken democratically by consensus.

**Duties of Steering Committee Officers:**

**Chairman:** The highest level officer of the SIG’s steering committee. It is the chairman’s duty to preside over meetings of the group and to ensure that it conducts its business in an orderly fashion. Outside committee meetings, the chairman’s duties include acting as head of the applicable SIG, its representative to the outside world and its principal spokesperson.

**Deputy Chairman:** To assume the duties of chairman in their absence and act as second highest officer and core committee member of the group.

**Secretary:** To assume administrative duties for the SIG to include, but not exclusively, organisation of committee meetings, taking meeting notes, recording meeting attendance, management of membership records for the group, and event budgetary sign-off. This position will normally be held by a member of STEP Worldwide staff, most likely the SIGs Executive, but if so not with voting rights. Where a secretary is not a member of STEP Worldwide staff, SIG activities and membership data should be shared with STEP Worldwide for the purposes of transparency. Please note: Post of Secretary is not counted towards steering committee head count of 6-12 members.

**Policy Liaison Officer (Optional):** To be the central point of contact between the SIG and STEP Worldwide Policy Team on any policy-related issues and consultation responses. It is this officer’s duty to coordinate the group’s policy activities and take responsibility for progress to action.

**Events Liaison Officer (Optional):** To be the central point of contact between the SIG and the STEP Worldwide SIGs Executive on event organisation and programming. It is this officer’s duty to coordinate the group’s event activities and take responsibility for progress and action.

**Meeting Frequency and Attendance:**

The steering committee must meet a minimum of four times in a calendar year, at locations to be agreed by the committee, and with a quorum of fifty per-cent plus one (to include at least two of the officers) attending in person or by means of communication equipment.

An individual’s absence from three consecutive committee meetings shall lead to a review (led by the chairman) of his or her continuing membership. In the absence of a resolution this review may lead to a recommendation to the Board for that individual’s removal.
Committee Membership and Election Process:

Requirements:

- To sit on a SIG steering committee one must normally be a STEP member. Types of membership include: Associate Membership, Student Membership, Honorary Membership, Judicial Membership, Retired Members, Restricted Members, and Affiliates. Friends of STEP with relevant professional experience may also be considered.

- To assume officer roles of chairperson or deputy one must be a Full STEP member.

- A committee position (except that of the secretary) may be held for a maximum of three consecutive years, with the possibility of standing for a subsequent term of up to three years (3+3), and with a stand-down period of at least three years.

- A rotation schedule will be devised with original committee members to ensure that exit of all original steering committee members does not take place all at once to stagger the group experience levels and knowledge. This schedule will be agreed by STEP Worldwide office and each of the special interest groups from January 2012. A suggested schedule for a third of each committee would be:
  Three years plus possibility of standing for a subsequent one year (3+1)
  Three years plus possibility of standing for a subsequent two years (3+2)
  Three years plus possibility of standing for a subsequent three years (3+3)

General Election Principles:

Elections to the steering committee (including the filling of casual vacancies) for vacancies will take place annually to the approximate schedule:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mid-September</th>
<th>Upcoming election dates and request for candidate submissions announced.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid October</td>
<td>Deadline for candidate applications.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of October</td>
<td>STEP’s Director of Governance and Professional Standards and the Special Interest Groups Executive ensure all submissions are complete and valid. Candidates invited to stand for election notified.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mid November</td>
<td>Members of the SIG provided with details of candidates running. Online voting available to SIG members for a period of two weeks.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>End of November</td>
<td>Successful and unsuccessful applicants will be individually informed. The election results will be publicly announced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early December</td>
<td>New committee sworn in at the AGM. New committee member/s invited to attend next forthcoming committee meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Code and Regulations:**
Where applicable, the process of election to SIG steering committees should be compatible with the spirit of the [STEP Election Code](https://www.step.org/about_step/step_governance/governance_documents.aspx).

**Process:**

**Application and nomination**
- All members wishing to put themselves forward as candidates for the steering committee will be requested to submit an application for committee membership which will comprise of personal details of career, involvement with STEP and the special interest group field, and reasons for wishing to contribute to the work of the committee, along with the name of a contact who wishes to back the nomination.
- STEP office will check applications to ensure submissions are complete and valid. Notification from the Special Interest Groups Executive will be forthcoming to each applicant following the review process.

**Election**
- Elections are based on “one member, one vote”. Candidates in elections may vote for themselves.
- STEP Worldwide employees are not eligible to stand or vote in an election and must at all times maintain neutral between election candidates.
- All candidates are entitled to have a short information sheet (election statement) about themselves (up to 300 words) which will be distributed to voters.
- Electronic balloting will be used to allow for international voting. Reasonable precautions for security will ensure that the vote is only capable of being exercised by the correct individual and only once per individual. The electronic data (ballot papers) will be retained for a minimum of six months after the election result has been announced. They may then be destroyed, but only with the consent of the Board.

**Results**
- Successful candidates will be the 1-12 candidates (according to the size of the committee) who receive the highest number of valid votes cast.
- The results of all elections will be communicated electronically to candidates and voters within seven days after the last date for voting.

N.B The spirit of this electoral code should be applied to any electoral matters not specifically covered by the [Code](https://www.step.org/about_step/step_governance/governance_documents.aspx).

**Related documents:**
- [STEP Election Code](https://www.step.org/about_step/step_governance/governance_documents.aspx)
- [SIG Steering Committee Application and Nomination Form](https://www.step.org/join_step1.aspx)
- Membership routes: [www.step.org/join_step1.aspx](https://www.step.org/join_step1.aspx)
4. Membership of the Special Interest Group

Membership of a SIG is open to both members and non-members of STEP. Presently membership of a SIG is not chargeable however the Board reserves the right to introduce or withdraw annual subscription/membership charges.

Administration for membership records and authorisation of membership normally lies with STEP Worldwide office.

5. Activity Detail

General:
The steering committee will have responsibility for the launch and subsequent activities of the group.

The officers shall liaise as appropriate with the STEP Worldwide office on matters such as membership, public representation and lobbying, press and media, event programming, marketing, publicity and design.

Consultation Responses/Public Policy Representation:
No member of a SIG shall make any representation in STEP’s name without the express consent of the STEP Policy Team and appropriate committee of the Board of Directors.

It is acknowledged that STEP has to meet external timetables, often set by governments, when submitting consultation responses. While as much time as possible will be granted to respondents, it will often be the case that external timetables will prevail and may result in restrictive timeframes. When preparing an agreed response to a consultation, timelines will be set by the STEP Policy Team which must be adhered to. Failure to do so may result in input to future consultation responses being limited. With prior arrangement and where possible, the Policy Team will be flexible with regards to scheduled deadlines providing sufficient response time. Where more than one group is responding to a single consultation, the available response time will be equally assigned to each group.

Groups are requested to submit one single collective response upon the deadline, rather than multiple strands. For best practice advice as to how to gather and compile a single group response, please liaise with the Policy Team by emailing policy@step.org

Event Organisation:
It is recommended that an event be given at least six weeks of marketing to maximise attendance rates. Please liaise with the SIGs Executive to discuss suitable timeframes and viable ideas for event planning and execution.

Events should be included in the business plan at the start of the year.
Unless undertaking a role at an event (e.g. speaker, host), members of the SIG steering committee will be charged the normal event attendance fee.

Local Groups:
Where members of SIGs wish to establish a more localised/regionalised offering, members must first submit a business case to the international steering committee prior to any activity or representation to determine suitability for overall strategy and fit with SIG business plan and budgetary allowances.

It is the responsibility of the international steering committee to agree the appropriate activity output at local level and successfully communicate and ensure understanding of terms under which these activities operate with those involved.

Where a local group is established to progress local activity it is the responsibility of the international steering committee to ensure that that local group provides regular progress updates and fulfils their reporting duties in line with the annual reporting requirements for the international SIG (section 2). Detail surrounding membership of a localised/regional steering committee or group should be shared with the international steering committee.

The purpose of localised/regionalised groups is to expand the international SIG offering for the membership at large. They should not become niche, exclusive or in any way independent from the main group and steering committee.

Related documents:
SIG Authority, Reporting and Review - Proposals and Business Plans for the Development of New SIG Initiatives

6. Funding and Financial Responsibility

The steering committee will have responsibility for financial viability of the SIG’s activities. This must be detailed in the annual business plan. Budgetary sign-off and management of funds lie with the STEP Worldwide office with permitted exceptions.

The overall programme of each SIG’s activities must be operated on a break-even or profit basis. If a loss-making activity takes place (whether or not the loss was foreseen), then the loss must be recouped elsewhere within the SIG’s budget. Event budgets and charging must be agreed with STEP Worldwide.

Charges for membership of a SIG are subject to review by the Board. The Board reserves the right to introduce or withdraw annual subscription/membership charges.
7. Contact

Special Interest Groups
Society of Trust and Estate Practitioners (STEP) Worldwide Offices
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Email: SIGs@step.org
Website: www.step.org/SIGs

Special Interest Groups Executive: Emma Yeats