

NATURE SOCIETY (SINGAPORE)

PROJECTS & ACTIVITIES OPERATING PROCEDURE

Updated May 2015

Purpose: To define the considerations, control procedures, and roles & responsibilities of NSS projects & activities to ensure they are appropriately engaged and executed to achieve NSS objectives and vision.

Scope:

1. Approval of NSS Projects and Activities
2. Considerations and Controls
3. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Approval of NSS Projects and Activities

There are various types of projects and activities that the NSS embarks on in the course of achieving its objectives and vision. Projects and activities may involve various parties such as members, volunteers, individuals, government departments, non-government organizations (NGO), corporations and schools. Projects and activities carry inherent legal, financial and reputational risks if they are inappropriately engaged and executed. Therefore it is important that the NSS Exco/Council maintains an oversight and control of such projects and activities. The table below lays out the approval matrix:

Objective	Projects and Activities	Requirement before embarking or organising	
		Established and regular activities	New or modified activities
Appreciation of Nature	Walks, Treks, Bird-watching, Kayaking	Approval by SIG Chair, & inform Exco/Council.	Approval by Exco
Education, Outreach, Promotion	Talks, Seminars, Workshops, Exhibitions(Booth), Displays, Publications, Marketing, Website/App promotions, Contests	Approval by SIG Chair, & inform Exco/Council.	Approval by Exco
Conservation, Restoration, Research	Site/Species Surveys/Banding and Analyses/Research, Coastal-cleanups, Re-forestation, Site-maintenance	Approval by SIG Chair, & inform Exco/Council.	Approval by Exco
Scientific analysis advocacy, Consultation, Feedback, Strategic partnership	Environment impact assessments, Position papers, Consultations, Green plans, Strategic partnership	Approval by Exco	Approval by Exco

2. Considerations and Controls

- a) The project or activity must be in line with **NSS Mission Objectives** and should not cause adverse perception of the Society by the public.
- b) **Sponsor/Donor/Partnership** – Exco shall review and approve Sponsors/Donors/Partners to ensure they are genuine and of general good standing, and that the receipt of funds from them does not cause adverse perception of the society by the public. For the avoidance of doubt, accepting funds donated from an organization does not presume NSS's approval of all their business activities. NSS's contractual obligations resulting from the sponsorship, grant, donation or partnership must be achievable and in line with NSS mission objectives. Please also refer to NSS Operation principles and Guidelines.
- c) **Project Management Resources** requirements have to be assessed, ensuring availability and that they do not compete with other higher order priorities. For each project, the Exco/Council has to be informed of the Project Manager in advance. The Project Manager will be responsible for end-to-end planning, preparation and execution with consultation with Exco/Council as required. Members and volunteers, rather than the Secretariat should be mobilized to execute the program. Secretariat may assist as required. Exco/Council shall use discretion to reallocate human resources to projects of higher priorities as they arise.
- d) **Activities for Members only or for the Public or for both** – Many activities are specifically for members only, as part of the benefits of membership and for the co-learning and fellowship of members. There should always be a solid core of such member-only activities. However activity leaders and the relevant Chairs may open some member activities to the public for various reasons, including the encouragement of new memberships. In such activities, if involving places that must be booked, priority will normally be given to members. Certain activities, however, are specifically for outreach and conservation purposes and are specifically aimed at the public. It is important that announcements of activities always make clear whether an activity is for members only or specifically for the public, or whether individual members of the public can join in with members in the activity.
- e) **Singapore or Overseas** – Projects or activities are usually conducted in Singapore. At Exco's discretion and approval, it is acceptable to conduct activities overseas provided that NSS objective and mission are achieved. This includes regional cooperation and promotion of nature conservation and appreciation.
- f) **Financial funding** –
 - i. Activities and projects funding, where needed, are to be planned specifically and approved by Exco during the Budgeting process. While activities which don't consume much financial resources are normally funded from existing NSS funds (either Committee/SIG funds or the general fund), projects which require much financial resources are normally funded specifically from a donor, and will not commence until a donor is found, However, as per the Constitution, such projects can be funded from existing funds, if no donor can be found and Exco considers the project worthwhile. In certain cases the donor comes before the project, and the project is developed in terms of the Society's objectives and the donor's wishes. During the year, Exco may approve or initiate unplanned, unfunded or partially-funded projects and activities at its discretion

by allocating funds from the general fund. In all such cases, Exco decision-making will be minuted for future reference so as to provide consistency where possible.

- ii. As a non-profit membership organization with a mission, NSS has an obligation to serve the cause, its members and the public, within its financial means. Therefore NSS does not normally charge participation fees for member and public activities like nature appreciation, outreach, education and conservation activities unless the activities incur considerable financial costs and NSS needs to recoup the costs for the activities to remain sustainable.
 - iii. Most activities are carried out and led willingly and pro bono by members, for other members and for the public, as part of the ethos of the Society as a membership organization committed to a common interest and common cause. In most cases food and travel expenses are not paid to members who lead such activities, nor to members or volunteers who may participate, e.g. in rescue activities, cleanup activities, or survey and census activities. There is, however, a tradition of dinners which combine fellowship, co-learning and thanks for participation, such dinners being paid for out of the relevant project funds(within the Committee or SIG funds) or from the General Fund.
 - iv. In certain projects, particularly those where the sponsor has been a leading party in proposing the project, there may be members needed to carry out professional services e.g. assembly talks, workshops for schools, providing exhibitions, guiding nature walks, etc. NSS may reasonably reimburse its members for their professional services (as per "Fee Guideline" below). However those members should be chosen in such a way that allows any active members who might have the requisite skills to be considered.
 - v. When NSS is engaged and paid by external organizations to provide professional consulting services, some of its members and volunteers may be nominated to support the project, which will consume their personal time. NSS may reasonably reimburse their professional services as per "Fee Guideline" below. However those members should be chosen in such a way that allows any active members who might have the requisite skills to be considered.
- g) **Using members or volunteers or Third party agents** – Most projects arise within the context of a Committee or SIG, and the members of the Committee or SIG, together with other members, and maybe volunteers, provide the development and completion of the project. However, certain projects may need third party contracted assistance, e.g. for extensive marketing or for laying out butterfly gardens and providing signages, eg. Butterfly Trail @ Orchard, eg. for design and printing materials, and such assistance will be sourced as per Financial Control Operating Procedures.
- h) **Fee Guideline** – Reasonable fees may be paid to its members for their professional services. Exco has the discretion to vary the fees from time to time depending on the circumstance of the project or activity.

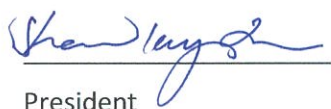
Professional Services	Fee Guideline (applicable to all members, volunteers, Exco & Council)
Guide for walks, treks or bird-watching	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$140 for a 2-hour guided walk for about 20 participants, or • 70% of fees collected from participants or fees paid by sponsor
Give talks in seminar/workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • \$150 for a 1-hour talk, or • 70% of fees collected from participants or fees paid by sponsor <p>Or whichever of the above is lower</p>
Production of publications, website or apps	Normally below market rate, as established by quotations or checks. The final decision will be made by the Exco.
Professional services (research, analysis, assessment advice, report writing) contributing to a Conservation, Restoration, EIA or Consulting Project <u>which must be funded by a Sponsor or paid by a main Consultant.</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At the discretion of Exco to recognise the member/volunteer/officer's contribution and personal time sacrificed, a fee may be paid based on number of hours spent multiplied by an hourly rate benchmarked against comparable professionals in the market. However, the total fee calculated must be further calibrated to ensure it is a reasonable percentage of the remaining funds, and provided NSS has fully received the funds from the Sponsor and paid its related Project expenditures. In exercising the discretion, the Exco shall ensure independence and freedom from conflict of interest as per the NSS Operational Principles and Guidelines, and COC (Commissioner of Charities) Code of Governance.

- i) **Independence, Liability, Intellectual Property, Branding, and Communications** – The NSS Operational Principles and Guidelines provide detailed guidance on what needs to be considered before embarking on projects and activities to ensure NSS independence, liability, intellectual property and its brand are protected. In addition, it provides guidance on various communication protocol in the course of projects and activities. Please refer to it and comply.
- j) **Financial Control Operating Procedure** provides detailed guidance on the procedures to follow to ensure NSS financial assets are safeguarded. Please refer to it and comply.
- k) **Human Resources Recruitment Operating Procedure** provides detailed guidance on the procedures to follow when recruiting staff and contractors. Please refer to it and comply.

3. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
Exco	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the projects and activities as per the approval matrix. • Maintain oversight and control of all NSS projects and activities
SIG Chair	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approve the projects and activities as per the approval matrix.. • Prepare or approve the plan prepared by SIG members, submit financial budget, report status, and submit invoices/costs for timely accounting.
Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and execute (source, purchase, marketing, execute, monitor, report to SIG Chair or Exco/Council)
Legal	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support contract or term sheet preparation if needed
Accounts Officer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bill and collect from the sponsor or participants. Pay the guides/speakers and invoiced costs.


Confirmed by Exco:



 President



 Honorary Secretary



 Asst Honorary Treasurer

