

NDA Guidance for Site Stakeholder Groups

Ref LAR3.0

1 - Introduction

1.1 This document describes what the NDA expects from Site Stakeholder Groups (SSGs) and what support SSGs can expect in return. It also provides the basis of a generic Constitution that SSGs can use to inform their own operation. The Guidance provides clarity on the aim and operation of SSGs.

1.2 The Guidance supercedes the original "Guidance note for LLC transition to NDA SSGs" published in 2004 and then used by sites to inform the set up of SSGs. The Guidance has now been updated in response to various requests for clarification and also the need to review progress given four years of SSG activity. It will be kept up-to-date by the NDA Stakeholder Relations Team and formally reviewed again by 31 March 2012.

1.3 The NDA recognises that each site is uniquely situated, has its own priorities and different stakeholder interests. There is therefore the need for some flexibility in the detailed arrangements applied at each location. However, stakeholder feedback consistently suggests that a clearer, more directive set of guidelines would be appreciated. This Guidance therefore sets out minimum standards that all SSGs should adhere to, as well as the support SSGs can expect from the NDA in return.

2 – Purpose of the SSG

2.1 The SSG is a standing forum for communications between the NDA, site operators and the local community. It has the overarching aim of ensuring that decisions taken by the NDA or operators that affect NDA sites are informed by the local community's views.

The primary objectives of each SSG are:

	Objective	Examples of how this could be delivered
1	To provide an opportunity for questioning the operators, NDA and regulators on behalf of the community	Info circulated by operators or NDA on local or national issues Presentations, briefing papers and structured questioning time
2	To receive and comment on progress reports and forward plans for the sites	Receive updates on site progress Request updates on issues of interest
3	To represent the views of the local community through the provision of timely advice to NDA, operators and regulators	Represent local views at local and national level e.g. National Stakeholder Group meetings, SSG Chairs' Forum, as well as SSG meetings Raising issues of local concern Responding to NDA consultations Input on site socio-economic fund applications

2.2 SSGs are not decision-making bodies. The objectives above do not remove the accountability of relevant bodies for decision-making on the sites.

2.3 Submissions to NDA or SLC consultations (objective 3) are a central part of the SSG's remit. Submissions do not have to provide a consensual view of all SSG members but should aim to map out where agreements and disagreements exist on the SSG, and why these exist. The NDA and secretariat will provide advance notice of major consultation requests to the SSG e.g. Business Plan and Strategy consultations.

2.4 SSG activity that is not in direct support of the objectives above should be agreed in advance by the NDA (both the local team and the Stakeholder Relations Team).

2.5 As representative of local communities, it is recognised that SSGs will be approached by organisations who wish to use agenda time for activities that fall outside of the NDA's core remit (e.g. new nuclear build developers and any of the many organisations based on the Harwell Campus). Where the NDA wholly funds an SSG, it expects discussions to focus on activity at NDA sites¹. Whilst other issues may be of interest to the SSG, the NDA expects these to be limited to brief updates and not take up significant time on the agenda. In all cases, common sense should prevail, but the SSG should not be used as the primary vehicle for community engagement by anyone other than the NDA or the relevant SLC. A similar principle should be applied to invitations that SSG members may receive to attend conferences and other events – if the subject matter falls within the NDA's core remit and attendance will help the SSG deliver on the purpose and objectives set out in Section 2 of this Guidance, then there is a reasonable expectation that any costs involved will be covered by the SSG Secretariat. If it does not, then funding support to cover attendance at the event concerned should be sought from the event organisers. Before accepting any such invitations, SSG members should therefore speak to their Secretariat.

2.6 Any questions about any of the above should be directed to the NDA Site Programme Manager who will liaise with the NDA Stakeholder Relations Team as required.

3 – Constitution and Code of Conduct

3.1 This Guidance provides a standard foundation for the SSG constitution. Each SSG should develop their own constitution and code of conduct that reflect both the NDA's needs and local stakeholder needs at the site location. To ensure alignment with NDA guidelines, each draft constitution will be submitted to the NDA for comment before adoption. New constitutions should be adopted and published on the individual SSG's website or on www.sitestakeholdergroups.org.uk by September 2009 at the latest.

4 – Members, Advisors and Public

4.1 Members. SSG membership should reflect the local community and its interests, as well as the operational status of the site and needs of the NDA. On that basis the SSG should have provision to include members from:

- Elected representatives and politicians at all levels
- Local community groups with an interest in the site, including environmental groups
- Other local interests such as businesses and the voluntary sector

¹ This part of the Guidance may need to be revised if other organisations start to offer a financial contribution to SSG running costs.

The precise criteria for membership is a matter for each SSG and should be included in the SSG constitution.

4.2 Advisors². Each SSG should have provision to include representatives from the following bodies to provide advice to the SSG as needed:

- Appointed representatives of relevant organisations such as regulators, unions, emergency and health services
- A representative of the NDA, normally the Site Programme Manager (or his deputy)
- Representatives of the site operators (normally the Site Managing Director or his deputy)
- Officers from the local councils at County, District and Parish level or Community Councils in Scotland and Wales

4.3 Co-opted advisors. From time to time it may be necessary to co-opt temporary advisors to bring expert knowledge to help the SSG or a sub-group complete work more efficiently.

4.4 Public. The public should be able to attend SSG meetings, asking questions and joining discussions with members when appropriate. This participation is to be encouraged but is at the discretion of the Chair.

4.5 Press. The press should be able to attend SSG meetings, and ask questions at least at the end of the meeting. This is at the discretion of the Chair.

4.6 Role and responsibility of members. Being an SSG member means that:

- You represent your organisation or 'community of interest' actively on the SSG, including consulting them beforehand on major agenda items
- You formally update your organisation or community of interest after SSG meetings, either verbally or in writing
- You attend every SSG meeting, where possible, or send a nominated representative
- You read papers circulated in advance of SSG meetings
- You update other SSG members promptly after representing them at another meeting

These responsibilities should be monitored by the secretariat and enforced where possible by the Chair and/or Deputy Chair.

4.7 Criteria for membership. From time to time the SSG may wish to introduce new members to the group. New members should:

- Represent an organisation or community of interest that warrants inclusion on the SSG
- Be willing to fulfil the roles and responsibilities set out in this Guidance
- Adhere to the SSG's Constitution and Code of Conduct

4.8 Decision-making. Given that the SSG does not have responsibility for decision-making on site, voting should be avoided. However any matters such as changes to the constitution, election of the Chair/Deputy Chair etc that require formal resolution should be put to the vote on the basis of simple majority. In the event of a deadlock, the Chair has a casting vote. Voting rights will be determined at

² The term 'advisors' describes what some SSGs used to call 'non-voting members'. The use of the word advisors aims to reduce confusion around who is a full member of an SSG.

local level and enshrined in constitution.

4.9 Wider community engagement. Representation of local views by SSG members may from time to time be supplemented by the relevant Site Licence Company (SLC) commissioning wider engagement with the community (exhibitions, public meetings etc). In this case the SLC could involve SSG members as a source of advice on the aim, scope and methodology of any wider engagement. This would allow the SSG to exercise influence without having to manage and deliver wider engagement activities themselves³.

4.10 Via the secretariat, SSGs can request external support if needed, to complete a specific task. This should however only be done when other ways of completing the task have been identified and assessed. The NDA Local Team and Stakeholder Relations Team must be informed of each case so they can maintain an overview across sites and seek efficiencies where various sites have the same need.

5 – The Chair

5.1 The Chair of the SSG should:

- Be independent of the site operator and NDA i.e. not employed by either
- Be formally elected by SSG members and be re-appointed at regular intervals
- Consider standing down after 5 years
- Be supported by a similarly elected Deputy Chair
- Be transparent about any conflicts of interest, by declaring them at the start of SSG meetings

5.2 The Chair is accountable to the SSG members, through their formal election.

5.3 The Chair is accountable for:

- Upholding the SSG's constitution in its entirety
- Respecting the boundaries of SSG business
- Planning forward to ensure agendas meet the needs of stakeholders, SSG members, the site operators and NDA in the context of SSG objectives
- Managing SSG meetings to ensure a balance of views is heard and that all members are able to contribute to discussions
- Liaising with the secretariat to enable the development of both new and existing members through appropriate training, site visits and other support
- In conjunction with other nominees, representing the SSG at national level and in other meetings as needed⁴
- Circulating updates to SSG members from any relevant meetings they attend
- Ensuring SSG subgroups update the full SSG meeting, with an opportunity for discussion
- Reviewing SSG performance and operation at least every five years with the NDA, site

³ The delivery of wider community engagement by the SLC reflects the feedback that many SSGs found the Site End States exercise onerous in terms of time and resource. Also, it is not legally possible for the SSG to hold a contract with a consultant to deliver this work, whilst an SLC is well suited to do so.

⁴ This includes representing views on the SSG with which the Chair and/or Deputy Chair do not agree

operators and SSG (see section 12)

- Assisting the secretariat in assessing SSG activity requirements for the year ahead
- Considering with the secretariat how best to provide for smooth succession of the Chair post

5.4 In considering the selection of a Chair, the SSG will want to consider qualities such as independence, local reputation, experience in chairing groups of this sort, and having the time, interest and willingness to fulfil this demanding role.

6 – The Deputy Chair

6.1 The Deputy Chair of the SSG should:

- Be independent of the site operator and NDA i.e. not employed by either
- Be formally elected by SSG members and be re-appointed at regular intervals
- Consider standing down after 5 years
- Provide support to the Chair
- Be transparent about any conflicts of interest, by declaring them at the start of SSG meetings

6.2 The Deputy Chair is accountable for:

- Upholding the SSG's constitution in its entirety
- Respecting the boundaries of SSG business
- Covering the accountabilities of the Chair in the Chair's absence (see section 5.3)
- In conjunction with other nominees, representing the SSG at national level and in other meetings as needed⁵

7 – Secretariat

7.1 The site operator will provide secretarial support funded by the NDA through the site operation contract. This secretarial support would normally include:

- Administering SSG meeting dates, venues and refreshments
- Reimbursing agreed out-of-pocket expenses for members on SSG business
- Booking travel tickets and accommodation for members on SSG business
- Administering the emolument for the Chair and Deputy Chair (see section 11)
- Drafting and promptly circulating and publishing minutes from SSG meetings to members and wider interested parties, including an Executive Summary of key bullet points that members can pass on to their constituents
- Managing and updating the SSG website or the relevant page on www.sitestakeholdergroups.org.uk
- Circulating papers to members as needed, including communications from external bodies
- Organising inductions for new SSG members

⁵ This includes representing views on the SSG with which the Chair and/or Deputy Chair do not agree

- Organising site visits when useful for SSG members
- Budgeting for, administering and paying for all costs involved in the above
- Liaising with adjacent sites (where relevant) to ensure relevant issues are adequately covered on SSG agendas

7.2 Information volume and format. The secretariat has an important role in challenging the organisations and individuals that submit information to the SSG so that it is as useful as possible. Questions to ask include but are not limited to:

- Is the information for noting, discussion or a decision?
- Can the information be presented in a more useful way for SSG members given their time constraints and technical background?
- What information would they like passed to SSG members' constituents? Is the information in a suitable format to easily allow this?
- Are there specific questions that merit further discussion by members' constituents?

7.3 Where sites are joint or closely adjacent and share, for historic reasons, an SSG (e.g. with British Energy at Dungeness, Hinkley Point, Hunterston and Sizewell and the MoD at Dounreay), the Secretariats or relevant Communications Officers should:

- Jointly input to agenda planning with the SSG Chair
- Recognise that although sites may be owned and operated by different organisations, there is significant overlap and, indeed some common services, on shared sites. The agenda for SSG meetings should reflect this and allocate an appropriate proportion of time to each site, based on the needs and interests of the SSG members as well as the site operators themselves
- If appropriate and possible, discuss and subsequently agree proportional funding or support-in-kind for the SSG from the other site operator

8 – Meeting Location and Frequency

8.1 Meetings should be advertised and must be held in locations that are easily accessible to members of the public and press, ideally within easy reach of public transport. The timing should be convenient to stakeholders so that as far as possible they are not inhibited or prevented from attending. Location and timing should be varied to allow different members of the public to attend each time.

8.2 As the need arises, consideration should be given to holding additional or special meetings to deal with particular issues that may fall outside the routine business of the SSG. Equally, the SSG may choose to set up subgroups to address specific topics on behalf of the whole SSG. These subgroups should seek to reflect SSG membership as set out in section 4.1. The work of all SSG sub-groups should be regularly shared with the relevant SSG and an appropriate opportunity for discussion given.

8.3 Meetings should be planned to take account of the activity within the operators Site Engagement Plan.

8.4 SSGs should meet as appropriate (e.g. 2-4 times a year).

9 – Communications

9.1 Each SSG should have a website. This can either be at www.sitestakeholdergroups.org.uk (which the NDA hosts and pays for) or alternatively SSGs can make their own arrangements as long as a link is created from the central site for ease of navigation.

9.2 As a minimum, the SSG website should be frequently updated with:

- Dates, locations and agendas of future meetings
- Past minutes or reports
- Full list of members and advisors and who they represent
- Key papers of interest to the community regarding SSG business
- Constitution and Code of Conduct of SSG
- Reciprocal links to partner websites such as Local Authorities, SLC etc

9.3 Whilst decisions regarding the website should be made by the SSG, it is expected that the secretariat cover day-to-day management and updates.

9.4 All organisations providing information to the SSG are responsible for ensuring it is accessible and useful to members, and can be passed on to members' constituencies easily.

10 – Capacity Building

10.1 Induction. To ensure effective operation of the SSG, new members should undergo an induction process that as a minimum would include:

- A site visit
- An information pack including: NDA Stakeholder Charter and associated papers, this Guidance, the SSG constitution and code of conduct and any relevant SSG policies.
- Meeting the SSG Chair, NDA Site Programme Manager and secretariat to welcome them on board and clarify any questions about the SSG and constitution

10.2 During their period of tenure, members should be afforded opportunities by the SLC to visit the site(s) for general familiarisation and also to review specific items that may be the subject of an SSG discussion.

10.3 Information and skills gaps. Members should be encouraged to recognise their own needs to understand the issues that come before them. Additionally SSGs should identify annually the information and skills gaps that prevent them fulfilling their objectives. The secretariat - or NDA as appropriate - will consider how best to address these needs.

11 – NDA Support

11.1 Chairs' and Deputy Chairs' Emolument. Via the secretariat, the NDA can also provide an emolument to Chairs and Deputy Chairs that recognises their enhanced role on SSGs. Chairs are entitled to claim £5000 and Deputy Chairs £1500 on a 'per annum' basis and this will be paid six monthly in arrears by the secretariat.

The emolument acknowledges the extra work involved in preparing for meetings related to the NDA's core mission, as well as actually Chairing them, and any appropriate follow-up.

11.2 Other SSG members attending/chairing meetings. Where another member of the SSG steps in to fulfil the role of the Chair or Deputy Chair, it is up to the SSG to decide how this should be compensated from within the SLC's existing budget for the SSG.

11.3 Expenses. Via the secretariat, the NDA will meet out-of-pocket expenses of SSG members when on SSG business, such as reasonable travel costs. Travel should only take place if it is critical to maintaining or improving SSG performance. Less expensive, safer and more environmentally responsible alternatives such as telephone and videoconferences must have been considered as a first option prior to travelling. When travelling on SSG business, SSG members should choose their mode of transport based upon what is safe, time effective and best value for money. When selecting their method of travel they should consider the practicalities of the journey in terms of relevance to the SSG, their own time and other related costs, as well as the actual transport costs.

All travel must be agreed in advance with and booked via the secretariat.

Legitimate claims for additional expenses will also be considered on a case by case basis. Such claims should be agreed in advance via the secretariat.

Expenses can also be claimed by Chairs and Deputy Chairs in addition to the emolument

11.4 The NDA's local team will:

- Ensure representation from the local NDA team at all SSG main meetings, or arrange informed cover
- Offer regular meetings to the secretariat and SSG Chair to clarify NDA Guidance, policies and plans
- Provide a rapid response to SSG queries, including providing information upon request.
- Facilitate exchange visits between SSGs upon request, via the secretariat.
- Discuss with NDA Head Office any issues arising that may have implications for consistency of SSG operation across the UK.

11.5 The NDA Stakeholder Relations Team at Head Office will:

- Provide oversight and advice regarding SSG operation, including maintaining appropriate consistency of approach across the UK
- Fund and support a SSG Chairs' Forum meeting
- Provide a Meeting Report from NSG meetings, with an Executive Summary for ease of circulation and reading
- Clarify in advance when a response to a major consultation is required from the SSGs e.g. Business Plan or Strategy consultation
- Facilitate exchange visits between SSGs upon request
- Provide advice and expertise on public and community engagement
- Provide advance warning, where possible, to SSG Chairs, SLC representatives and Site Programme Managers of announcements that are likely to generate interest locally

12 – Review of SSG

12.1 To ensure constant evolution and opportunity for improvement, SSG progress should be reviewed at least every five years. A prompt for this review could be when a new Chair is elected. This review could be by an independent external expert, but must involve all SSG members, the NDA, SLC and other interests depending on the site characteristics. The review should cover all aspects of the constitution including:

- Progress against objectives
- Membership
- Role and accountabilities of the Chair/Deputy Chair
- Administration and procedures
- Information and training needs for all members
- Website and communication
- NDA and secretariat support

12.2 The results of each review should be made public on the SSG website or www.sitestakeholdergroups.org.uk so that learning can be shared across all SSGs.

12.3 Resource for the external review of each SSG can be made available by the NDA via the site operator contract, and should therefore be included in the SLC's relevant annual budget planning.

13 – Complementary Mechanisms

13.1 Site Licence Companies and NDA Site Programme Managers are encouraged to consider which aspects of their business are most relevant to the SSG, to streamline SSG time and resource. This inevitably means that additional channels of communication and liaison may be necessary, such as:

- Local regulatory fora between the SLC, regulators and where appropriate Local Authority representatives
- Bilateral meetings on specific topics as necessary. These may include issues that would benefit from more frequent face to face meetings between the NDA or SLC and key stakeholders.