

Southern Coastal Group and Standing Conference on Problems Associated with the Coastline (SCOPAC)

Constitution

PART I

Adoption of the Constitution

1. The Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC will be administered and managed in accordance with the provisions in Part I and II of this constitution.
2. Part I outlines the purpose of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC and how it will conduct its affairs. Part II sets out the administrative provisions including membership, roles and operation.
3. Parts I and II may be amended by the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC from time to time as may be required.

Name

4. The name of the organisation is the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC.

Terms of Reference

5. Key policy aims

To give sound advice on coastal issues and be a strong influencer in optimising strategic and sustainable policies, plans and programmes to best manage the risks from flood and coastal erosion. To be a natural and chosen forum for coastal practitioners to discuss coastal management problems and share best practice. To be efficient in operation and secure best value for the public purse.

6. Primary objectives

- a. As a technical group principally comprising coastal managers, planners and others with a knowledge of shoreline management, who operate in a strategic framework, to be a source of expertise on the coast and to advise and influence the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee(s) (RFCC) and other stakeholders on matters relating to the coast. To attend the RFCC and work closely with officers and members.
- b. To contribute to the Environment Agency's preparation and implementation of an investment strategy for the management of flood and coastal erosion risks including both long-term plans and delivery of annual programmes of works and maintenance.

7. Secondary objectives

- a. To prepare a Business Plan and Annual Report for the group and to present them to the Environment Agency National Team.
- b. To monitor and coordinate the Shoreline Management Plans.

- c. Through discussion with Defra, Regional Flood and Coastal Committee Chairmen, the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interests Group, and the Environment Agency, to ensure the views of member organisations are considered in the development and implementation of national policies and initiatives relating to coastal risk management.
- d. To work closely with adjacent coastal groups, the Coastal Group Network and the Environment Agency's Regional Flood and Coastal Committees in advising on managing flood and coastal erosion risks at the shoreline.
- e. To advise upon research and development needs primarily within the sediment cell but also beyond the Group boundaries where there are perceived benefits in relation to issues of coastal engineering, shoreline management, coastal zone management and monitoring.
- f. To raise and sanction funding from full members for the development and implementation of its research programme.
- g. To act as a forum for coastal managers within the maritime authorities, the Environment Agency, port managers and others within the region.
- h. To share expertise and examples of best practice between group members and to share resources between member organisations when mutually acceptable and advantageous.
- i. To identify, develop and share best practice with regard to procurement.
- j. To encourage the development of a co-ordinated approach to the collection, storage and dissemination of data relevant to the effective management of risks at the shoreline.
- k. To support the national network of strategic coastal monitoring programmes.
- l. To encourage agile and flexible working given the future challenges to the provision of public services having regard for succession planning, shared services, partnership working and social enterprising.
- m. To provide a strong political forum and voice for coastal local authorities and other organisations with an interest in coastal risk management along the south coast of England.
- n. To assist coastal stakeholders by disseminating advice and good practice through the publication of advice and guidance, the holding of conferences, field meetings and events.
- o. To make representations to the government to ensure a proper level of resources are made available for coastal risk management in the context of climate change.
- p. To encourage active political involvement in coastal risk management by its constituent members.

Geographical Extent

8. For the purposes of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC the geographical area comprises the coastline between Portland Bill in Dorset and Selsey Bill in West Sussex together with the whole of the coastline of the Isle of Wight (comprising Coastal Sediment Cell 5).

Application of Income and Property

9. Income will be generated from membership subscriptions, Grant or Levy contributions and other suitable windfalls. Full Members contribute to the administrative costs together with a separate budget for a research programme. Associate Members pay a reduced level of contribution which contributes only to membership and not to research. Corresponding members may only receive copies of agendas and minutes.
10. The level of fees shall be fixed before the end of each calendar year for implementation from the following April. The income accrued shall be applied solely to the promotion of its objectives.
11. Income will be applied in order to fulfil the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC's primary and secondary objectives. Funds will be expended on providing the necessary levels of administration including administrative and financial support, audit services, technical officer support, management of the website, chairman's expenses, professional indemnity insurance, fees for membership of key related organisations and domain fees. Any additional income generated will be expended as directed by the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC but may include professional events (e.g. conferences and technical field meetings).
12. The Host Organisation(s) will be paid by the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC to ensure proper financial control (auditing, etc.).
13. An annual Business Plan and Work Programme for the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC will provide the basis for determination of the allocation of funding from the budget for the following year. The Chairman will be responsible for day to day financial control of the budget.
14. None of the income of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC may be paid or transferred directly or indirectly by way of dividend or otherwise by way of profit to any member of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC. However, this does not prevent:
 - an officer from receiving reasonable and proper remuneration for any goods or services supplied to the Group;
 - a member or officer from buying goods or services from the Group.
15. The Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC membership shall not be liable to indemnify the Host Organisation in respect of any losses, costs or expenses as set out above where such loss, cost or expense arises as a consequence of unlawful or negligent act of an employee working for the Host Organisation. Each of the Funding Partners will ensure that its employer's liability insurance fully covers its involvement in the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC.
16. Administration and Procurement will be in accordance with the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC financial protocol.

Dissolution

17. If the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC resolves to dissolve the Group, the Chairman, subject to availability of resources, will remain in office and be responsible for winding up the affairs of the Group.
18. The Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC must amass income of the Group and must pay or make provision for all the liabilities/commitments of the Group.
19. The members may pass a resolution before, or at any time as, the resolution to dissolve the group, specifying the manner in which the Group is to apply its remaining assets.
20. The Group must apply any remaining funds:
 - directly for its objectives; or,
 - as directed by its members, by transferring to some other charitable organisation having similar objectives to the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC and which prohibits the distribution of income (either directly or indirectly), and property to its members.

Amendments

21. Any provisions contained in Part I of this constitution may be amended, provided that:
 - No amendment may be made to alter the Objects if the changes would not be within the reasonable contemplation of the members;
 - It is passed by not less than the majority of members of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC.
22. Any provision contained in Part II of this constitution (below) may be amended, provided that any such amendment is passed by not less than a majority of its membership.
23. A copy of any amendments of this constitution must be sent to all members and posted on the website within 21 days of it being passed.

PART II

Membership

1. Membership of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC shall be open to any body corporate or unincorporated association (such as local government, harbour authorities, key user groups, associations and NGOs) which is interested in furthering the objectives of the Group (any such body being called in this constitution a “member organisation” or “member”).
2. Admission is at the discretion of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC which shall take into consideration in deciding whether to accept the application of any organisation to membership that organisation’s contribution or potential contribution to the principal objectives of the Group. Acceptance of an application to become a member may be subject to any conditions (including charges) as the Group may stipulate.
3. The Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC may create different classes of membership and make rules concerning administrative fees.
4. Each member organisation shall appoint an individual to represent it and to vote on its behalf at meetings of the Group. The extent of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC spans two Environment Agency Areas and the Environment Agency shall, therefore, be entitled to two votes. Only Full Members will be eligible to vote on matters relating to the Research Programme.
5. The Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC must keep a register of names and contact details of every member organisation and appointed representatives which must be made available to any member organisation upon request.
6. Membership is terminated if:
 - the member organisation ceases to exist;
 - the member organisation resigns by submitting written notice;
 - the Group resolves that it is in its best interests that the membership is terminated.
7. A resolution to remove a member from membership may only be passed if:
 - a) the member has been given at least 21 days’ notice in writing of the meeting of the Group at which the resolution will be proposed and the reasons why it is to be proposed;
 - b) the member organisation’s representative has been allowed to make representations to the meeting.

Role of Appointed Representatives

8. The responsibilities of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC members are as follows:
 - a) To represent the views of the Group;
 - b) To be accountable to both their member organisation and to the Group;
 - c) To act as information gatekeepers/bridging personnel between their member organisation and the Group;
 - d) To provide experience, comment and advice on individual areas of interest;
 - e) To actively participate in the processes (for example consultation) of the Group;

- f) To attend meetings where member organisations are requested to actively take part;
- g) To contribute towards the actions to deliver the key aims and supporting aims and objectives;
- h) To inform the Group when alternative consultative processes are required.

Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC Meetings and Information Sharing

- 9. The Group shall meet at least two times each year and at other times as may be deemed necessary. Meetings will be held principally at the Public Service Plaza, Havant but may also be convened at other locations or may also be conducted entirely virtually. The venues for the meetings shall be required to make available suitable technology to host virtual participation alongside the venue attendees. No more than eight months shall elapse between successive meetings. The meeting will be known as the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC meeting.
- 10. The main purpose of the meetings will be to:
 - a) report to the wider membership progress of the implementation of the Group's key aims and objectives as set out in Part I above;
 - b) to inform members of national, regional or local issues relating to coastal risk management;
 - c) to allow Group members to raise, discuss and, where possible, resolve issues relating to coastal risk management;
 - d) to allow Group members to make recommendations for further actions to be implemented by the Chairman.
- 11. The meeting is for officers from the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC and items on the agenda will be agreed by the Chairman. Any member organisation, subject to due notice, may let the Chairman know of any particular item that it wishes to see on the agenda. A minimum of twenty eight days notice is required in order that the necessary reports may be prepared.
- 12. To maximise opportunities to discuss coastal management challenges and share best practice, the Group will utilise online virtual peer to peer discussion platforms and forums.

Office Bearers

- 13. The Group may appoint officers to act as a Chairman and Vice-Chairmen who will be elected for a three-year term; thereafter they may offer themselves for re-election. The Group may also appoint a Councillor to act as the SCOPAC Champion who will be elected for a three-year term; thereafter they may offer themselves for re-election. The Group may also appoint an Officer to act as the Research Chairman who will be elected for a three-year term; thereafter they may offer themselves for re-election. Elections may be held in person or through virtual meetings.
- 14. The Chairman will co-ordinate the day to day activities of the Group and prepare agendas, ensure minutes are properly recorded, liaise with the host organisation over administrative and financial matters. The Chairman will liaise with SCOPAC Champion in order to ensure sensible coordination in terms of report preparation and information exchange.

Role of the Chairman/Vice-Chairmen/SCOPAC Champion/Research Chairman

15. The responsibilities of the Chairman are as follows:
 - a) To preside at meetings, and any other Group gatherings, where appropriate, at which and during the time for which he or she is present,
 - b) To actively promote the Group's role to a wide range of organisations at a senior level and to raise its profile locally, nationally and internationally,
 - c) To attend key meetings including the National Flood Forum, Regional Flood and Coastal Committees, the Local Government Association Coastal Special Interests Group and meetings of coastal fora and any other meeting(s) as may be required from time to time,
16. In the absence of the Chairman for any reason, the responsibilities of the Chairman shall be discharged by the Vice-Chairmen or delegated as appropriate. If the Chairman or Vice-Chairmen are not present or unwilling to preside, a member of the Group shall perform this duty on that occasion.
17. The responsibilities of the SCOPAC Champion will be to preside over and conduct proceedings of the Annual Conference, Annual Field Visits and be the signatory for political lobbying correspondence from the Group.
18. The responsibilities of the Research Chairman are as follows:
 - a) To arrange and preside over meeting of a Research Subgroup made up of interested Full Members of the Group,
 - b) To develop a Research Programme and make recommendation to the Group,
 - c) To coordinate, monitor and report progress with respect to the Research Programme back to the Group,
 - d) To disseminate reports and findings of the Research activities across the Group.

Role of Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC members

19. The responsibilities for members of the Group are as follows:
 - a) to be committed to and act as a champion, for the achievement of the Group's aims and objectives;
 - b) to be a good ambassador for the Group at its meetings and within its associated organisations;
 - c) to attend Group meetings, vote on items of business and make a positive contribution to achieving the key aims and objectives;
 - d) to act as an advocate for the Group in seeking approval of their organisation's commitment to the Group;
 - e) to consult with member organisation representatives individually and/or collectively on matters affecting their interest;
 - f) to act as a champion for the work of the Group and promote a consistent approach within the sector nationally through the Coastal Group Network which is the collaborative group of the seven coastal groups in England.

Roles of the host organisation

20. The responsibilities of the host organisation are as follows:

the host organisation shall be a legal entity (e.g. County Council or Borough/District Council/Unitary Authority) or another suitable CPOA body which shall provide administrative and financial services for the Group supported by the host organisation's legal and administrative framework.

Administration

21. The host organisation shall receive reports from the Chairman a minimum of ten days before each meeting. It shall compile agendas as directed by the Chairman for up to four meetings a year and shall arrange for agendas to be sent to members either electronically or as hard copies (by request).

22. A representative of the host organisation shall attend a minimum of two meetings per annum and take minutes (average time of each meeting maximum three hours); produce draft minutes within one week for review by the Chairman and compile final minutes and distribute within two weeks.

23. The host organisation shall set up a database for correspondence, letter heads, passing correspondence to relevant officers and allow for costs for postage and telephone calls.

Accountancy Services

24. The host organisation shall provide the following accountancy services:

- a. Attend two meetings annually to arrange for fee setting and report on annual audit of accounts.
- b. send fees invoices to members allowing for follow up payment chasing as may be required.
- c. Review transactions quarterly and report to the Group twice a year detailing a tabulation of expenditure against projected costs.
- d. arrange payment of invoices on instruction from the Chairman (maximum twenty invoices per annum).
- e. Arrange an annual internal audit of accounts
- f. The host organisation shall be paid to undertake these services; a budget for the services shall be agreed in advance and shall be subject to annual review.

25. The Group shall comply with the Standing Orders of the host organisation with respect to administrative, procurement and any other processes required unless otherwise agreed by the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC.

Minutes

26. The Chairman shall be responsible for ensuring the proper preparation and confirmation of minutes of each meeting.

27. The minutes for each of the meetings shall be made available on the website at least twenty one days after the meeting and to any member organisation as a hard copy on request.

Notices

28. Any notice may be given by the Group to any member, either personally or by sending it by post to their registered address or to an e-mail address supplied by him or her for the giving of notice. Where a notice is sent by post, service of the notice shall be deemed to be effective by proper addressing, pre-paying and posting a letter containing the notice.

29. Notice of the next Group meeting will be given at the end of the previous meeting, in minutes of that meeting or on the website, at least twenty-one days prior to the next meeting with the agenda.

Annual Statement

30. An annual Business Plan will be prepared each year in order that any necessary adjustments may be made to the budget and work programme for the following year. The financial programme for the Group, including its budget and audit, will be subject to an annual review including a presentation by the appropriate financial officer from the host organisation. The Chairman shall be responsible for monitoring budget reports received from the financial department of the host organisation and shall report to the Group on progress with the budget and obtain approval as may be required for any variations.

Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC Code of Conduct

31. Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC members will:

- a) Use their influence and ensure that they perform to the best of their ability to maintain a sustainable environment in their undertaking of the Group's activities;
- b) promote the concept of sustainable development and integrated coastal zone management through their activities;
- c) embrace the needs of the Southern Coastal Group and SCOPAC and give the highest possible standard of service;
- d) serve the Group as a whole. They should always remember their responsibilities to the Group and ensure courteous, efficient and impartial delivery to all members;
- e) advise pressure groups, when required, but must do so in ways which must not compromise their or the group's political neutrality;
- f) use their knowledge in serving the profession and stakeholders and constantly strive to learn more;

- g) not to use any information obtained in the course of their membership of the Group for personal gain or benefit, nor should they pass it on to others who might use it in such a way;
- h) never to engage in corrupt practice and maintain a high standard of behaviour which will serve as an example to others.

Public Sector Equality Duty

32. SCOPAC is subject to the public sector equality duty and shall, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to:

- a) Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and people who do not share it;
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a relevant protected characteristic and those who do not share it.