

INCOSE UK Chapter

Local Group Funding & Governance Policy

Background

An INCOSE Local Group (ILG) can be instituted by any group of like minded INCOSE members. The ILG may be focussed on a geographic location (e.g. Bristol LG), a particular area of interest (e.g. Rail Interest Group) or set up for a specific purpose (e.g. Architecture Working Group). The common factor is that they are subsidiary groups to the UK Chapter and must operate in accordance with its principles, however they can operate autonomously within their terms of reference. A local group is expected to organise meetings/workshops/tutorials for the wider membership on specific topics. A working group is expected to provide working papers to the Board.

The benefits of LGs working autonomously are:-

- Flexibility and adaptability to meet local requirements
- Local knowledge to exploit resources and opportunities
- Low maintenance required from the UK Board
- Best value for INCOSE members

However, autonomous working also confers a responsibility to uphold the aims, objectives and ethos of INCOSE (refer to the main INCOSE website for definitive guidance on governance). The INCOSE UK Board have a responsibility to assist LGs so far as they can (bearing in mind that Board members are also volunteers and have finite time to devote to INCOSE affairs) and to ensure that LGs are operating in a consistent and equitable manner.

Constitution

A LG must have a committee who meet from time to time to plan the activities of the LG and carry out whatever governance tasks necessary to keep the group operating. Each LG must be endorsed by the INCOSE UK Board, but this should only be a formality to ensure that the LG is recognised as an official part of the INCOSE UK Chapter. However the UK Board reserves the right to withhold or renounce endorsement if they have reason to believe that a LG activity may be detrimental to the aims and objectives of INCOSE UK.

INCOSE do not wish to force any particular structure or modus operandi on the LG committee, but the minimum requirements are as follows:-

1. There should be a minimum of 3 individuals on the committee, and preferably around 6. Experience has shown that any less than 3 is unsustainable in the face of “day-job” and personal commitments that can deplete the team on a random basis.
2. The committee members should be endorsed in some way by the group. Clearly the committee is self selected initially. Group members should have the opportunity to join the committee and vote on the committee members regularly (e.g. at an annual AGM). Given that it can be difficult to persuade people to take a role on a committee there are no limits set on the length of tenure for named roles.
3. INCOSE UK requires a minimum of three roles to be performed by members of the committee; Chair, Treasurer, Secretary. Ideally the three roles should be assigned to

different individuals. Other roles may be assigned as required, provided that these three basic roles are covered.

4. Meetings must be open to all INCOSE members, whether they are “signed-up” as group members or not. This means that all LG meetings must be advertised in e-Preview, Preview and / or on the INCOSE UK website.
5. Group members should initially contact a member of the LG committee if they have concerns about the way that a LG is being operated. If their concerns are not allayed by the LG committee they should contact a member of the UK Board.
6. The LG should document and publish any operating procedures that it applies.

Responsibilities

LG Chair (LGC)

The LGC is responsible for the overall operation of the LG and ensuring that it operates within guidance provided by the UK Board in this document and from time to time. The LGC is responsible for ensuring that the group has a set of Terms of Reference and calling regular committee meetings to plan group activities. The LGC is also responsible for ensuring that the UK Board and Communications Committee Chair are kept informed of the group’s activities.

LG Treasurer

The LGT is responsible for any financial matters relating to the group; collecting monies, paying bills, accounting for any funds supplied from INCOSE UK etc. The LGT must prepare an annual financial report at the end of each financial year (31 May) to account for income, expenditure and propose a budget for the following year. This report must be forwarded to the INCOSE UK Finance Director. Requests for funding or any financial issues should also be documented and brought to the attention of the INCOSE UK Finance Director.

LG Secretary

The LGS is responsible for keeping records of those affiliated to the group (whether INCOSE members or not), and maintaining a record of attendance at meetings. This information must be made available to the Communications Committee Chair from time to time to enable trends to be monitored, new members who have attended LG meetings identified etc. The LG Secretary must also submit an annual report prior to the Autumn Assembly, summarising the activities of the LG, attendance figures and plans for the following year.

Any records identifying the Local Group membership must only be used for the purposes of the Local Group and INCOSE UK and must not be disclosed to any other group, individual or organisation without the consent of the UK Board

Publicity

It is strongly recommended that one of the committee members is tasked with the role of marketing, ensuring that information about the events gets to a wider audience as well as INCOSE members.

The INCOSE Secretariat can supply partial or full membership lists that will help to locate members who are likely to be interested in the LG events.

Publicity Material such as pens, leaflets etc can be provided for free distribution to the Local Group attendees by the INCOSE Secretariat.

The use of the INCOSE UK and INCOSE logos is permitted on Local Group advertising or publicity material. The group may create their own personalised logo, however this should not involve adaptation of the main INCOSE logo (the blue globe) or the INCOSE UK logo.

Funding

Ideally, LGs should utilise locally available facilities (e.g. at companies or Universities employing INCOSE members) to minimise the need to spend “real-money”. INCOSE UK is able to provide some financial support, but in the interests of fairness and to avoid over-commitment of funds, this must be capped. Traditionally LGs have not charged attendance fees, which simplifies operations considerably, but it is inevitable that in some circumstances fees may need to be charged.

INCOSE UK will allow each LG approved by the UK Board a budget of **£250** per financial year. This budget is subject to presentation of valid invoices / receipts. The Finance Director can issue a cheque to the LGT to serve as a cash float, or invoices / receipts can be forwarded to the FD for payment / reimbursement. It does not make sense to operate separate LG bank accounts for these relatively small amounts of money. VAT invoices or receipts should be requested for any expenditure since INCOSE UK is VAT registered and can recover relevant VAT payments.

Any budget remaining at the end of the financial year cannot be rolled over to the next year. Any remaining cash will be set against the next year’s budget.

Annual funding levels will be reviewed from time to time by the UK Board in the light of operating conditions and INCOSE UK objectives.

The annual budget may be spent in accordance with INCOSE UK FIN-100 viz on justifiable expenses associated with operating events and managing the group. Event operating expenses could include refreshments, room hire and payment of expenses to invited speakers. Management expenses can include working meals, recognising that people give their own time and that meeting over a meal provides a neutral place to meet. The key determinants are whether the expenditure supports INCOSE in some way and whether the levels of expenditure are reasonable.

The LG committee should make a business case to the Finance and Events Directors for more ambitious events. Advice and assistance will be provided to ensure that a sound budget has been established. The budget must be approved by the Finance and Events Directors before making any commitments on behalf of INCOSE UK. The FD will need to ensure that financial arrangements are fully defined and understood (e.g. pricing, invoicing, payments, VAT etc.) and that any overhead costs are understood and factored in (e.g. event services provided by the INCOSE Secretariat¹). Any large event will usually involve charging for admission which will incur the need to organise registration.

¹ The INCOSE Secretariat is funded to provide general support to LGs, but services such as providing event booking will usually incur additional costs. The INCOSE Secretariat will be able to advise and help with event planning, and should be contacted early in the planning stage for more ambitious events.

Reporting Requirements

Reporting requirements are identified in context above, but are listed here to provide a summary.

Annually, at year end

Financial Report

Secretary's Report

Plans for Next Year (LGC)

Ad-Hoc

Post Event Report – attendance levels, costs incurred, lessons learnt

Event expenditure – receipt, invoice or petty cash slip for each event

LGC Meeting minutes

Contributions to Preview

Write-ups for the Board

Configuration Management

Version 1.0 of the policy produced for comment

Version 2.0 of the policy agreed at the UK Chapter Board meeting held on 5th September 2007

Version 2.1 of the policy produced to correct errors and reflect the introduction of the INCOSE Secretariat.