



**TURNING TIDES**

A facility supporting rights and tenure of coastal and shoreline communities

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Date: **1<sup>st</sup> July 2024**

# Terms of Reference

## Turning Tides' Steering Committee

### 1. Introduction

Turning Tides (as of 1st July 2024) is dedicated to advancing the rights and agency of local communities, small-scale fishers and fish workers, and Indigenous Peoples in the allocation, use, conservation, management, and development of coastal lands, shorelines, oceans, lakes, and other aquatic areas and resources.

Turning Tides is guided by a Steering Committee composed of individuals that can well represent, and/or effectively and accurately articulate, the (broad) interests of local communities, small-scale fishers and fish workers, and Indigenous Peoples. The Steering Committee plays a pivotal role in setting strategic direction and providing oversight and guidance to ensure the realization of Turning Tides' vision and goal(s). The Steering Committee also assures Turning Tides' operations are ever increasingly in line with its stated values and principles.

### 2. Purpose

These Terms of Reference (ToR) outline the roles, responsibilities, composition, and functioning of the Steering Committee of Turning Tides, ensuring alignment with the organization's vision, goals, values and principles.

The Steering Committee is established to provide strategic guidance, oversight, and decision-making to ensure that the organization advances the rights and agency of local communities, small-scale fishers and fish workers, and Indigenous Peoples in the allocation, use, conservation, management, and development of coastal lands, shorelines, oceans, lakes, and other aquatic areas and resources.

### 4. Composition

The Steering Committee (SC) will be comprised of individuals who hold highly relevant expertise (in social justice, environmental justice, food security and food sovereignty, aquatic and terrestrial tenure, Indigenous Peoples, local communities and small-scale fisher rights, human rights, and institutional governance, regranting, liberatory philanthropic approaches) that they can draw on when providing advice and direction. These individuals hold leadership or advisory positions for groups or networks that represent the interests of, or members of, potential partners and clients of Turning Tides. As such these can draw on this up-to-date knowledge when providing advice and direction. Finally, the SC must seek balanced representation so that, across its membership, there is inclusivity and diversity; geographic, age (considering representation of youth), cultural and / or gender diversity, and representatives of local fishing communities and Indigenous Peoples.



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## 5. Selection criteria for members of the Steering Committee

The Steering Committee shall comprise seven to nine members who demonstrate diverse expertise and experience relevant to tenure rights, conservation, governance, Indigenous rights, finance, legal matters, and community development. Members shall be appointed based on their qualifications, integrity, and commitment to the vision and goal of Turning Tides, as well as their ability to invest the necessary time and input. Steering Committee members will;

- 5.1 Hold a position within a non-governmental, governmental or civil society organization or network which enables them to present views or perspectives of the broader constituency of local communities, small-scale fishers and fish workers, and/or Indigenous Peoples, in such a way to steer or influence the strategic direction and operations of Turning Tides, and;
- 5.2 Regularly meet with a constituency in two-way deliberations, discussions, listening and informational sessions that may improve the responsiveness and accountability of Turning Tides' to our intended partners, and;
- 5.3 Recognized by peers to hold domain and/or geographically applied expertise in social justice, environmental justice, inclusive resource governance, food security and food sovereignty, aquatic and/or terrestrial tenure, Indigenous Peoples rights, human rights, liberatory philanthropic approaches and/or governance of socially-responsible institutions;
- 5.4 Complement existing, and add new, diversity of lived experience, perspective, skills, knowledge and networks to the established team and Steering Committee;
- 5.5 Be willing and able to dedicate timely advice and input into Turning Tides, online or in person discussion and input to written documents, and;
- 5.6 Be able and eager to work collectively as a team in the Steering Committee to achieve the best possible outcomes for potential and current partners.

## 6. Committee culture and norms

Turning Tides has a commitment to a positive culture built upon respect, shared problem solving, and alignment towards common goals. Steering Committee members will uphold high standards of conduct and intervene if they observe or become aware of any inappropriate behavior, thus promoting a respectful and positive organizational culture. These are also in place to help to maintain consistency, credibility, and trustworthiness in the organization's internal and external relationships and public image.

- 6.1 Commitment to Organizational Mission and Values:** Align decisions and behaviors with the organization's mission, vision, and values to maintain coherence and direction.
- 6.2 Unified External Representation:** Steering Committee members should present a unified and consistent message externally that aligns with the organization's mission, values, and strategic goals. They should communicate in a manner that enhances the organization's reputation and credibility.
- 6.3 Prioritizing Organizational Interests:** Steering Committee members must prioritize the best interests of the organization above personal or external organizational interests. They should avoid conflicts of interest and ensure that their actions and decisions benefit the organization.



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- 6.4 Active Listening and Constructive Dialogue:** Steering Committee members should actively listen to diverse viewpoints without interrupting or dismissing others' perspectives. Others should experience Steering Committee members as open to new ideas and different approaches, valuing innovation and creativity in problem-solving. In doing so, members will freely and openly provide feedback in a constructive manner, focusing on improvement and growth rather than criticism.
  - 6.5 Accountability:** Hold oneself and others accountable for their actions and decisions, fostering a culture of responsibility, solution-orientation and dialogue. This includes following established Steering Committee policies and procedures to ensure consistency and fairness in decision-making. Members are encouraged to directly raise concerns to the co-Directors in ways that lead to resolution and improvements to the organization.
  - 6.6 Conflict Resolution:** Approach conflicts with a solution-oriented mindset, seeking resolution through respectful dialogue and compromise when necessary.
  - 6.7 Empathy, Support and Recognition of Achievements:** Acknowledge and celebrate successes and milestones achieved by staff and executives, reinforcing positive behaviors and outcomes. Consider the perspectives and feelings of others, including staff and executives, to ensure decisions consider their well-being and concerns. Offer support and guidance to executive leadership, understanding the challenges they face and providing constructive feedback.
  - 6.8 Zero Tolerance for Bullying and Harassment:** Turning Tides has zero-tolerance for bullying, harassment, discrimination, or any form of disrespectful behavior towards staff, executives, fellow Steering Committee members or contractors. We will not tolerate personal attacks or blame audits.
  - 6.9 Confidentiality:** Respect confidentiality agreements and handle sensitive information with care to maintain trust and psychological safety.
  - 6.10 Prevent Conflict of Interest:** Actively prevent any actual, potential or perceived conflict of interest through conformance with the [Conflict of Interest policy](#).

## 7. Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of the Steering Committee include:

- 7.1 Oversight and Accountability: Ensure effective implementation of strategy and hold the executive leads accountable for meeting the stated vision and goal(s).
- 7.2 Providing strategic guidance and direction to Turning Tides in line with its vision, mission, values and principles.
- 7.3 Reviewing and approving strategic plans, annual budgets, and major policies proposed by the executive lead(s)/Director(d) and technical team.
- 7.4 Selecting and appointing executive lead(s)/Director(s), and evaluating their performance periodically.
- 7.5 Monitoring implementation to ensure alignment with established goals and objectives.
- 7.6 May participate in relevant advisory platforms, advisory panels related to TT's approach towards grant-making.
- 7.7 Reviewing guidelines, criteria and methodologies for evaluation of performance
- 7.8 Evaluating and interpreting the performance and impact of Turning Tides and providing recommendations for improvement.



- 7.9 Reviewing and approving strategic grantmaking plans for all grantmaking funds; reviewing and approving grants for select grantmaking funds.
- 7.10 Overseeing risk management and ensuring effective internal controls are in place, including redressal of complaints, grievances and develop appropriate mechanisms and responses.  
Representing Turning Tides and promoting its mission and activities to external stakeholders, and reporting these representations back to the Steering Committee and technical team.
- 7.11 Identify, evaluate and nominate new Steering Committee members as and when required, in line with selection criteria.
- 7.12 Ensuring transparency, accountability, and ethical conduct in all operations of Turning Tides.

## **8. Roles and responsibilities in relation to the Fiscal Sponsor**

- 8.1 The Steering Committee must guide Turning Tides in line with the [Fiscal Agreement](#) and [Social Contract](#) with the current Fiscal Sponsor.
- 8.2 The Steering Committee must, if requested by the Sponsor, allow a representative of Sponsor to attend all or some portion of Steering Committee meetings.
- 8.3 The Steering Committee may designate a delegated representative to communicate with Fiscal Sponsor on operations, including to a) keep Sponsor informed of its activities and b) keep Sponsor apprised of the Steering Committee membership and operating procedures.
- 8.4 The Steering Committee can advise and decide to dissolve the current fiscal sponsorship arrangement, and concurrently propose a new fiscal sponsorship arrangement or create an independent legal and fiscal entity.

## **9. Meetings and Decision-Making**

- 9.1 The Steering Committee shall meet virtually on a bimonthly basis, with one in-person meeting held annually.
- 9.2 Virtual meetings shall be conducted using appropriate communication technology.
- 9.3 In-person meetings shall be held at a location determined by the Steering Committee, considering accessibility, convenience and cost for all members and technical team support.
- 9.4 Decisions of the Steering Committee shall be made by consensus whenever possible. Consensus should be pursued following the consensus protocol (which will be provided as an annex to this document, once agreed). In cases where consensus cannot be reached, decisions may be made by a simple majority vote.
- 9.5 Working groups or sub-committees may be formed if necessary to report back to the Steering Committee
- 9.6 If there is not quorum at a meeting, then the missing members may be approached afterwards by the technical team to seek endorsement or otherwise of the decision unless the SC specifies otherwise [issue of what is a quorum needs to be mentioned above].
- 9.7 Minutes of meetings shall be maintained and circulated to all members for review within two weeks of a meeting, and for approval in the subsequent meeting.



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## **10. Expectations of service of individual members**

- 10.1 Be able to allocate in order of 12 working days to Committee duties.
- 10.2 Be able to attend at least four of the six bimonthly virtual meetings and one in person meeting per year.
- 10.3 Commit to serve for a minimum term of 2 years (unless unexpected changes to circumstances), with the option to review for a second term.
- 10.4 In the event a Steering Committee member must or wishes to cease their service before the end of the two-year term, they shall do so with as much advance notice to the Steering Committee and technical team as possible (ideally 6 months forewarning).
- 10.5 Upon each 6 months of service, each Steering Committee member will be provided with USD5 000 as an honorarium for 'time and talent'. Honorariums are paid upon mutual agreement that the role and responsibilities have been met and facilitated. Honorariums will be paid directly to the bank account of the individual or the organization nominated by them.
- 10.6 A Steering Committee member may be requested to resign or leave the Steering Committee for reasons including, but not limited to, conflict of interest, insufficient participation, term limits, or persistent failure to adhere to the conduct and commitments outlined in the terms of reference.

## **11. Support provided to Steering Committee operations**

From the technical team the Steering Committee can expect support for effective and productive communication and exchange between the technical team and the Steering Committee. Details of services provided are in the document "[Provision of support to the Steering Committee](#)".

The Steering Committee can be expected to be regularly and comprehensively briefed by the technical team in well-organized background papers, regularly facilitated meetings, and easy access to ad hoc briefings and discussions with the technical team.

The Steering Committee can expect well organized virtual and in-person meetings designed to optimize the time, expertise and guidance of the Steering Committee over matters related to Turning Tides strategy, design, and implementation.

## **12. Review and Amendment**

These Terms of Reference shall be subject to periodic review by the Steering Committee, in consultation with the technical team, to ensure continued relevance and effectiveness. Amendments may be proposed by any member of the Steering Committee and shall be approved by consensus or majority vote.

## **13. Conclusion**

These Terms of Reference shall come into effect upon approval by the Steering Committee of Turning Tides. They shall serve as the guiding framework for the Steering Committee's operations and shall be adhered to by all members in the discharge of their duties and responsibilities.