

Policy and Practice Governance Review

September 2021



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Executive summary

The development and delivery of impactful policy and practice content requires a strategic approach. This Governance Review was initiated in order to ensure that IEMA has this in place as its membership grows and the range of policy and practice activities that it is engaged in also increases. The review sets out a number of recommendations for enhancing the governance structures already in place for the Institute's policy and practice output.

If adopted, these recommendations will enable IEMA to more effectively take forward the 'transforming the world to sustainability' objective that sits at the core of the Institute's offer to its members and society.

Principally, this review makes the following recommendations:

Policy and Practice Committee

- A Policy and Practice Committee should be established to act as a conduit between the IEMA Board and member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities.
- The Policy and Practice Committee should provide strategic and joined-up oversight for all relevant activities and periodically report on progress to the IEMA Board.
- Membership of the Committee should be diverse and it is recommended that the IEMA Board undertakes analysis to establish what this would mean in practice.

Member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activity

- Member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities should have standardised terms of reference documents that commit them to producing an annual programme of activity.
- While member steering groups will each have a different thematic focus, they should share a common purpose of 'transforming the world to sustainability'.
- The membership of these groups should be diverse and it is recommended that the IEMA Board undertakes analysis to establish what this would mean in practice.

Policy and practice content development

- All policy and practice content delivery must follow a standardised process flow for initiation and sign-off.
- IEMA should produce a roughly even balance of policy and practice content.

Background to the review

IEMA launched a review of the governance structures that the Institute uses for the development and delivery of policy and practice outputs in early 2021. The aim was to make sure that these structures provide transparency and accountability for IEMA members, while also ensuring that the Institute has a robust set of processes for prioritising the issues that it produces policy and practice outputs on.

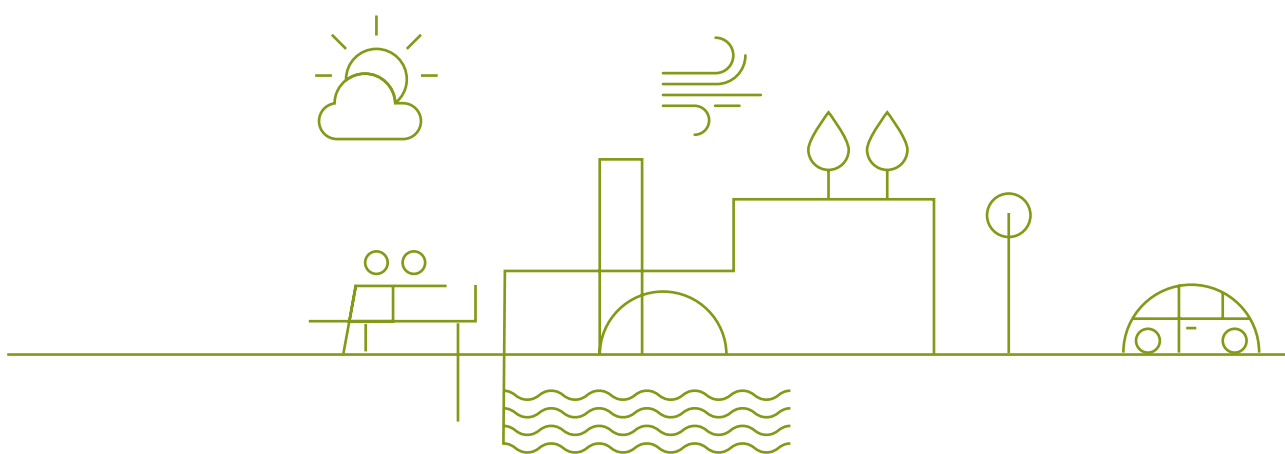
Putting in place the right governance structures is increasingly important as the Institute's membership grows. The success of IEMA's policy and practice activity is built on the many members that volunteer their time to help deliver it. Ensuring that they and the wider membership can have confidence in the governance arrangements that underpin this is only right.

The scope of the review covered all member steering groups that produce or input on policy and practice outputs under the IEMA umbrella. Principally, the following groups:

- Circular economy
- Climate change and energy
- Global environmental and social assessment
- Impact assessment (and its subgroups).

In addition, the review considered other opportunities for creating new formal member groups and structures for IEMA policy and practice activities not currently covered by the existing governance arrangements.

The full terms of reference for the review can be found in Appendix 1.



Methodology

Overseen by a member-led steering group, the review was delivered in four stages:

- scoping
- planning
- delivery
- final report.

The scoping stage focused on agreeing the terms of reference with the IEMA Board, followed by running an expression-of-interest exercise with the membership to establish the steering group. In the planning stage, the steering group met several times to agree a set of project deliverables, before agreeing a project plan.

Following the successful completion of the scoping and planning stages, the review moved to delivery. This comprised of three workshops with IEMA members from across the UK and a member survey. More than 40 members participated in the workshops, with nearly 200 members completing the survey. Peer review with other professional bodies and consultation with existing member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities were also undertaken.

The member survey was carefully designed so that it focused on the key issues raised during the member workshops, thereby providing a mechanism for validating the discussions that took place at those sessions.

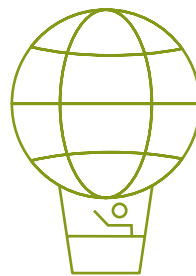
The final stage of the review was the production of this report, which the steering group developed through an iterative drafting process, in consultation with the support of the IEMA policy team.



Governance Review steering group

Members of the steering group for the review are listed below. They were assisted by staff from across different IEMA departments, including policy, marketing and communications.

- Louise Nicholls (Chair), Suseco.org
- Martin Bigg, University of the West of England
- Ali Hassan, Ain Shams University
- John Hill, John Hill Associates
- Rosemary Horry, University of Derby
- Alex Hilton, HMRC
- Anya Ledwith, Eshcon
- Andy Whyte, S-AW



IEMA's policy and practice function

The scoping stage of the review also included a 'stocktake' of IEMA's policy and practice function to help identify the specific areas that the review would focus on. This was done by assessing five different components of what might constitute a 'high-performing' policy and practice function. These five elements are illustrated in Figure 1.



Figure 1: Components of a 'high-performing' policy and practice function

Mission statement

A mission statement can be a useful tool for focusing policy and practice development around a single overarching objective. In examining IEMA's policy and practice function in this context, it was apparent that there is not a consistent goal that draws together the range of relevant activities that the Institute engages in; although this review posits that this could be done through the more effective adoption of the 'transforming the world to sustainability' narrative.

It is worth noting that IEMA is already actively exploring Royal Charter status, with an application to the Privy Council currently pending. It was agreed at the outset of the review that the outcome of that application would be joined up with the reforms made to the policy and practice function at the appropriate point in the future.

Thematic policy and practice development

IEMA's membership continues to grow and as a consequence the range of themes that members would like the Institute's policy and practice function to focus on is also growing. The introduction to this review lists the four member steering groups that are currently engaged in policy and practice activity on four specific themes. The four themes are:

- Circular economy
- Climate change and energy
- Global environmental and social assessment
- Impact assessment (and associated sub-themes).

Establishing further groups will require a more consistent approach to formalising IEMA member steering groups, which at present does not exist.

This includes consistency in purpose, terms of reference documents, member term lengths, election processes, clear deliverables that are measurable and steering group members who are accountable to the wider IEMA membership.

Member insight

Using the insight of members in an effective way is a critical component in developing policy and practice outputs. After all, IEMA's members are experts in their respective fields and it is their insights that enrich the Institute's work.

In assessing this component of IEMA's policy and practice function, it was identified that there was an inconsistent approach to engaging members in relevant projects and activities; in particular, a lack of specific project groups, inconsistent involvement of members in sign-off processes and the absence of an appropriate platform for members to provide strategic oversight of IEMA's policy and practice work. Therefore, more robust governance is required.

Policy and practice outputs

There are two main types of activity and output that IEMA's policy and practice function is engaged in:

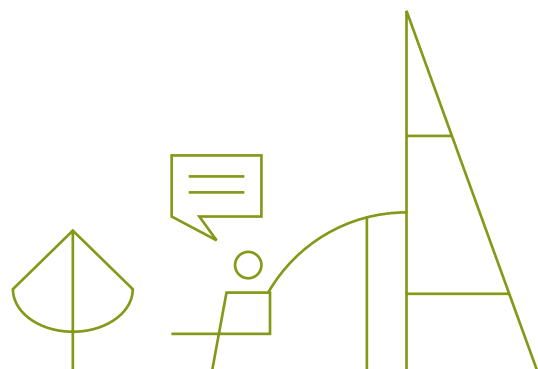
- **policy** – developing positions, statements and reports on key environmental and sustainability issues to influence government policymaking for the good of society
- **practice** – providing technical guidance and support to IEMA members on key policy and regulatory issues that impact them in their workplace.

A review of outputs and activities revealed that these were weighted towards the practice category. Indeed, for January to July 2021, 70% of outputs and activities were in this category. While this was not considered a problem in and of itself, the Governance Review steering group felt that the IEMA membership should have more of a say on the types of outputs that their Institute is producing. Hence, there was also a focus on this in the member survey.

Policy and practice outcomes

Producing outputs and delivering policy and practice activity means little if the impacts are not measured. IEMA's output rate on policy and practice is impressive, as is the quality. Yet an effective and consistent approach to measuring impact with members, other key stakeholders, and policy and legislative processes is more limited.

Establishing a better approach to measuring impact was not in scope for the Governance Review, but parallel work in this area is being progressed by the IEMA policy and practice team. The outcomes of this will be joined up with the reforms to the policy and practice function as a result of this review.



The need for a Policy and Practice Committee

Evidence-gathering activities that were undertaken as part of the Governance Review indicated that there was strong appetite among the IEMA membership for a Policy and Practice Committee to be established. It was felt that such a committee could provide strategic oversight of the development and delivery of the policy and practice outputs that the Institute produces.

Member evidence

Strong support for a Policy and Practice Committee was expressed at three member workshops that were undertaken with members from across the UK. There was a consistent view that while IEMA has and continues to produce high-quality policy and practice outputs, there is not currently a vehicle for connecting these in a way that presents a coherent whole. It was felt that if this could be achieved, IEMA's policy and advocacy work with policymakers, in particular, would be more effective.

The membership survey that was undertaken during the course of the review also highlighted unequivocal support for a Policy and Practice Committee, with nearly 90% of those surveyed in support of its establishment (see Table 1).

Yes	No	Don't know
88%	1%	11%

Table 1: (Member survey question 1) Would you agree that IEMA should put in place a Policy and Practice Committee?

Role of the Policy and Practice Committee

During the member workshops, a number of views were expressed around what role a Policy and Practice Committee should perform. As aforementioned, the primary view was that such a committee should provide strategic direction for all of IEMA's policy and practice output, something that members currently felt was lacking.

The Policy and Practice Committee should do this by acting as a conduit between the main IEMA Board and any member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities. In performing this role, the Policy and Practice Committee would set the thematic direction of relevant member steering groups, which in turn would ensure that the delivery of their work was joined-up.

The Policy and Practice Committee would also provide a reporting mechanism to the main IEMA Board on behalf of those relevant steering groups to ensure that the delivery and overall impact of policy and practice outputs is properly considered by the Institute.

Other themes that were repeated across the member workshops included the need for those members who sit on any Policy and Practice Committee to be rotated regularly, and to be drawn from a range of diverse backgrounds.

Overall, the Policy and Practice Committee would:

- identify major projects for relevant member steering groups to deliver
- advise on expert stakeholders for any task and finish groups required for policy and practice work
- appraise the impact of policy and practice outputs and suggest process improvements
- regularly consult and survey the IEMA membership to gauge views on policy and practice priorities.

Potential governance structure

A potential position for the Policy and Practice Committee within the existing IEMA structure is set out in Figure 2.

The structure positions the Policy and Practice Committee as central to the development and delivery of policy and practice outputs. In this structure, the Policy and Practice Committee is able to act as the conduit between relevant steering groups and the main IEMA Board, as set out previously.

The structure also includes provision for IEMA regional and corporate members to feed insights and observations to the Policy and Practice Committee.

It is recommended by the Governance Review steering group that the composition of the Policy and Practice Committee should be as follows:

- chaired by an IEMA Board member
- representation from: policy and practice steering groups, regions, international, corporate, fellows and futures groups
- the Committee should be diverse and it is recommended that the IEMA Board undertakes analysis to establish what this would mean in practice.

Appendix 2 sets out proposed terms of reference for the Policy and Practice Committee.

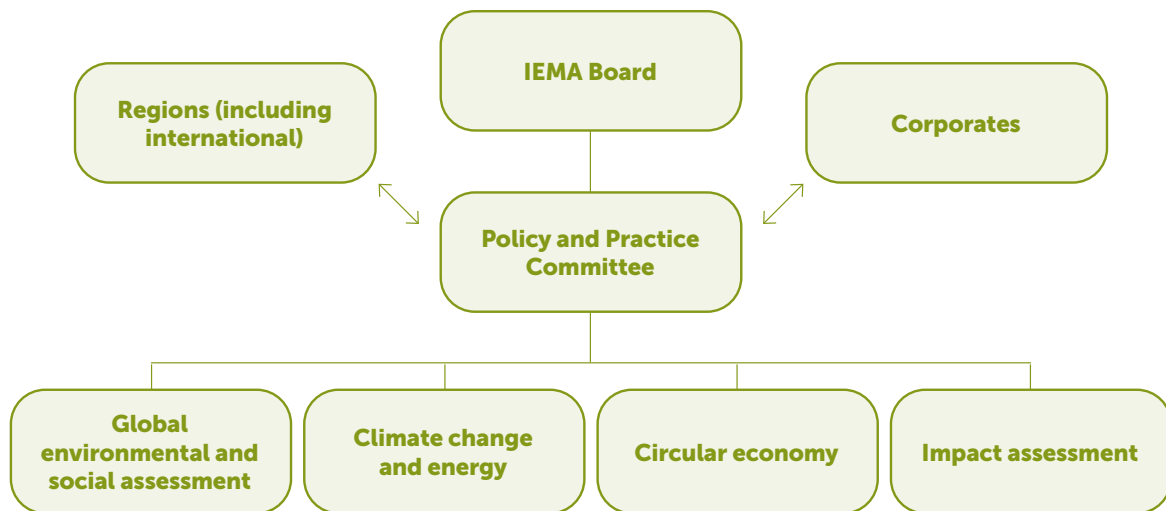


Figure 2: A potential position for the Policy and Practice Committee within the existing IEMA structure

Policy and practice governance case study – Royal Academy of Engineering

- At the Royal Academy of Engineering there are a number of operating committees that sit underneath its Trustee Board. This includes the Engineering Policy Centre Committee (EPCC) whose purpose is, on behalf of the Trustee Board, to provide strategic oversight and thought leadership to the engineering policy and public affairs work of the Academy and National Engineering Policy Centre (NEPC). The EPCC has power to initiate activities within the remit of its terms of reference. It reports its activities quarterly to the Trustee Board via a written report and the Chair is asked to give a verbal and detailed update to the Board once a year.
- Cross-working and collaboration across operating committees is encouraged and a separate Operating Committees Group (OCG) is a formal way of bringing the chairs of the operating committees together.
- The EPCC directly approves and signs-off major policy reports and positions to ensure it delivers high quality, evidence based, timely policy impact to stakeholders.
- There are a number of policy working groups which report to the EPCC. Their composition is driven by the needs of specific policy projects, but usually consists of specialist engineering expertise and working groups include representatives from partners of the NEPC. Their responsibility is to support the development of the technical content of policy outputs and to steer and support delivery of policy projects. They are an integral part of the sign-off process, as they validate and challenge the technical content. Once cleared by the working group, the policy product goes to the EPCC for approval. An internal Academy staff review also takes place usually in parallel with the working group sign-off.
- For government policy consultations and other agile work, one member from the EPCC may be nominated to provide sign-off, without the need for full involvement of the EPCC. Internal Academy staff sign-off is still required. Such work may be overseen by a working group or delivered directly by staff in consultation with relevant experts.
- The above structure and processes provide proportionate checks and balances on the quality of content and project delivery. The EPCC reviews its own terms of reference annually and makes recommendations for improvement to the Trustee Board. An ongoing focus is to ensure each level of governance includes the appropriate diversity of voices within its representation.

Establishing the Policy and Practice Committee

To establish the Policy and Practice Committee it is proposed that an expression-of-interest exercise is delivered in Q4 2021, whereby IEMA members would be invited to apply for one of ten positions (that reflect the composition set out above). It is expected that appointments would be made before the end of 2021.

Applicants would be required to outline their suitability to become a Policy and Practice Committee member as part of the expression-of-interest exercise by answering the questions below. This exercise would, of course, be subject to the IEMA Board approving the recommendation to create a Policy and Practice Committee in the first place.

- What role do you believe an IEMA Policy and Practice Committee should play?
- What experience of delivering policy and practice outputs do you have?
- What other relevant skills and knowledge do you have?

The expression-of-interest exercise would require extensive communications and campaigns support to attract members from across the IEMA membership and to clearly articulate what is required in terms of commitment and diversity.



Policy and practice steering groups going forward

Another key focus of the engagement activities delivered in the review was to build an understanding of members' thoughts about the terms of reference documents that govern member steering groups undertaking policy and practice work. These groups are:

- Circular economy
- Climate change and energy
- Global environmental and social assessment
- Impact assessment (and its subgroups).

Member evidence

In the three member workshops, concern was expressed in relation to the transparency of terms of reference documents for the groups listed (i.e. their availability to members). Following the review, it was felt that these documents and others for any new groups that should emerge must be made easily accessible.

In terms of developing some consistency across terms of reference documents for steering groups undertaking policy and practice work, the workshops revealed many recurring themes. These themes were used to inform the member survey, which asked members to choose how important each one was (see Table 2).

Table 2 shows that the theme which most consistently scored a 'high importance' rating in the survey was that there should be a clear and standard definition of purpose (90% of survey respondents felt this was of high importance). This was followed by the 'Membership is diverse and inclusive' theme in second place (approx. 77%) and then the 'Annual programme of agreed outputs reviewed' theme in third place (approx. 61%).

Appendix 3 sets out a proposed (standard) terms of reference document for all existing and future member steering groups that are principally engaged in policy and practice activities. This reflects the key themes that emerged through the member workshops and survey, plus a desk-based assessment of the existing terms of reference documents for IEMA member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities.

Terms of reference theme	Low importance	Medium importance	High importance	Don't know
All members appointed with defined terms	12%	37%	45%	6%
All members assigned specific roles (thematic and operational)	17%	40%	39%	4%
Annual programme of agreed outputs reviewed	3%	34%	61%	2%
Clear and standard definition of purpose	1%	8%	90%	1%
Mechanism for removing members who fail to contribute	21%	41%	32%	6%
Mechanism for reporting back into IEMA HQ	3%	41%	55%	1%
Membership is diverse and inclusive	3%	16%	77%	4%
Membership organised in a number of overlapping terms for continuity	7%	48%	40%	6%
Succession planning	6%	40%	50%	4%
Terms of reference periodically reviewed	6%	48%	45%	1%

Table 2: (Member survey question 4) Please highlight how important you think each theme is by selecting from: Low importance / Medium importance / High importance / Don't know

It is recommended that existing steering groups engaged in policy and practice agree an annual programme of work with the Policy and Practice Committee. This would aid the steering groups as they continue to deliver new content and activities relevant to their defined thematic areas, including the development of new policy positions, reports, guidance and the like. Engagement with relevant member networks and the wider membership in general should be used in the delivery of outputs.

In instances where IEMA already has established policy positions, its policy team would have the autonomy to engage in relevant activities, such as government consultations and select committee inquiries, without the need for member consultation.

In cases where it is determined by the Policy and Practice Committee that a programme of work is required in thematic areas not covered by existing IEMA steering groups, the Committee would take the decision to create a new steering group to do so. If, on the other hand, it is determined that a specific project is required in a thematic area not covered by existing IEMA steering groups, it would be more appropriate for the Policy and Practice Committee to form a dedicated task and finish group.

Appendix 4 puts forward a potential process flow for the initiation, delivery and sign-off of written policy and practice outputs. The process flow captures the role of member steering groups in policy and practice development and how they might best interact with the IEMA staff policy team.

Content IEMA should produce

The member survey also contained questions regarding the type of content that IEMA should prioritise (i.e. policy or practice). It was important to gather this insight to ensure that IEMA's policy and practice outputs continue to be tailored to the needs of members.

Over 50% of those members surveyed suggested that they would like to see a roughly even balance of policy and practice outputs going forward. It is recommended that this is factored into the planning processes and decisions that relevant member steering groups (and the Policy and Practice Committee) undertake. It should also be kept under review.

Summary of recommendations

This Governance Review recommends:

Policy and Practice Committee

- A Policy and Practice Committee should be established to act as a conduit between the IEMA Board and member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities.
- The Policy and Practice Committee should provide strategic and joined-up oversight for all relevant activities and periodically report on progress to the IEMA Board.
- Membership of the Committee should be diverse and it is recommended that the IEMA Board undertakes analysis to establish what this would mean in practice.

Member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activity

- Member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities should have standardised terms of reference documents that commit them to producing an annual programme of activity.
- While member steering groups will each have a different thematic focus, they should share a common purpose of 'transforming the world to sustainability'.
- The membership of these groups should be diverse and it is recommended that the IEMA Board undertakes analysis to establish what this would mean in practice.

Policy and practice content development

- All policy and practice content delivery must follow a standardised process flow for initiation and sign-off.
- IEMA should produce a roughly even balance of policy and practice content.

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Terms of reference for the IEMA Policy and Practice Governance Review

The following includes the basis, initial aims and scope of IEMA's Policy and Practice Governance Review. It also sets out the expectations for the member-led review steering group.

Basis for the Governance Review

IEMA is a recognised authority and voice for environment and sustainability professionals. In this capacity the organisation is engaged in a range of practice, policy and advocacy work on behalf of its expert membership to effect positive change in government and industry.

Underpinning this activity is a range of member boards, committees and working groups. Over time, the number of these different groups has grown. They are constituted in different ways, with different remits; some have terms of reference, some do not. Our volunteers are central to the work we do, and we are extremely grateful to our members for the time they give for this important work. However, the current situation risks the clarity of IEMA's work and calls into question the accountability of certain activities to the wider membership.

As the membership continues to grow, it is critical that the right governance and operational structures are established to ensure that IEMA's policy and practice work continues to serve all its members in the most transparent and accountable way.

Initial aims

The aim of the review is to examine current governance processes that sit around the development of policy and practice content to establish their ongoing fitness for purpose and to make recommendations on how these might be reformed to improve their effectiveness for all members.

This will ultimately lead to better governance structures and accountability for these activities.

It should be noted that IEMA has applied to the Privy Council to become a chartered body, following overwhelming member support for our draft Charter and By-laws. Although the application has yet to be determined, we remain committed to this way forward. The outcomes of this current Governance Review can be implemented in IEMA's current form or through the proposed Royal Charter.

Scope

The scope of the review will cover all member groups that produce or input on content and outputs under the IEMA umbrella. In addition, it will consider other opportunities for creating formal member groups and structures for IEMA activities not currently covered by the existing governance arrangements.

This includes, but is not restricted to, policy and practice groups, regional and international committees, corporate member groups and the various ways in which each of these interacts with the Board and other central parts of the IEMA hierarchy, such as the Strategic Advisory Council (SAC). It follows that the role of the Board and SAC in the governance of IEMA's policy and practice work will also be in scope. Separately, a review of Board governance will take place following the granting of chartership.

Role of the Governance Review steering group

The role of the steering group is to:

- agree a project plan and key deliverables for the review
- assist in member engagement and other evidence-gathering activities
- advise on the development of the final review report and its recommendations
- sign-off on the report prior to its submission to the IEMA Board.

A final report and recommendations will be submitted to the IEMA Board before the end of 2021. An associated project plan has been compiled, which maps out the key steps for delivering the project.

Appendices

Appendix 2 – Proposed terms of reference for the Policy and Practice Committee

Role	The Committee is the conduit between the main IEMA Board and those relevant member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities (to whom it provides strategic oversight). Overall, the Policy and Practice Committee will be guided by the principle of 'transforming the world to sustainability'.
Remit and responsibilities	<p>In fulfilling its role, the Policy and Practice Committee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• advise on key themes and areas of focus for member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities• ensure that the work of all relevant member steering groups is effectively joined-up• agree an annual programme of work for all relevant member steering groups• review the progress of relevant steering groups in delivering their annual work programme and report to the IEMA Board• provide and receive advice from the IEMA Board on policy and practice priorities, to help guide IEMA's overall business plan and operations• comply with the Corporate Governance Code adopted by the IEMA Board.
Status	The Policy and Practice Committee is a subcommittee of the IEMA Board.
Membership and constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Policy and Practice Committee will comprise of 10 IEMA members and be chaired by a member of the IEMA Board (who is appointed by the IEMA Board).• The Policy and Practice Committee will include representation from: policy and practice steering groups, regions, international, corporate, fellows and futures groups.• Membership will be for a fixed period of three years and decided by member elections.• Membership will be diverse and inclusive.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Policy and Practice Committee will meet four times a year.• The Chair will set the agenda, with relevant and appropriate papers produced by IEMA's policy team and circulated at least seven days in advance of each meeting.• Any Policy and Practice Committee member who misses three consecutive meetings (without mitigating circumstances) will be deemed to have resigned from the Committee, with substitute attendees not permitted.• Minutes and actions will be documented by a member of IEMA's policy team and agreed by the Chair, with circulation to take place within two weeks of each meeting.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair of the Policy and Practice Committee will report to the IEMA Board at each of its quarterly meetings.• The focus of this reporting will include a progress update on the annual work programmes of relevant member steering groups, with meeting minutes also included in the papers for IEMA Board meetings.• Matters requiring IEMA Board approval shall be highlighted in the minutes and brought to the attention of the Board by the Chair of the Policy and Practice Committee.

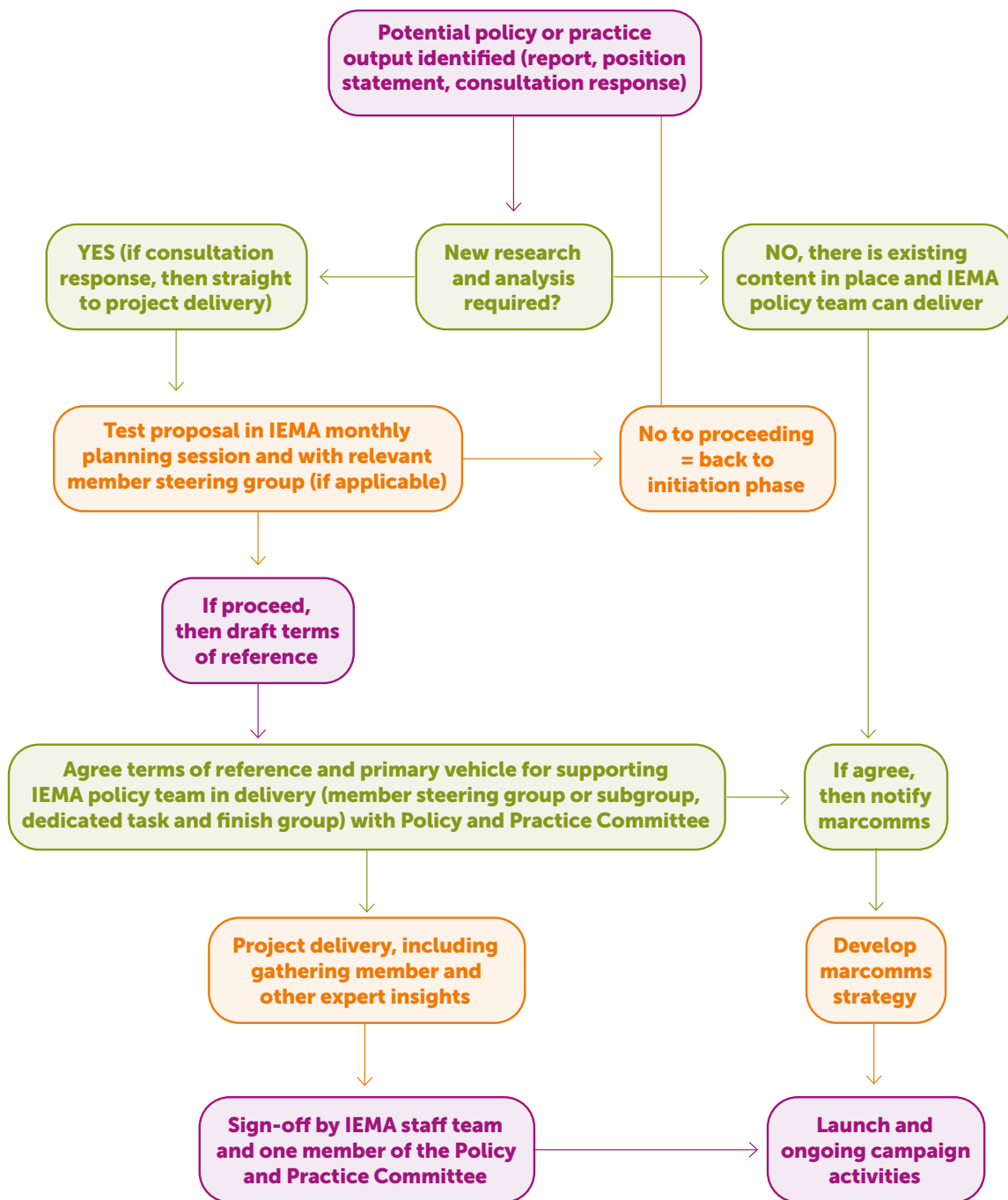
Appendices

Appendix 3 – Proposed (standard) terms of reference document for member steering groups engaged in policy and practice activities

Role	In the area of XXX the steering group will deliver policy and practice activities for the benefit of IEMA members and to positively impact government policymaking. Overall, the steering group will be guided by the principle of 'transforming the world to sustainability'.
Remit and responsibilities	<p>In fulfilling its role, the steering group will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• deliver an annual work programme of policy and practice activity that is agreed with the Policy and Practice Committee• report on progress in delivering this work programme at each of the Policy and Practice Committee's quarterly meetings• provide and receive advice from the Policy and Practice Committee• comply with the Corporate Governance Code adopted by the IEMA Board.
Status	The steering group is accountable to the Policy and Practice Committee.
Membership and constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The steering group will comprise of between 10 and 15 members and be chaired by a member appointed by the steering group.• Members of the steering group will have prerequisite expertise and knowledge, and sit for a fixed period of three years.• Members will be allocated specific thematic (i.e. subject-specific, based on a member's area of expertise) and operational (i.e. events, communications and so on) roles as part of their membership.• Membership will be determined through member network elections or via member expressions of interest where there is not an existing network in place.• Membership will be diverse and inclusive.
Meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The steering group will meet six times a year.• The Chair will set the agenda, with relevant and appropriate papers produced by IEMA's policy team and circulated at least seven days in advance of each meeting.• Any steering group member who misses three consecutive meetings (without mitigating circumstances) will be deemed to have resigned from the steering group, with substitute attendees not permitted.• Minutes and actions will be documented by a member of IEMA's policy team and agreed by the Chair, with circulation to take place within two weeks of each meeting.
Reporting	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Chair of the steering group will report to the Policy and Practice Committee at each of its quarterly meetings.• The focus of this reporting will include a progress update on the annual work programme of the steering group.• Matters requiring Policy and Practice Committee approval shall be highlighted in the minutes and brought to the attention of the Committee by the steering group Chair.

Appendices

Appendix 4 – Process flow for written policy and practice outputs





About IEMA

IEMA is the professional body for everyone working in environment and sustainability. We're committed to supporting, encouraging and improving the confidence and performance, profile and recognition of all these professionals. We do this by providing resources and tools, research and knowledge sharing along with high-quality formal training and qualifications to meet the real world needs of members from their first steps on the career ladder, right to the very top. We believe that, together, we can change perceptions and attitudes about the relevance and vital importance of sustainability as a progressive force for good. Together, we're transforming the world to sustainability.

Join us at [iema.net](https://www.iema.net)

