

**EUROPEAN YOUTH PARLIAMENT SWEDEN**

# **Guidelines for working groups**



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**General Disclaimer :** *The following document does not have to be followed strictly, but rather acts as guidance and support for members of working groups in order to achieve maximum work efficiency. If these guidelines are in conflict with a by-law, policy, or any decision made by the National Board or annual meeting then those documents or decisions supersede these guidelines. When referring to the working groups, WG should be used.*

## 1. Introduction

Most of the time, while working with a specific portfolio on the National Board, the workload requires independence. Even though it is something positive, and each member of the National Board can work at their own pace, a lot of work gets done individually by the person responsible, while a lot of time it requires a group effort. An example of such can be the BNC preparation. While preparing for such an event is handled and led by the International Coordinator, making it easier, more efficient, and enjoyable process if it is handled together with other board members. This also provides a better insight to the rest of the board when more people are handling such affairs. Future National Board members of EYP Sweden will have access to what has been done in previous years. As the work of the WGs will be documented and evaluated once it is done, it will provide future National Board members with the insight of what worked best, and what has/ can be improved. WGs refers to a group of people working together on a specific subject, e.g. this document, in order to make sure that there is an equal division of work among board members. It is strongly encouraged that when working on subjects such as the NSP and regional development, relevant individuals should be contacted such as Regional Board members, or Head Organisers of previous sessions to achieve maximum efficiency and insight.

**It is important to note and emphasise that this document is always open for improvement, and it is in no way, shape, or form should be followed strictly, its purpose is only to provide guidance when forming WGs.**

## 2. Leadership

As a working group consists of a range of different people with different backgrounds, positions and responsibilities in EYP Sweden, it is important for WGs to implement a system of pseudo-leadership to balance the discussions. This does not mean that in case of differing opinions the person in the leadership position will have the final word, but rather will take care of the tasks and responsibilities related to chairing the WG. This implies calling in the meetings in the



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previously agreed frequency, giving the general direction the discussions of the WG should follow, writing down the minutes and ideas brought up during the meetings and being the spokesperson in regards to the relevant individuals. Unlike chairing a committee during a session, the WG chair is also expected to take part in the discussion and share their own point of view to the group. This aims to foster a wider range of opinions and discussions within the WG. Furthermore, it is necessary to have a group leader as they will not only focus on the output of the project, but also the team that comes together for it. Hence the position of WG chair. Finally, it is highly recommended for the person chairing the working group to have the relevant and necessary experience and knowledge in EYP to take on the responsibility of the leadership position.

### **3. The Beginning of a Working Group**

#### **3.1. Timespan**

The length of a working group is the first major decision that has to be made by the relevant individuals. That decision has to take several factors into account. The first is the availability of potential WG members. It's hard for many members to make long term commitments since potential WG members have a lot of other activities ongoing such as, but limited, to attending sessions or studying. However not allocating enough time can lead to a situation where everyone must allocate a lot of time and energy during a shorter timespan which can lead to a high amount of stress. The length of a WG should also ensure that there is a consistent amount of work during the WG existnes. This is to prevent WG members from taking on other commitments because they believe that the workload will remain at the same, very low, level when in fact the workload might increase with time. Another factor to take into account when deciding on the timespan of a WG is the scale of the objective into account. A WG tasked with drafting guidelines for example does not need a lot of time since the task is relatively light whereas a WG tasked with reforming the NSP will require a lot of work and thus need a longer timeframe.

#### **3.2 Size**

The size of the WG is as consequential as its timespan. Its size of the WG should primarily take major factors into consideration. Those are: the urgency and the importance of WG. A WG which deals with an urgent matter should strive to have a smaller WG. This is for two reasons: it will take less time to gather and select members of the WG thus giving more time for doing the work. The second point is that there will be less of a need of coordinating the WG. However a WG with a large time frame can benefit from having a larger WG since that can lead to more perspectives from WG members and lessen everyone's workloads. The second factor was the importance of the WG. The rule here is quite simple: the more important and the more work a WG needs the larger the WG



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needs to be and vice versa. It is however important to note that there shouldn't be too many WG members since that can be hard for a chair to coordinate and it can make it difficult for everyone to properly state their opinion on the matter at hand.

### **3.3 Briefings**

Before selection of any WG members can be made it is important to properly brief prospective members. This is done in order to ensure that all prospective WG members know what they are getting themselves into. The brief should contain information concerning the expected hours per week that are needed, it should also contain a note if the general time dedication shifts during the WG time span, as well as an explanation of what the final product of the WG. Make sure to be honest and transparent, the work of the WG for example involves a lot of writing. It is also important to state that the relevant individuals is open for questions about details, especially if it is possible for members to apply. If a prospective WG member gets accepted to the WG the chair or other relevant individuals should provide the WG member some background information on the subject. This background information should not take a lot of time or energy from the chair to produce since it will only be something for the WG member to dig when they are waiting for the first meeting.

### **3.4 Selection**

#### **3.4.1 Selection Process**

Selection of WG members is of the utmost importance. The selection should be handled by the relevant authorities, or by the chair alone if that is deemed fitting for the WG. It is also important to note that the selection can be handled in many different ways. If it's deemed appropriate the relevant authorities can simply reach out to those members who are deemed appropriate. It can also be handled in such a way where interested members can apply through a google form or some other program and the relevant individuals make decisions much like a sessions selection panel.

#### **3.4.2 Criteria for Selection**

The members of a WG should be representative of the actors and stakeholders that the work of the WG reflects. This means that a WG which aims at reforming some part of the NSP should involve previous Head Organisers and NC representatives since those are the actors would be most closely affected by any change to the NSP and have the relevant experience. Other factors to consider are reliability, experience and availability. It's worth noting that experience should not be a necessity to be a part of any WG. This is because WG can also serve as a way for members to get more engaged and get a better understanding of EYP Sweden. Thus making WG participate in the capacity building of the organisation.



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### **3.5. First Meeting**

The first meeting is the most important for the WG and has the most objectives. The first and the simplest part is just to introduce all WG members to each other, this can be unnecessary if everyone knows each other. The second point is to introduce and explain the purpose of the WG as well as the chair explaining how the WG will work, with a potential discussion on the subject if that is deemed necessary and the general outline of work as well as clarifying the role of the chair. It's important to note that the chair involves the rest of the WG and gathers their view. The WG should also come to agreement on how frequent the WG wants meetings to be and for how long. It is also important for the WG to get some sort of work done in order to start building momentum. This should be done even if an extra meeting is required to properly get the work started. The meeting should be properly prepared by the chair in order to minimise the chance that anything gets forgotten.

## **4. Managing a WG**

### **4.1. Meetings**

Before the start of any meeting, it is important to always have an agenda that has been shared with the WG. The chair of the WG, as mentioned previously, is the one in charge of such a task and to note down what is being discussed, but also actively engaging in discussions. The agenda and documentation of the discussions are important to have since people who are not involved in the WGs, e.g. National Board members can have access to what is being worked on, and what future steps the WG will take. Furthermore, sharing updates of the work process with parties that are not involved is strongly encouraged, and it should not be too frequent for the sake of relevancy.

As mentioned previously, the frequency of meetings should be agreed on upon the first meeting of the WG. Different projects will require different amount of meetings, so it is important to reflect on the amount of meetings needed to finalise any sort of project.

Please note that any meeting regarding the WG should be held online for the sake of efficiency and accessibility for all members of the WG. This ensures that meetings are not overly super time-consuming and can be participated in from anywhere.



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## 4.2. Division of Work

When the first meeting is conducted and all members are aware of what shall be worked on, an equal workload must be divided. It is necessary that nobody takes more responsibilities than they can handle, it is also important to have a clear structure of the work every participant is going to have. Having a good balance is essential when working on documents, so that one thing does not take precedence over the other. In situations where somebody takes more responsibilities than they can handle, clear communication between the WG is crucial for the sake of efficiency, no work gets left undone, but most importantly, for the sake of the welfare of participants. The WG chairperson should make sure that the workload is not overwhelming for the participants, and should be a person with whom participants can talk openly.

## 5. Finalising and Evaluating the WG

### 5.1. Presenting the WG's output

Following the process in which the WG produced their duty, their findings and recommendations shall be presented to the relevant individuals. As the pool of topics discussed can be very broad, the relevant individuals can range from being the National or Regional Boards as well as the Annual meeting of EYP Sweden too. The WG's output can therefore be but not limited to:

- a policy proposal,
- a set of recommendations,
- a set of guidelines.

Furthermore, the aforementioned presentation to the relevant individuals can happen as but not limited to:

- an online town hall open to all members of EYP Sweden,
- a presentation to the National or Regional Boards during a board meeting.

In addition to the mentioned above the working documents will be made public and uploaded to EYP Sweden's website. Shall the WG work with topics which need a certain degree of privacy, they are expected to provide an unmarked version of their work to the relevant individuals but have the right to hide information in the version made public. Finally should the WG members want, their work can also be announced on other media platforms such as EYP Sweden Member's Slack, Instagram **or LinkedIn**.

### 5.2. Evaluating the WG

The final step in the closing of a WG is the step where the WG's dynamics, discussions and working spirit is reflected upon. It is highly recommended to organise a separate call whose main purpose is evaluating the WG at least one week following the presentation of the WG's output to the



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relevant individuals. The purpose of this reflection is not to evaluate the quality of the output and the involvement of the WG members, but rather the but not limited to:

- WG procedure was followed,
- Efficiency of discussions,
- Issues faced and resolved,
- Communication inside the WG,
- Teamwork and division of work,

By doing this post process reflection, the WG aims to learn from their experience and make future WG benefit from their learning. Following a group discussion and reflection, the Chair of the WG is then expected to write a comprehensive evaluation report which will be presented to the relevant individuals as well but will not be made publicly available on EYP Sweden's website. It is important to note that the WG evaluation is something completely different from the usual evaluations from sessions, and therefore session evaluations should not be considered as the template to follow when it comes to their format and layout. **The evaluation of the WG should always aim to improve this document and make future recommendations.**