

Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce Terms of Reference

Approval

Terms of Reference endorsed by Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Steering Group on: 8 March 2024

Acknowledgement

Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples are the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef and the land and rivers which join the Reef and flow into the sea.

This Taskforce Terms of Reference acknowledges and supports the rights and interests, possessed under traditional laws/Lore and customs, observed by Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples that hold cultural connections to the land and waters of the Great Barrier Reef Region.

Through the creation of the Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce, this Taskforce Terms of Reference outlines matters relevant to the advancement of rights and interests of the Reef's Traditional Owners and their aspirations for a 'Healthy Reef and Healthy People'.

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Note: in this document, 'Traditional Owner' refers to the Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef land and sea Country. In some parts of the Reef and across the Reef's catchments, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples refer to themselves as Bama, Murri or other language names, Traditional Custodians or First Nations Peoples. A glossary of terms used in this Taskforce Terms of Reference is provided in Table 1.

Executive Summary

The creation of a Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce (Taskforce) is a key recommendation of the [Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan](#) (Reef TO Plan) launched in November 2022.

The establishment of the Taskforce is a way for Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef to work with each other through a dedicated governance process, and engage with Reef 2050 partners and other stakeholders, through effective coordination and delivery of the Reef TO Plan. The Taskforce is a Traditional Owner-led knowledge and skills-based collective. It is not a representative body.

This *Taskforce Terms of Reference* together with the *Taskforce Governance Charter* and *Host Corporate Services Plan* provide the framework for the Taskforce's establishment and operation.

In summary:

- The Reef TO Plan provides an operational platform to coordinate the delivery of actions required to achieve the Traditional Owners' vision for a 'Healthy Reef and Healthy People'. It builds on the strong and proud history of Traditional Owners voicing their priorities for the Reef and contains 71 actions, spanning six work areas.
- The Taskforce is responsible for overseeing delivery of the Reef TO Plan, and has three key priorities:
 - i. Engaging with Traditional Owners on options for a Sea Country Alliance (Reef-wide and regionally) and implementing the preferred option.
 - ii. Overseeing the delivery of strategic policy and capacity building actions in the Implementation Plan while a Sea Country Alliance is being established.
 - iii. Monitoring and reporting on the delivery of Traditional Owners actions in this Plan as part of the broader Reef 2050 integrated monitoring and reporting.
- Effective engagement and communication with the Reef's Traditional Owners will be central to the Taskforce. In carrying out its functions the Taskforce will be guided by and act in the best interests of Traditional Owners across the Reef. This Taskforce Terms of Reference includes the standards to which the Taskforce will operate in carrying out its community engagement functions.
- The Taskforce will work closely with government agencies and non-government organisations to elevate the priorities of Traditional Owners and drive the system-level changes needed to build genuine partnerships and realise Traditional Owner aspirations for genuine co-governance, co-decision making and Traditional Owner-led approaches¹.
- The Taskforce will be supported by an independent Secretariat and a Coordination Unit. It will operate for up to three years or until such time as a Sea Country Alliance is established (whichever is the earliest).
- As an unincorporated body of individuals, the Taskforce, including the Coordination Unit will operate within a host organisation to provide legal and financial accountability.

The Reef TO Plan provides important background on the establishment of the Taskforce, including information on the Traditional Owner Steering Group – a group of individuals with relevant expertise who oversaw development of the Reef TO Plan. This Taskforce Terms of Reference should be read alongside the Reef TO Plan and its supporting documents.

¹ Traditional Owner-led approaches, include but are not limited to, self-determined governance and management approaches in line with cultural obligations and customary rights and interests.

Glossary of Terms

In this document terms used have the same meaning as those used in the *Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan* unless otherwise specified. A summary of the most commonly used terms is provided below.

TERM	MEANING
Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander	An Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person is a person of Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander descent who identifies as an Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (person) and is accepted as such by the community in which they live. (Adopted from s51 (25) of the High Court of Australia Act (1983))
All Parties	Refers to the Traditional Owner Taskforce Members, the General Manager, Coordination Unit Members and Host Organisation employees engaged for the delivery of the Traditional Owner Taskforce purpose and priorities.
catchments	Refers to the Great Barrier Reef's 35 river catchments which extend across Cape York, the Wet Tropics, Burdekin, Mackay-Whitsunday, Fitzroy and Burnett Mary regions. The Reef 2050 Plan uses the singular term 'Catchment' to refer to all 35 river basins that flow into the Great Barrier Region.
co-management	To share the responsibility for management by jointly undertaking actions needed to achieve given objectives. Source: Adapted from <i>Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions, 2018</i> .
co-governance	To share overarching governance by jointly deciding what the objectives are, sharing power, authority and responsibility, and being jointly held accountable for outcomes. Source: Adapted from <i>Traditional Owners of the Great Barrier Reef: The Next Generation of Reef 2050 Actions, 2018</i> .
Country	A person's land, sea, sky, rivers, sites, seasons, plants and animals; and place of heritage, belonging and spirituality is called 'Country'. The term 'Country' refers to the interdependent relationship between Traditional Owners and their ancestral lands and seas. Source: <i>Reef 2050 Plan, 2021-2050</i> .
Cultural expertise	Refers to the Indigenous ways of knowing-being-doing. This includes but is not limited to; Lore, custom, heritage, values, systems, traditions, relationships, and knowledge.
DCCEEW	Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water (Commonwealth)
governance	The processes that determine who decides what the objectives are, what to do to pursue them and with what means. Governance determines how those decisions are taken; who holds power, authority and responsibility; and who is (or should be) held accountable. Source: Adapted from <i>Governance for the Conservation of Nature, Borrini-Feyerabend and Hill, 2015</i> .
GBRF	Great Barrier Reef Foundation.
GBRMPA	Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (Commonwealth).
Grant Agreement	Refers to the Agreement between Pollination Foundation Limited and State of Queensland acting through the Department of Environment, Science and Innovation in relation to hosting the Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce.
Host Organisation	Refers to Pollination Foundation Limited.
Host Corporate Services Plan	The document agreed to by the Traditional Owner Steering Group for the Host Organisation's corporate services to support the establishment and operations of the Taskforce.
management	Is about what is done in pursuit of given objectives; the means and actions to achieve such objectives. Source: <i>Governance for the Conservation of Nature, Borrini-Feyerabend and Hill, 2015</i> . It includes functions such as planning, policy, field operations, monitoring, evaluation and reporting.
OGBRWH	Office of Great Barrier Reef and World Heritage, Queensland Department of Environment and Science.

Reef	Refers to the Great Barrier Reef as depicted in the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan, Figure 1 page 6.
Reef 2050 Plan	Refers to the Reef 2050 Long Term Sustainability Plan – Australia’s long-term strategy for protecting and managing the Great Barrier Reef.
Reef TO Plan	Refers to the Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan.
Term	The term commences on the date of signing the Grant Agreement and concludes on 30 June 2026 (or such further term as agreed by the parties to the Grant Agreement). The Taskforce may be dissolved earlier if the establishment of a Sea Country Alliance occurs before 30 June 2026.
Taskforce	Includes the Taskforce Members, General Manager and Coordination Unit (the Coordination Unit includes the Secretariat).
Taskforce Governance Charter	The Taskforce Governance Charter set out the framework for the Taskforce’s establishment and operation. It provides important context for the Taskforce’s operation, outlining its purpose, priorities, structure, and high-level roles and responsibilities. It also outlines the roles and responsibilities of Key Partners, Traditional Owner Steering Group members and the Host Organisation.
Taskforce Members	The Traditional Owner Co-Chairs, Traditional Owner Members, non-voting non-Traditional Owner Members and the non-voting General Manager who have responsibility to provide strategic direction and cultural advice for the Taskforce, as set out in the Taskforce Terms of Reference.
Taskforce Terms of Reference	This document. The Taskforce Terms of Reference sets out more detail in relation to governance arrangements of the Taskforce’s operations including the composition of the Taskforce Membership, detailed roles and responsibilities of Taskforce Members, Co-Chairs, General Manager, Coordination Unit and Secretariat, meeting procedures, decision making, Code of Conduct, Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality and Privacy, Termination and Resignation of Taskforce Members.
Traditional Owners	Refers to the Traditional Owners of Great Barrier Reef sea Country and land and coast. Traditional Owners are the Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples who have inherent rights and connections to their apical ancestors and ongoing traditional and cultural association with the land and sea, and possess rights and interests under Traditional and Customary Lore and Australian and Queensland government laws. Source: <i>Reef 2050 Traditional Owner Implementation Plan, 2022</i> .
Traditional Owner led approaches	Traditional Owner-led approaches, include but are not limited to Traditional Owners having positions of influence, and self-determined governance and management approaches in line with cultural obligations and customary rights and interests.
Traditional Owner Steering Group	The group of individuals with relevant expertise who oversaw development of the Reef TO Plan and were responsible for bringing the Taskforce initiative to life.

Table 1: Glossary of acronyms and commonly used terms

Preamble

The establishment of a Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce to develop an independent Sea Country Alliance is a milestone moment for the Great Barrier Reef, and all communities that respect, care for, connect with and rely on it.

This arrangement reflects in Western governance what Traditional Owners across the Great Barrier Reef have been doing since time immemorial, caring for Country, kinship, family and Community. This asserts the inherent rights of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people under the *United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous People*, to Country, to their Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property, and their Data. This pathway is crucial to the right to continue to practice and pass on culture and knowledge, for current and future generations.

In this pathway, Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owners, governments and non-government organisations jointly:

- (i) **Acknowledge that** the Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce having self-determination over the operations, direction and future of the Taskforce is essential to an eventual, independent Sea Country Alliance;
- (ii) **Acknowledge that** Governments and non-government organisations supporting the Taskforce require a degree of oversight and accountability over funding and reporting;
- (iii) **Acknowledge that** a Host Organisation is acting as an enabler to support this transitional period towards an independent entity;
- (iv) **Commit to** work together to appropriately and reasonably balance this potential tension; and
- (v) **Commit to** work together in good faith, effectively and respectfully, as this is imperative for self-determination, and mutual social, environmental, and economic benefits. This benefits all Australians, to preserve and fight for the largest living structure on the planet.

Purpose of this document

The creation of a Great Barrier Reef Traditional Owner Taskforce (**'Taskforce'**) is a key recommendation of the Reef TO Plan. Its purpose is to elevate the aspirations of Reef Traditional Owners for a 'Healthy Reef and Healthy People' and advance key imperatives required to translate these aspirations into outcomes.

This Taskforce Terms of Reference sets out the detail in relation to governance arrangements of the Taskforce's operations including the composition of the Taskforce Membership, detailed roles and responsibilities of Taskforce Members, Co-Chairs, General Manager, Coordination Unit and Secretariat, meeting procedures, decision making, Code of Conduct, Conflicts of Interest, Confidentiality and Privacy, Termination and Resignation of Taskforce Members. The *Taskforce Governance Charter* set out the framework for the Taskforce's establishment and operation. It provides important context for the Taskforce's operation, outlining its purpose, priorities, structure, and high-level roles and responsibilities. It also outlines the roles and responsibilities of Key Partners, Traditional Owner Steering Group members and the Host Organisation.

This Taskforce Terms of Reference aims to ensure that All Parties have a common understanding of the Taskforce's governance and operation. All Parties involved with or working with the Taskforce in any capacity related to the exercise of its functions agree to comply by this Taskforce Terms of Reference. Where there is a conflict between this Taskforce Terms of Reference and the Grant Agreement, the Grant Agreement will prevail.

The Taskforce will annually review this Taskforce Terms of Reference, to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose.

Any changes to the Taskforce Terms of Reference require approval by the Taskforce and Host Organisation. Formatting or minor changes may be approved by the Taskforce Co-Chairs and/or the General Manager in consultation with the Host Organisation.

1. Taskforce

The Taskforce is made up of two parts, Taskforce Members and Taskforce Coordination Unit. It will work for up-to three years or sooner if a Sea Country Alliance is established. The Taskforce will operate in-line with these Terms of Reference, and in conjunction with the Taskforce Governance Charter and the Host Corporate Services Plan.

The purpose of the Taskforce is to oversee delivery of the Reef TO Plan.

The Taskforce has three key priorities:

1. Engaging with Traditional Owners on options for a Sea Country Alliance (Reef-wide and regionally) and implementing the preferred option.
2. Overseeing the delivery of strategic policy and capacity building actions in the Implementation Plan while a Sea Country Alliance is being established.
3. Monitoring and reporting on the delivery of Traditional Owners actions in this Plan as part of the broader Reef 2050 integrated monitoring and reporting.

The Taskforce is not a representative body and will work to Lore and Custom with true consultation done the right way, engaging with all Reef Traditional Owners at the grass roots level. It will not speak for, or on behalf of anyone or their Country - each mob will maintain their right and power to decide what is best for their Country.

The Taskforce respects that the Host Organisation has the legal and financial responsibility for the operations of the Taskforce.

2. Taskforce Membership

There are eight Taskforce Members with a minimum of five Reef Traditional Owners. All voting Members, including the two Co-Chairs (one male and one female), must be Reef Traditional Owners. Any non-voting members may be Queensland Inland Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander (first preference), Aboriginal and / or Torres Strait Islander (second preference) or non-Indigenous. The General Manager is a non-voting member. Additionally, if required to fill particular skills gaps, two positions may be non-voting members.

The Host Organisation is a formal Observer, attending Taskforce Member meetings (on request from Taskforce Co-Chairs) to provide guidance on implementation of Host Organisation policies and procedures, and when financial and/or legal matters require a decision.

All Taskforce Members, excluding the General Manager, are appointed on a contractor basis with the Host Organisation until the end of the term of the Taskforce or until a Sea Country Alliance has been established.

Taskforce Members are not appointed to represent particular regions or organisations but on the basis of their knowledge, lived experiences, skills and professional expertise in areas relevant to delivering the Taskforce's three priorities.

Taskforce Members may have expertise in the following areas:

- Cultural expertise
- Indigenous governance, rights and engagement
- Governance and legal frameworks
- Strategic policy and planning
- Partnerships and capacity building
- Multi-lateral agreement making
- Reef and catchment operations and management
- Indigenous knowledge systems
- Sustainable and/or innovative financing and investment
- Firm understanding of economic management
- Communication and engagement
- Technology, information management and innovation
- Education, skills development, employment and business enterprises.

Other expertise may be co-opted from outside the Taskforce Members to address a specific topic, including by engaging external consultants.

Membership is gender balanced (i.e., 50% male and 50% female) and may include gender neutral and/or gender diverse persons.

All reasonable efforts have been made to ensure that Traditional Owner Taskforce Members cover a diverse range of geographic locations along the length of the Great Barrier Reef, and that the Taskforce Members cover a range of age groups.

Alternates or proxies will not be permitted.

The Taskforce Members may establish sub-committees as required (for example a youth sub-committee to enable younger generations to have a voice in, and to contribute to, creating a strong and positive future for the Reef and its Traditional Owners; and to build leadership and strategic capability in Reef governance and management).

3. Taskforce role and responsibilities

3.1 Taskforce Members

Taskforce Members are responsible for:

- Providing strategic direction and cultural guidance on actions to deliver the Taskforce’s three key priorities.
- Providing advice in relation to the effective use of resources to deliver the Taskforce’s three key priorities.
- Providing strategic direction and cultural guidance on the Taskforce’s operational activities and monitoring performance reporting across its functions, including:
 - advising on, and endorsing, the Taskforce’s communication plan, annual work plans and budgets, and annual reports. Noting the annual work plan will identify key deliverables for each of the three key priorities of the Taskforce,
 - advising on risks associated with Taskforce activities and

- recommending the allocation of resources in line with the Taskforce’s budget.
- Attending and actively participating in Taskforce meetings:
 - attending meetings on time and reviewing all papers sent in advance of meetings,
 - adopting a strategic perspective on issues when providing direction and guidance on matters,
 - ensuring discussions remain focused on the Taskforce’s three key priorities, and
 - participating respectfully and constructively, sharing knowledge and insights, and adopting a solution-focused approach.
- Participating in key strategic meetings, workshops and forums on matters directly relevant to the Taskforce’s functions as set out in **Section 6.0** (Taskforce events).
- Fostering strong and productive working relationships with Australian and Queensland Government agencies responsible for the implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan and the Great Barrier Reef Foundation.
- Identifying and fostering other important partners, including Indigenous-led, other government and non-government organisations that can aid in the development of the Sea Country Alliance, the Futures Fund and implementation of the Reef TO Plan.
- Participating in or leading the establishment and/or the development and implementation of sub-committees and mentoring programs (e.g. Youth, Emerging Leaders).
- Contributing to the development of a Traditional Owner and stakeholder communication plan, encompassing culturally appropriate forms of communication.
- Communicating and promoting the Taskforce’s role in line with the Taskforce communication plan.

3.2 Co-Chairs

In this Terms of Reference, a role or responsibilities tasked to the Co-Chairs is taken to mean that only one of the Chairs has to exercise that function, for that outcome to be considered as completed.

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in **Section 3.1** for the Taskforce Members, the Co-Chairs are responsible for:

- Leading the Taskforce in carrying out its responsibilities, including ensuring the Taskforce operates in accordance with this Terms of Reference.
- Representing and speaking on behalf of the Taskforce at Traditional Owner, government agency and stakeholder meetings, workshops and forums.
- Chairing Taskforce meetings, including:
 - remaining impartial and ensuring business is managed without bias,
 - fostering a respectful, culturally appropriate and inclusive environment for discussions,
 - developing a strategic forward meeting calendar identifying specific matters for consideration,
 - endorsing draft agendas for circulation and approving final meeting agendas,
 - ensuring all members act in accordance with this Terms of Reference and its Code of Conduct, and that conflicts of interest, and any non-compliances, are managed appropriately,
 - ensuring discussions remain focused on advancing the Taskforce’s three high priority functions,
 - ensuring risks associated with Taskforce decisions are identified, discussed, managed, monitored and recorded appropriately in Taskforce meetings,
 - ensuring that conflicts are a standing agenda item, being declared at the start of each Taskforce meeting,
 - approving attendance of guest speakers, subject matter experts, advisors and or observers,

- reviewing and approving final minutes and the Taskforce’s public communique, and
- mediating disputes as they arise in meetings.
- Maintaining productive working relationships with Australian and Queensland government ministers responsible for the implementation of the Reef 2050 Plan.
- Participating in key strategic discussions with other Indigenous-led, government and non-government agency leads to promote the Taskforce’s role and foster partnership building.
- Preparing, delivering and/or endorsing media statements and communication materials on behalf of the Taskforce in consultation with Taskforce Members, including the Coordination Unit’s General Manager.
- Coordinating the Taskforce’s annual review and participating in the annual performance reviews of the General Manager.

The Co-Chairs may appoint an acting Co-Chair from the Taskforce membership if they are unable to attend a meeting.

3.3 General Manager

The General Manager’s role is to lead the operational management of the Taskforce’s three key priorities under the strategic direction and cultural guidance of the Taskforce Members and the legal and financial direction and guidance of the Host Organisation.

The General Manager may be a Reef Traditional Owner, Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander person, or non-Indigenous person but must have a high level of cultural competency and experience working with Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples. For a non-Indigenous person, it is expected the General Manager mentors and trains an Indigenous person as an ‘understudy’, preferably a Reef Traditional Owner, to be able to move into a leadership position within the Sea Country Alliance.

The General Manager, as part of the Taskforce Members, also contributes to setting the strategic direction and, together with the Co-Chairs, speaks on behalf of the Taskforce.

The General Manager is responsible for the operation of the Coordination Unit. They are responsible for ensuring policy and delivery systems are in place to enable the Taskforce to effectively deliver its three key priorities.

In addition to the responsibilities outlined in **Section 3.1** for Taskforce Members, the General Manager is responsible for:

- Maintaining a deep knowledge of Reef Traditional Owners’ aspirations and issues relevant to their advancement.
- Analysing problems and developing solution-focused strategies to advance Reef Traditional Owner aspirations in line with the Taskforce’s three priority functions.
- Engaging with Reef Traditional Owners and ensuring their views drive the development of options for a Sea Country Alliance and strategic policy and capacity building actions.
- Briefing the Taskforce Members on Traditional Owner engagement and work undertaken/commissioned to advance the Taskforce’s three key priorities.
- Responding to Reef Traditional Owner concerns on strategic matters related to the Taskforce three key priorities.

- Establishing and maintaining close working relationships with, and providing regular updates to, the Reef 2050 Executive Steering Group² members, key stakeholders and relevant subject matter experts.
- Building effective working relationships and partnerships with other Indigenous-led, government and non-government organisations that can assist in the delivery of the Taskforce’s three key priorities.
- Representing the views of the Taskforce at meetings, workshops and forums.
- Facilitating genuine dialogue between Reef Traditional Owners, and other Reef 2050 partners on key Reef TO Plan strategic actions, including what co-governance and co-management means and pathways to achieve both.
- Raising awareness of the Taskforce’s role and championing the aspirations of Reef Traditional Owners as outlined in the Reef TO Plan.
- Approval of and delivering media statements and communication materials for Reef Traditional Owners and other stakeholders on behalf of the Taskforce in consultation with the Co-Chairs and Taskforce Members.
- Establishing, leading and managing the operation of the Coordination Unit (see **Section 3.4**), including:
 - implementing a flexible and responsive structure, fit-for-purpose governance arrangements, and recruiting staff,
 - leading by example through modelling behavioural standards and ethics as set out in the Taskforce’s Code of Conduct,
 - ensuring Coordination Unit staff act in accordance with this Terms of Reference including its Guiding Principles and Code of Conduct,
 - leading a culturally inclusive, positive and productive working environment,
 - drafting the communication plan, annual work plans and annual budgets,
 - preparing regular implementation updates and performance reports to Taskforce Members and Host organisation,
 - co-designing with the Host Organisation, Taskforce specific policies and procedures and overseeing implementation,
 - identifying and managing risks and compliance with this Terms of Reference and Taskforce policies and procedures in accordance with the Host Organisation legal and financial responsibilities,
 - overseeing and coordinating Coordination Unit communications,
 - managing the proper use of funds in line with the Taskforce’s budget and regulatory requirements for approval by the Host Organisation,
 - acting in accordance with the direction of the Host Organisation as it relates to financial and legal matters, and
 - acting in accordance with the strategic direction and cultural guidance of Taskforce Members.

The General Manager will be appointed as an employee of the Host Organisation until the end of the term of the Taskforce or until a Sea Country Alliance has been established.

3.4 Coordination Unit

The role of the Coordination Unit is to coordinate the delivery of the Taskforce’s three key priorities under the strategic direction and cultural guidance of Taskforce Members, the operational leadership of the General Manager.

² The Reef 2050 Executive Steering Group comprises senior executives from the three Reef 2050 lead government agencies: the Commonwealth Department of Climate Change, Environment, Energy and Water, the Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority and Queensland Government Office of the Great Barrier Reef.

The work and responsibilities of the Coordination Unit will reflect the needs and interests of Reef Traditional Owners and be detailed in the Taskforce's annual work plans.

The Coordination Unit are employed by the Host Organisation until the end of the term or until the Sea Country Alliance is established. Appointments are competency-based with priority consideration given to Reef Traditional Owners first and non-Reef Traditional Owners second, whether they are Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander or non-Indigenous people.

3.5 Secretariat

The Taskforce will be supported by a Secretariat, within the Coordination Unit.

The Secretariat's role is to provide dedicated support to the Taskforce Members including:

- Supporting the Co-Chairs and General Manager to ensure the Taskforce Members operate in accordance with this Terms of Reference.
- Working with the Co-Chairs and General Manager to deliver effective Taskforce Members meetings.
- Maintaining a register of Taskforce membership.
- Maintaining a current register of Taskforce Members interests, including a record of any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and steps taken by the Taskforce to manage conflicts of interest.
- Coordinating Taskforce Member training including inductions.
- Maintaining the Taskforce Members forward meeting calendar.
- Oversee the coordination of meeting logistics including venues, travel arrangements and managing expenditure relating to Taskforce Members meetings.
- Working with the Co-Chairs and General Manager to prepare meeting agendas, meeting papers and meeting summaries.
- Assisting the Co-Chairs and the General Manager to draft Taskforce Members updates following each meeting.
- Managing email correspondence and coordinating communication with Taskforce Members.
- Ensuring accurate record keeping of Taskforce Members business, including:
 - a register of Taskforce Members decisions and actions as they relate to the Taskforce's three key priorities, and
 - maintaining a risk and compliance register.
- Maintaining the Taskforce Terms of Reference annual review under the direction of the Co-Chairs and General Manager.

4. Taskforce Member meetings

The Taskforce Members meets a minimum of four, and maximum of six, times, including out-of-session meetings each financial year.

Each attending Taskforce Member with voting rights is counted for the purpose of forming a quorum:

- A minimum of four members in attendance constitutes a quorum.
- One of the four members must include a Co-Chair.

- The Secretariat and non-voting Taskforce Members are not considered a member for the purpose of forming a quorum.

If a quorum is not reached the meeting will be rescheduled.

Taskforce Member meetings may be conducted face-to-face or by video or tele-conferencing.

- The Secretariat will send a meeting reminder and call for agenda items three weeks in advance of each meeting. A final agenda will be approved by the Co-Chairs and meeting papers circulated by the Secretariat one week in advance of each meeting.
- Meeting minutes will be taken by the Secretariat and reviewed by the Co-Chairs, prior to circulation to Taskforce Members for review and endorsement. Meeting minutes will record key discussion points, decisions and actions arising. Meeting minutes are not for public distribution.
- A public communique will be produced by after Taskforce meetings and circulated to Reef Traditional Owner groups and Reef 2050 stakeholder agencies.

Additional observers or guest speakers with specialist expertise may be invited to attend meetings, subject to the Co-Chairs' approval.

Taskforce Members may also be requested to attend additional Taskforce meetings or be called on out-of-session to provide direction and advice on time-sensitive or relevant issues.

4.1 Meeting attendance

It is expected that Taskforce Members will attend at least four (4) of the six identified Taskforce Member meetings each year, or in the event that only four meetings are held, three (3) of the four meetings.

In the event a Taskforce Member cannot attend a meeting, it is expected that the member will provide direction and advice on agenda matters listed for discussion to the Taskforce Co-Chairs via the Secretariat prior to the meeting.

If a Taskforce Member fails to comply with the minimum meeting attendance their appointment may be terminated. Termination of appointment provisions are outlined in **Section 16.0**.

4.2 Taskforce Calendar

The Taskforce Calendar is developed and maintained by the Secretariat. The Calendar's purpose is to minimise scheduling conflicts and maximise member's meetings attendance at Taskforce Member meetings.

The Calendar includes advance Taskforce Member meeting dates (as agreed by Taskforce Members) for the next 18 months or Term of the Taskforce, together with Taskforce workshops and training sessions.

The Calendar also includes scheduled Taskforce events, including key strategic forums and workshops.

The Secretariat will update the Calendar every three months and circulate to Taskforce Members.

5. Official travel and allowances

All reasonable travel costs for Taskforce Members will be paid for from the approved Taskforce budget in line with Host Organisation's policies.

The Secretariat will coordinate travel requirements for Taskforce Members. Travel and allowances for Coordination Unit staff will be in line with the annual work plan and approved operational budget.

The Host Organisation will provide travel-booking services in accordance with the Corporate Services Plan.

6. Taskforce Members participation in events

Taskforce Members may be invited to attend Taskforce workshops and forums on key strategic matters directly relevant to the Taskforce's functions.

Taskforce Member attendance at such events will be coordinated by the General Manager with the approval of the Co-Chairs, noting that:

- the Co-Chairs hold primary responsibility for representing and speaking on behalf of the Taskforce at Traditional Owner, government agency and stakeholder meetings, workshops and forums (see **Section 3.1**), and
- the General Manager is responsible for engaging with Reef Traditional Owners and ensuring their views drive the development of options for a Sea Country Alliance and strategic policy and capacity building actions (see **Section 3.2**).

7. Taskforce Member Meeting decision making

Taskforce Members with voting rights are responsible for making decisions about the strategic direction and cultural authority of the Taskforce.

The Co-Chairs are responsible for facilitating the discussion and ensuring that there is progress in discussions and action items, noting:

- All members have equal say.
- Decisions should be made by consensus. However, decisions may be made by majority.
- Each Taskforce Member with voting rights has one vote.
- Non-voting member do not have a vote.
- Co-Chairs have a casting vote when consensus is not reached. Co-Chairs must hear both for and against arguments from voting members before placing their casting vote.

All decisions are to be recorded in meeting minutes and in the Taskforce Member meeting decision register, noting:

- Risks associated with each decision shall be recorded in the Taskforce risk and compliance register.
- The Secretariat is to record minutes of meetings, and the exact wording of the decisions adopted and approved and circulated to members prior to the next meeting for approval.

All Conflicts of Interest must be declared before each meeting starts and logged in a register for reference.

The Taskforce is responsible for developing further policies and procedures regarding Taskforce meeting decision-making.

Financial statements will be presented at each meeting for Taskforce Members advice, guidance and monitoring.

9. Conflicts of Interest

Taskforce Members are responsible for following the Host Organisation's Conflicts of Interest Policy and managing conflicts of interest on the part of Taskforce Members. Conflicts of interest are to be a standing Taskforce Member meeting agenda item. The Co-Chairs are to implement this policy.

All Taskforce Members must disclose, and take reasonable steps to avoid or manage, any conflict of interest (actual, potential or perceived) in connection with their role in the Taskforce. All declarations of conflicts of interest will be entered in a register for reference. The disclosure of a conflict should include a description of the nature of the conflict, proposed management strategies, and the extent those risks can be treated to effectively manage the conflict/s.

The Secretariat is responsible for maintaining a register of Taskforce Member interests, recording any actual, potential or perceived conflicts of interest and steps taken by the Taskforce to manage conflicts of interest.

All interests in the matter being considered, not limited to pecuniary gain, must be declared as per the Taskforce Terms of Reference. If there is any doubt as to the relevance of an interest, a Taskforce Member must declare it so that any potential conflicts can be considered.

The Taskforce is made up of relevant experts, so there is an expectation that members, in maintaining their expertise or the organisation they represent, may have some interest relevant to the delivery of functions of the Taskforce. Having knowledge or a point of view about the Taskforce's purpose and functions does not create a conflict.

Examples of conflict of interests include but are not limited to:

- A financial or economic interest or opportunity for financial gain.
- Use of information, confidential or otherwise, obtained from the Partnership for your, or your organisation's benefit or gain.
- Using your position on the Partnership to influence an outcome i.e. influence a tender decision, awarding of a contract, influencing report card scores.
- When a person's interests or otherwise may cause harm to the Partnerships reputation.
- A person having conflicting responsibilities i.e. between the Partnership and their employee, or outside interests.
- A person who has a position of authority in one organisation which conflicts with his or her interests in another organisation.

The Co-Chairs are responsible for making decisions about how conflicts are to be managed during Taskforce Member meetings. This may include (in relation to the matters of which the conflict relates):

- Requesting that someone step out of the room (whether in person or online) for a certain discussion.
- Requesting that someone not participate in certain decisions.

If the conflict lies with one or both of the Co-Chairs, and should there be a need for both or either of them to step out of the room or not participate in the decisions, there must be an Alternative Co-Chair nominated to take charge of the item under discussion. This should be agreed by the remaining members and recorded in the Minutes.

10. Risk and compliance

The General Manager with advice and guidance from Taskforce Members will develop and implement a risk management framework in line with the Host Organisations Risk Management Framework.

The risk management framework will identify and set out a process to manage risks associated with Taskforce activities and will be approved by the Host Organisation. The risk management framework will include policies on risk management and a risk and compliance register.

Risk and compliance management is to be a standing Taskforce meeting agenda item.

The Co-Chairs are responsible for:

- risks being identified, discussed, managed and recorded as part of each Taskforce decision and reported to the Host Organisation as per their Risk Management Framework, and
- managing any reported non-compliances with this Terms of Reference.

The Secretariat is responsible for maintaining a risk and compliance register identifying:

- the likelihood and consequences of a risk occurring and actions taken to manage risks, and
- any reported non-compliance with Taskforce Terms of Reference, policies and procedures and actions taken in response to the reported non-compliance.

The Host Organisation is responsible for monitoring the risk management framework and endorsing the approach taken by the Taskforce to manage risks.

11. Protocols for communication and public statements

Taskforce Members may only make public communications or represent the Taskforce in the public sphere with approval from the Co-Chairs and the General Manager.

The Taskforce will develop and follow a communications protocol with relevant government agencies, setting out expectations around matters such as public commentary, media releases, public facing engagements, or publications about the activities of the Taskforce.

In all public communications, Taskforce Members will conduct themselves in line with the Taskforce's Guiding Principles and Code of Conduct.

Public communications will:

- be transparent and honest to inspire public trust in the Taskforce and facilitate effective community engagement,
- respect the confidential and private details of all relevant persons,
- not share official information or documents without approval from the Taskforce or requirement by law and
- respect Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property (ICIP) and secret and sacred information.

12. Selection and appointment

Taskforce Members will be appointed through an open merit selection process.

An independent recruitment firm with experience and expertise in Indigenous leadership recruitment will manage the selection and appointment process under the direction of the Host Organisation including:

- applying best practice recruitment principles to ensure the process is culturally safe, respectful, free from bias, and that conflicts of interest are appropriately declared and managed,
- ensuring a Reef Traditional Owner-led selection process to assess, interview and select Taskforce Members and the General Manager,
- ensuring Reef Traditional Owners involved in the selection process and appointment have a clear understanding of the context in which the Taskforce is operating, its role, and skills needed to successfully carry out its functions, and
- documenting how the process was managed in line with best practice recruitment principles and this Terms of Reference.

13. Training

Consistent with the need to build leadership and strategic capability in Reef governance and management, Taskforce Members will provide advice and guidance to the General Manager to develop and implement a formal training register, while the Host Organisation will provide the benefit of their expertise and existing arrangements to support the General Manager as required.

Taskforce Members are encouraged to mentor others (for example mentoring delegates on the youth sub-committee with the aim of each youth delegate being paired with a Taskforce Member).

The Secretariat is responsible for maintaining the Training Register and coordinating training.

14. Reporting

Taskforce Members, supported by General Manager, Coordination Unit and the Secretariat will produce an annual report for the Host Organisation and funding partners providing:

- a summary of the Taskforce's operations, and
- a description of decisions made, actions taken and progress in delivering the Taskforce's three priorities.

This report will be made publicly available.

15. Performance review

The Taskforce and Host Organisation will evaluate the performance of Taskforce operations annually to ensure it's the Taskforce purpose and functions as outlined in this Terms of Reference are being effectively fulfilled. The review will include:

- An assessment of the effectiveness of the Taskforce structure in carrying out the functions of the Taskforce.
- An evaluation of membership attendance.
- Feedback on the Governance Charter and Terms of Reference including any gaps and/or recommended amendments.

The annual performance review will involve:

- internal review, in the form of member self-assessment; and
- mid and end of contract external review.

The external review will assess performance to date, and be conducted by independent Aboriginal and/or Torres Strait Islander Peoples, groups, or organisations. The external review cannot be conducted by any government departments or bodies.

16. Resignation or termination of appointment

A Taskforce Member may resign their membership by submitting a letter or email to the Co-Chairs and the Host Organisation.

A Taskforce Member's appointment may be terminated by the Host Organisation if they do not comply with these Terms of Reference the Code of Conduct or the terms of their contractor agreement with the Host Organisation.

If a Taskforce Member fails to comply with the minimum meeting attendance their appointment may be terminated.

If Taskforce Members wish to remove a Taskforce Member, they must give written notice to the member that their appointment is being considered for termination at the next meeting. The member must provide their reasoning in writing within 14 calendar days, for the Taskforce to consider at the next meeting. The member is entitled to present their case at the meeting, and the Taskforce is to make a determination at that meeting, or at a future meeting, regarding termination.

Once this process has been followed and if the Taskforce Members still seek to remove a member, it is the responsibility of the Co-Chairs to report to the Host Organisation to set out the case for termination. Termination of the Taskforce member by the Host Organisation may only be completed consistent with this Terms of Reference and the terms of the contractor agreement.

Taskforce Members may seek redress for an alleged breach of this Terms of Reference in accordance with the dispute resolution provisions outlined in the Governance Charter.