

Code of Governance

Please read and sign the code of governance.

WESTMINSTER SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS FORUM CODE OF GOVERNANCE

Overview

1. The Westminster Sustainable Business Forum (WSBF) Code of Governance is an agreement between the Secretariat, Advisory Board and Associate Members of the Group on the rules under which the WSBF operates and is administered. A copy is made publicly available on the website. The intention of the Code is to ensure full transparency.
2. The WSBF is committed to ensuring its activities and funding is entirely transparent. The WSBF is funded through a combination of core funding from associate membership (add any other core funding) and ad hoc sponsorship of particular events and research. The WSBF does not endorse, support or campaign on behalf of any one organisation. Rather, it campaigns for evidence-based policy development in sustainable construction, sustainable infrastructure, water, sustainable planning, green finance and natural capital. The group operates according to a strict Code of Governance, and its work is driven by its Advisory Board and Secretariat.
3. The secretariat services are provided by Policy Connect, a leading network of parliamentary groups, research commissions, forums and campaigns working to inform and improve UK public policy. Policy Connect is committed to upholding the principle of transparency in UK Parliamentary and public affairs, and welcomes any questions you may have on its work and activities. Further details on this are provided below.

Parliamentary membership

4. The WSBF exists in order to help parliamentarians fully engage with maximising the opportunities for sustainable infrastructure when transiting to a low carbon economy.
5. The WSBF is open to members of all parties and both Houses.
6. The agenda of the WSBF is set by the group's Secretariat in consultation with the Advisory Board. Associate members will be able to provide advice to the Secretariat and Advisory Board, but will have no executive decision-making powers over the content of the programme.
7. The WSBF is also comprised of one non-parliamentary element: an independent advisory board of expert figures from central government, the private sector, third sector and academic institutions in the sustainability sector.

Associate membership

8. The associate membership is open to non-parliamentary organisations.

9. Membership subscriptions from these organisations provide a source of funding that allows the WSBF to maintain a secretariat. The Secretariat will facilitate the running of a regular meeting programme, parliamentary work and support information distribution such as the website.
10. The associate membership also offers the group a useful insight into present developments and the views of the relevant sectors.
11. Associate member organisations are invited to send representatives to all group meetings and are registered to receive all official group correspondence.
12. At meetings, associate members are asked to participate actively in discussions, whilst recognising that the WSBF is intended as a means of disseminating impartial information and that parliamentarians have priority in their contributions.
13. Associate members are also invited to sponsor additional resources, research or meetings that fall outside the standard programme. No editorial influence is conferred by such sponsorship.

Advisory Board

14. The independent Advisory Board is comprised of the Officers of the WSBF and relevant organisations from the public, private and third sectors, as appointed by the Officers.
15. The Advisory Board meets at least once annually with the parliamentary officers to evaluate the past and approve the future activities and administration of the group.

Secretariat

16. The WSBF is administered by a full time secretariat, responsible for executing the programme and activities of the group agreed by the Officers.
17. The secretariat and other administrative services are provided by Policy Connect.
 - a. Policy Connect is a not-for-profit social enterprise working to inform and improve UK public policy. It is part of a leading network of parliamentary groups, research commissions, forums and campaigns working to bring together public and private sector with parliamentarians, leading experts on important issues, and provides support services to a number of parliamentary groups and initiatives.
 - b. Secretarial and other administrative services include provision of: management staff; project and event management; shared costs of telephone, IT, web and email hosting; financial services; and shared office space.
 - c. Policy Connect does not set the group's agenda or programme.
18. The finances are administered as follows:
 - i. Annual membership subscriptions and any additional sponsorship for the WSBF are managed by Policy Connect. Policy Connect prepares annual accounts which are externally audited and published at Companies House. The work of Policy Connect is

overseen by a separate scrutiny committee to ensure governance of the use of funds, and chaired by parliamentarians. Please find more information on Policy Connect's financial governance arrangements here:

<http://www.policyconnect.org.uk/policy-connect-financial-governance>

- ii. The above arrangement allows the group to share administrative and accommodation costs with other Policy Connect groups.

19. The above arrangement allows the group to share administrative and accommodation costs with other Policy Connect organisations, and acts as a safeguard to the financial liabilities of the Parliamentary Officers.

Other organisations

20. Where possible and appropriate, other relevant organisations are invited to participate in meetings and resources.

- a. Internal to Westminster, meetings and resources are open to other parliamentary bodies such as Committee and Parliamentary Office staff, the House of Commons and Lords Libraries, and Member's own research staff.
- b. External to Westminster, representatives from charity and voluntary sector agencies and other relevant organisations are invited to attend meetings at which their contribution is of relevance to the subject area.
- c. Attendance at meetings must be by invitation of and response to the WSBF.

Endorsement

21. This code of governance is endorsed by the Advisory Board and associate membership of the group, representing an agreement on how the group operates and is administered.