

# Key Terms in SOS

The Self-Organising System (SOS) is the decision-making process adopted by Extinction Rebellion (XR). This guide walks you through some key components of SOS that we adopt to further the principles and values of XR.

## Circle:

A group or unit within the larger XR organisation.

## Mandate:

The authority given to an individual or a circle, a description of what they are working to achieve, and what others can expect them to do in order to achieve it.

## Roles:

Inside a circle, roles are created to share all ongoing work amongst individuals. This gives them the authority to make decisions to achieve their given goals — which are expressed in their mandate.

# Circles in XR

A circle is a self-governing team within XR. The structure helps us focus on priorities, respond to events, and share responsibility across the movement.

- A circle operates to accomplish a set of well-defined goals.
- Goals for the circle are outlined in a mandate that says what it is expected to do or create.
- The circle decides how they work within their area of responsibility.

## Circles and sub-circles

- Larger circles can delegate a specific task to a set of team members forming a sub-circle. Sub-circles are accountable for the work they do. This way, both groups can work independently towards a collective goal.
- Circles must prioritise activity as requested by the broader circle. Circle members
- Every circle includes three Core Roles crucial for the team's health, communication, and accessibility to the rest of the movement — more on that later, under 'roles'. Outside the three core roles, a circle is free to distribute roles to its members

# Understanding Mandates:

Mandates in SOS are descriptions of responsibilities given to individuals or teams, outlining what they are working to achieve and what they are accountable for.

- Components of a Mandate
  - Purpose: Clearly state goals or outcomes that the mandate aims to achieve.
  - Accountabilities: a list of activities necessary to fulfill the purpose, using action verbs.
  - Domains: Include if exclusive control over resources like technology or information is required.

Read this step-by-step guidance on [How to write mandates](#)

- Distributing Mandates: “We are based on autonomy and decentralisation.”
  - Mandates are distributed among team members to spread power and share responsibility.
- Changing Mandates:
  - Mandates are created and amended in formal circle meetings, using collective decision-making.
  - If mandate holders are not fulfilling their responsibilities, the constitution sets out escalating steps for resolving issues

## Roles in SOS:

Sharing the work to achieve XR’s core demands, together.

- Types of Role:
    - Core Roles: Circles **must** include three Core Roles: **Internal Coordinator**, **External Coordinator**, and **Group Admin**. Together they help to support the team, coordinate with other teams, and keep team records accessible. These roles are re-elected every six months.
    - All other roles: beyond the three Core Roles, the circle’s team is free to create any other Role to meet its mandate. Teams are all different, but may have some roles in common. Guidance for Templates roles is coming shortly.
  - Creating or Amending Roles:
    - Creating or amending roles should be done collectively in formal meetings as governance decisions.
    - Any team member can call for an election for any team role at any time.
    - The Internal and External Coordinators of a circle must always be appointed by election.
    - When roles don't involve circle-wide power, individuals can be appointed by volunteering.
  - Stepping Down:
    - Individuals can step down from a role at any time.
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