Your power and responsibility in SOS

A Guide for Every Team Member

As a team member, you have a unique role in fostering an environment where power and decision-making processes are transparent and effectively managed. Here’s how you can contribute positively to your team's success.

Understand Your Decision-Making Power

Recognise your part in decision-making. Spend some time familiarising yourself with how your mandate fits alongside other roles in the team. Identify

- the scope of the decisions that you can take yourself, within your mandate;
- which other roles in the team — and possibly beyond the team — might be affected by your decisions;
- how the purpose of your role contributes to the purpose of your team, its wider circle, and so on up to the three demands.

Step into your authority. Where you have a mandate, you do not have to ask permission of anyone. So take initiative without feeling the need to establish consensus first. Invite advice where you feel you need it, but that’s your decision, not your advisors’. It saves meeting time if we avoid unnecessary consultations.

Exercise your influence responsibly by adhering to the mandates assigned to you. This ensures that power is distributed fairly and decisions are made transparently.

Propose changes thoughtfully when you see an opportunity to improve processes or outcomes. If you believe a modification in your mandate could benefit the team, bring your suggestions to team meetings with clear reasons and potential impacts.

Navigate Team Mandates

Familiarise yourself with the bigger picture. Explore the relationships between teams and what they do on the XR UK Organism view (click on the circles to see their contents).

Clarify the purpose and accountabilities of your role with those you collaborate with. Knowing what they expect of you and what you are responsible for can guide your actions and decisions.

Adjust your mandates when necessary. If any accountabilities do not align with your skills or if you believe you can add more value in other areas, discuss these adjustments with your Internal Coordinator in the first instance. Some roles may have more than one person in them, and you can have informal agreements about who majors on what. You don't have to record everything in your mandate, but keeping it current provides a better guide to future role holders.

Understand the decision pathways within your team. Recognize which decisions you can make independently and which ones require consent by your team. Usually the decisions that require consent are

- how your team divides its mandate between roles and sub-circles, including their mandates;
- who is appointed to what roles;
- whether the team adopts any policies that constrain or empower what the roles can do.

(We refer to these as governance decisions, because they affect the power of the team members.)

Practise Effective Listening and Speaking for Decisions

Listen actively to your teammates. Pay attention to discussions and feedback, considering how the insights relate to the team's objectives and your role. This not only helps in better decision-making but also strengthens team cohesion.

Speak from your role(s), especially in meetings. Decision-making meetings are quicker and more effective if you keep in mind your mandate and whether the decision affects your ability to deliver on that — and if it doesn't, can you save any opinions for a separate agenda item or meeting (possibly a project or team-building meeting)?

Get familiar with integrative decision making (IDM). This method is specified in the Constitution. You don't have to use it other than for governance decisions, but it can be useful even informally to follow the IDM sequence:

- **clarifications** — what exactly is being proposed to happen next?
- **reactions** — how do I feel about it?
- **objections** — am I sure that bad stuff will follow if what is being proposed actually happens? If not, let it happen, see what actually follows, and work from there…

Focus on developing relevant skills that enhance your role's effectiveness within the team. Whether it's improving your strategic thinking or your ability to analyse data, enhancing your capabilities can make you a more effective member.

Lead from within your role

Make your role useful by demonstrating how it can help others. Even if your mandate seems relatively modest — let's say scheduling meetings and taking minutes — you can still have an impact in achieving your role's purpose — which might be "Everyone has the information and records they need to have effective meetings". Keep focusing on all the things that would bring you closer to that purpose.

Be accessible and respond to requests. You are the expert and have the authority in what you do. Anyone in XR can ask for your help in doing the things that you're accountable for. So help make it easy for them to reach you with requests, and respond quickly when they do.

Manage expectations and priorities. While others can expect you to do what's included in your accountabilities, they can't specify how you go about it, or when (unless dependencies are written into the accountabilities, like "Preparing the PA system before the speakers begin"). You may feel you should prioritise other accountabilities first, so let requesters know what they can expect.. If your team follows the XR UK Constitution, then you "must align [your] work with the priorities set by the Internal Coordinator of [your] circle." Those will be general high-level priorities, so, if it's not immediately obvious, check with your Internal Coordinator how a particular activity fits into those priorities.

Reflect, learn, regenerate

We all know there's more to good team work than assigning roles and making decisions effectively.

Be proactive in understanding the impact of your actions on the team's dynamics and outcomes. Reflect on how your decisions help achieve the team's goals and how they affect other members.

Fill your role in a way that supports your teammates in their roles. Offer help when you see opportunities, and be open to receiving support when needed. A collaborative approach can lead to more effective problem-solving and innovation. Create collaborative projects, involving different roles working to a common end.

Stay informed about the broader organisational goals and how your team's work contributes to these aims. Ask for updates from your External and Internal Coordinators. This broader perspective can enhance your decision-making and ensure that your efforts are aligned with the strategy and demands.

By focusing on these areas, you can be a proactive, supportive, and effective member of your team, ensuring that both power and responsibilities are managed wisely to achieve collective success.
