



GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMATION OF A CHAPTER OF THE
SYSTEM DYNAMICS SOCIETY



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SYSTEM DYNAMICS SOCIETY**

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INTRODUCTION

The System Dynamics Society (SDS) has Chapters in many parts of the world, formed by active and committed Society members who wish to strengthen interaction amongst them and to enhance their ability to reach other people.

Chapters are important for the System Dynamics Society because they are able to:

- disseminate System Dynamics in new places;
- propose activities, which advance System Dynamics capacities across diverse application domains (which the SDS actively supports with its Strengthening the Field Fund).

While most Chapters have been formed around a geographic area or in consideration of a specific language, some unite SDS members by type of activity (e.g. students) or application domain (e.g. Economics).

Society members may form a Chapter on grounds of any of these reasons.

The full description of considerations and rules concerning Chapters is in **Policy 8** of the System Dynamic Society's Policies. As reported and described in Policy 8, Chapters have a more stringent set of obligations than Special Interest Groups (SIGs).

Chapters must:

1. unite at least 10 Society members in good standing;
2. have a constitution which is compatible with the System Dynamic Society's Governance and Policy 8; (Please refer to the Sample Constitution)
3. report activities, membership, and governance to the Vice-President Chapters using a standard report form.

Chapters have privileges that SIGs do not possess, and which allow them to:

1. charge membership dues;
2. create publications;
3. host conferences;
4. have a non-voting representative on the SDS Policy Council.

The Policy Council of the System Dynamics Society will decide whether or not to recognize a Chapter only after it has satisfactorily submitted for consideration: a constitution, a petition signed by at least ten (10) Society members, and a list of officers and a named representative to the Council (see Section 7 of Policy 8).

If your group wishes to gain recognition as a Chapter of the SDS, then please read Policy 8 and contact the Vice-President Chapters Activities for assistance:

<http://www.systemdynamics.org/officers-and-policy-council-members/>)



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EXTRACT FROM THE “POLICY 8. CHAPTERS”

Section 1. Purpose. Chapters of the Society are intended to further the dissemination and encourage the advancement of system dynamics. Chapters can do this by undertaking activities that are specific to the interests or convenience of a subset of all practitioners and researchers in system dynamics. A subset of all practitioners might be delineated on the basis of location (regional or national), language, culture, application area, research interest or software use.

Section 2. Representation. Each Chapter of the Society will have an individual non-voting representative on the Policy Council. That representative will be invited to all meetings and receive all minutes of the Policy Council except under extraordinary circumstances. The mandate of the representative is to assure that the interests of his or her Chapter are made known and to report back on the activities of the Policy Council. The Chapter Representative shall be listed on the letterhead and web site of the Society.

Section 3. Activities and Publications. The Chapter may represent itself as a Chapter of the System Dynamics Society, Inc. in its activities and publications. All activities of the Chapter must be in keeping with the special interest of the Chapter and must not by focus, location or timing, interfere with the general activities of the Society. If a Chapter is considering anything that might be deemed to interfere with the activities or interests of the Society, the Chapter must inform the Society of its intent before finalizing its plans. The Chapter may engage in other activities to advance their purposes, so long as these activities are consistent with the provisions of the Bylaws and Policies of the Society and with the dignity of a professional association and the nonprofit status of the Society.

Section 4. Membership. Chapter membership is not restricted to members of the Society. However, in order to remain a Chapter in good standing, at least ten (10) members of the Chapter must also be members in good standing of the Society. The individual designated as a representative on the Policy Council must be a member in good standing of the Society. Once a Chapter has been recognized, its name will be included in the annual membership billing of the Society. Members will be asked to indicate any Chapter affiliations they might have. This list will be cross checked with the list of members supplied by the Chapter.

Section 5 Dissolution. If, during the first quarter of any fiscal year, the number of Society members who have designated themselves as Chapter members falls below ten, the Chapter's Society representative will be informed of the discrepancy. If the Chapter does not respond within sixty (60) days with a petition containing ten signatures of members in good standing of the Society, the Chapter will be automatically dissolved. If in the view of the Policy Council the Chapter should dissolve for cause, the Chapter's Society representative will be informed. If the Chapter does not respond within ninety (90) days rectifying the situation to the satisfaction of the Policy Council, the Chapter will be dissolved.

Section 6. Constitution. A Chapter must have a constitution outlining its areas of interest and its principles of organization. This constitution must be submitted as part of the Chapter application and changes must be reported to the Society and approved by the Policy Council. The Vice President Chapter Activities will maintain a template which prospective Chapters can use to draft their



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constitution. Should there be any discrepancy between the proposed constitution of the Chapter and the Articles of Organization, Bylaws, Policies or procedures of the Society, the members proposing the Chapter will be notified and asked to revise their constitution. On acceptance, a copy of the Chapter constitution will be kept on record at the principal offices of the Society.

Section 7. Initial Recognition. A Chapter will be recognized when it has presented its constitution (Section 6), a petition signed by at least ten (10) Society members (Section 4), and a list of its officers and a named representative (Section 2) to the Policy Council. On reviewing these items, the Policy Council will then choose whether or not to recognize the Chapter.

If the Policy Council does not recognize the proposed chapter, it will inform the petitioners in writing of its decision and the reasons for the decision. The petitioners have the option to revise and resubmit their petition.

Section 8. Annual Review. In addition to maintaining its membership, each Chapter will submit an annual report to the Policy Council through the Vice President - Chapters. The annual report will contain a list of active SD members, officers, active local members and recent activities. The report will be submitted in digital form to the VP Chapters Activities and the principal offices of the Society at least two weeks before the beginning of the annual conference. The Chapter will be informed in writing if there are any issues arising regarding its activities or membership.

Section 9. Limitation of Liability. Neither the Society nor the Policy Council, by granting a charter to any Chapter, assumes any liability or responsibility for any obligations of any kind incurred by any Chapter.



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STEPS NEEDED TO CONSTITUTE A NEW CHAPTER

The following steps are a checklist that we suggest to follow in order to successfully and efficiently constitute a new Chapter of the System Dynamics Society:

1. Read through this document “**GUIDELINES FOR THE FORMATION OF A CHAPTER**” as well as the Policy 8 of the System Dynamics Society’s Policies (reported in this document for ease of access and reference).
2. Particularly pay attention to the fact that the Chapter needs to:
 - a. Produce a list (with signatures) of 10 members of the Society in good standing, that support the creation of the Chapter.
 - b. Create a list of Officers, like (the following is just an example, obviously not intended to be exhaustive):
 - i. (legal) Representative (or President)
 - ii. VP Liason with the Society
 - iii. VP Finance
 - iv. VP Publications
 - v. VP Memberships
 - vi. Secretary
 - vii. etc.
3. Create a Chapter Constitution (according to the provided template)
4. Produce a petition (a letter) to the SDS Policy Council to create the new chapter. The petition letter should be accompanied by (ref. Section 7 of Policy 8):
 - a. the list of its officers and a named representative
 - b. the list of the 10 members of the Society in good standing that support the petition
 - c. the newly formed Chapter Constitution/Charter

HOW DO WE PROCEED FROM HERE?

The petition letter, the chapter constitution and the list of officers will be reviewed in a first instance by the VP Chapter Activities and will then be submitted to the Policy Council with an advice on whether the constitution can be accepted or sent back for refinement and adjustments.

Once the Policy Council will agree on the new Chapter recognition through a formal motion to be voted upon, which gets accepted, the Chapter Representative (or President) will be notified of acceptance and the new Chapter will be formally listed among the other Chapters of the System Dynamics Society on the Society’s website. From there onwards, the Chapter will be entitled to formally start carrying out its activities as a recognized chapter of the System Dynamics Society.



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SAMPLE CONSTITUTION

{The comments printed in gray italics are intended to give you guidance. Please delete them once you have specified the terms of your Chapter constitution.}

Constitution of the [Blank] Chapter of the System Dynamics Society, Inc. (the Chapter) a Chapter of the System Dynamics Society, Inc. (the Society).

1. The Chapter shall be known by the name:

The [Blank] Chapter of the System Dynamics Society, Inc.

2. The objectives of the Chapter shall be:

{Please select the objectives your Chapter will pursue; you may add other objectives.}

- To identify, extend and unify knowledge contributing to the understanding of feedback systems.
- To promote the development of the field of System Dynamics and the free interchange of learning and research in all related fields.
- To encourage and develop educational programs in the behavior of systems

3. Membership

{The following is the minimum specification. If your chapter raises fees, you may choose to specify different levels of membership. Please specify what constitutes “good standing” for your Chapter, as it will be decisive for elections. Please specify a minimum of benefits and obligations that differentiate the different types of memberships – if any – in your Chapter, as well as how future members can apply for the different types of memberships}

Chapter membership is not restricted to members of the Society. Any person living or working in [Blank] may join the Chapter. Chapter members who are also members of the Society will be referred to as Full Members; others will be referred to as Associate Members.

At any time, the Chapter will have at least 10 members that are also members in good standing of the System Dynamics Society.



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4. The Policy Council

The [Blank] Chapter shall be governed by a Policy Council. The Policy Council shall consist of a President, one or more Vice Presidents, a Secretary and a Society liaison. All members of the Policy Council shall be members of the Chapter.

The Policy Council shall determine the number of Vice-Presidents to hold office at any given time, subject to ratification by Full Members at the Annual Meeting. The Policy Council shall determine the duties and responsibilities of the other Vice-Presidents as seems expedient.

The Policy Council of the Chapter shall have the power to co-opt to fill any vacancy pending the Annual Meeting of the Chapter.

The quorum for meetings of the Policy Council shall be the President or the Secretary together with half the number of Vice-Presidents rounded up to the next whole number.

5. Meetings

The [Blank] Chapter shall hold a meeting at least annually. Such a meeting may be held during the international conference of the System Dynamics Society, but will not interfere with it. Society Business and election of officers will be dealt with in this meeting.

6. Elections

{Please specify if all members have the right to vote or if this right is limited to a certain type of member. You might want to consider the possibility of describing also other or more specific mechanisms to carry out elections }

The Policy Council shall be elected by a majority vote of the [Blank] Chapter membership. All Full and Associate members in good standing shall be allowed to vote. The elections shall be held at Chapter meetings at fixed intervals in accordance with the terms of the Policy Council.

The Policy Council of the Chapter shall have the power to nominate to any vacancy.

Not less than one month before the Annual General Meeting, the Secretary shall notify all Members of any impending vacancies. Any three Full Members shall have the power to make their own nomination and shall notify the Secretary not less than 7 working days before the Annual General Meeting.

In the event of there being two or more candidates for office, that person having the larger, or largest, number of votes of those Members present at the Annual General Meeting shall be elected.



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7. Publications

{You may choose to publish a journal, newsletter and books. Such publications need to observe two rules, as indicated below, which you are required to explicitly state.}

The [Blank] Chapter will publish *{please specify}*

The publications will:

- be related to the particular interests of the [Blank] Chapter.
- not represent themselves as publications of the System Dynamics Society, Inc.

8. Conferences

{You may choose to hold conferences as long as those conferences observe the three rules indicated below, which you are required to explicitly state.}

The [Blank] Chapter will ...

The conferences of the [Blank] Chapter will:

- do not present themselves to be conferences of the System Dynamics Society, Inc.
- do not interfere with the annual conference of the System Dynamics Society, Inc.
- have at least one month between them and the annual conference of the System Dynamics Society, Inc.

9. Dues

{The Chapter may charge dues in an amount and currency of its choice. Payment of chapter dues shall be made directly to the Chapter. Payment of Society dues shall be made directly to the Society. The Society will not collect any dues on behalf of the Chapter, nor will the dues it charges depend on membership in the Chapter.}

The [Blank] Chapter will ...

10. Finances

{If your Chapter charges dues, please describe how finances will be handled.}

Any surplus should be retained for future activities that further the aims and objectives of the Chapter.

A reserve may be kept as an insurance against pre-paying for our annual meeting and unexpected disruptions.

In the event of the Chapter being dissolved any cash balances will be donated to the International System Dynamics Society.

11. Chapter Society Interaction

{Several features assure interaction between the Chapter and the Society: please see below for some pre-recorder example and amend and update the text as needed. Please do not indicate what the Society shall do: it will comply to its obligations. Please add any additional considerations your Chapter will implement.}

- The [Blank] Chapter will submit annually a report of activities, finances and membership to the Society Policy Council (VP Chapters). The report will include the names of all officers for the [Blank] Chapter, summary information about the activities, publications and other achievements of the [Blank] Chapter, as well as complete membership information indicating the types of membership and changes according to the database format used by the Society.
- Upon request on behalf of the Society, the [Blank] Chapter will provide membership information, observing the legal limitations applied in its territory.
- The [Blank] Chapter's Society Liaison will be listed in the official Society letterhead
- The [Blank] Chapter-Society Liaison will be informed of, and invited to, all meetings of the Society Policy Council except under extraordinary circumstances. The [Blank] Chapter-Society Liaison will receive minutes from all meetings of the Society Policy Council.
- The Society will, upon request and up to twice per year, provide the [Blank] Chapter with a list of its members

12. Constitutional Reforms

{The constitution shall specify the rules allowing its own reforms. You may choose to apply the rules suggested below or replace them by your own rules.}

This constitution may be changed by initiative of the Chapter Policy Council, via an asynchronous, simple majority vote of the Full Members; or, via a qualified majority of two-thirds of Full Members



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present at the Annual Meeting, by initiative of any three members of the Chapter and with a quorum of at least fifteen Full Members present.

Any and all changes to this constitution shall be submitted for ratification to the Policy Council of the System Dynamics Society, Inc., accompanied by a declaration of support of at least ten Full Members.

13. Dissolution of the Chapter

The [*Blank*] Chapter dissolution can occur in the following situations: