



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Chief of Staff

SUDAN POLICY ADVISORY GROUP

1. Position particulars

POSITION TITLE	Chief of Staff (CoS)
ORGANISATION	Sudan Policy Advisory Group (SPAG), an independent association governed by the French Law of 1 July 1901
OFFICE	Office of the President
LOCATION	Remote and hybrid working as authorised
REPORTS TO	The President
KEY INTERFACES	The Executive Bureau, the Secretary-General-Treasurer, the Director-General, and the chairs of working groups and committees
SUPERVISES	Personnel and volunteers assigned to the Office of the President
ENGAGEMENT	Volunteer service, part-time and unremunerated
TIME COMMITMENT	Indicatively 6 to 8 hours per week, flexibly scheduled, with additional availability around meetings of the Executive Bureau and the General Assembly
TERM	Two years from appointment, renewable on the basis of performance and institutional need
AUTHORITY	Exercised on behalf of and under the direction of the President. The role carries no independent decision-making authority and no line authority over the executive structure

2. Purpose of the position

The Chief of Staff exists so that the Office of the President operates as a disciplined centre of institutional coordination. Business reaching the President is prepared, prioritised and complete; decisions once taken are communicated, tracked and closed. The role extends the President's capacity: it does not substitute for the President's judgement, and it does not duplicate the executive management exercised by the Director-General.

The Chief of Staff holds the seam between governance and execution. Decisions of the Executive Bureau must reach the executive in an actionable form, and matters requiring a governance decision must reach the Bureau in time to be decided properly. Where the two drift apart, or where a commitment is quietly slipping, the Chief of Staff is expected to surface it to the President early rather than absorb it.

3. Organisational context

SPAG is an independent, non-partisan association established under the French Law of 1 July 1901. Its mandate covers strategic planning, public policy research, governance advisory, institutional capacity development, analysis, stakeholder dialogue, innovation and sustainable development.

The Association is governed by its General Assembly and administered by its Executive Bureau, which the President chairs and before which the President represents the Association. Day-to-day executive management rests with the Director-General, supported by Deputy Directors-General, thematic working groups and specialised committees. The Office of the President supports the President in governance, representation and institutional stewardship. Much of SPAG's work concerns fragile, transitional and politically contested settings, which places a high premium on discretion, accuracy, impartiality and a do-no-harm approach in every communication the Office issues.

4. Duties and responsibilities

Under the direction of the President, the Chief of Staff shall:

4.1 Support to the President

- Manage the President's institutional agenda: establish priorities and sequencing, and protect the President's time for matters that only the President can decide or represent.
- Prepare the President for meetings, engagements and negotiations with concise briefs, background material, speaking notes and a clear statement of the decision or outcome sought.
- Screen and route incoming business so that matters reach the President complete, with options and a recommendation, and return to the originator those that are not ready for decision.
- Maintain the correspondence, records and filing of the Office of the President so that the presidential record is complete, retrievable and properly retained.

4.2 Governance cycle and Bureau business

- Plan the annual governance calendar with the Secretary-General, covering meetings of the Executive Bureau, the General Assembly and statutory deadlines.
- Coordinate agendas and meeting papers: commission them, set drafting deadlines, check completeness and quality, and circulate them in good time before each meeting.
- Support the Secretary-General in the accurate recording of decisions, and maintain a decision and action log that is followed up until each item is closed.
- Prepare the General Assembly in coordination with the Secretary-General and the Director-General, including convocation, documentation, logistics and the President's report.

4.3 Coordination across the institution

- Serve as the principal liaison between the Office of the President, the Director-General and the chairs of working groups, so that governance decisions and executive delivery remain aligned.
- Convene preparatory and follow-up meetings, identify where portfolios overlap, duplicate or stall, and refer unresolved matters to the President with a proposed route to resolution.
- Track cross-cutting commitments and institutional deadlines, and report slippage early rather than at the point of failure.

4.4 Communications, representation and protocol

- Draft presidential correspondence, statements, messages and talking points consistent with positions the Executive Bureau has approved.
- Coordinate the President's external engagements, including invitations, accreditation, protocol, delegation composition, and the recording of commitments made.
- Work with those responsible for communications so that the President's public output is consistent in substance and tone with SPAG's approved positions.

4.5 Confidential and sensitive matters

- Handle sensitive governance, membership, partner and personnel matters with discretion, and support the President in preparing matters that cannot be delegated, including nominations and integrity questions.
- Withdraw from the handling of any matter in which the Chief of Staff holds an actual or reasonably perceived conflict, and inform the President.
- Ensure sensitive documents are stored, transmitted and retained in accordance with SPAG's Data Protection and Privacy Policy and its records arrangements.

4.6 Institutional memory and reporting

- Maintain the register of Executive Bureau and General Assembly decisions and the status of their implementation.
- Provide the President with a weekly outlook covering upcoming commitments, decisions falling due and emerging risks, and a monthly summary of outstanding decisions and actions.
- Keep a current record of commitments made on behalf of the President, and ensure an orderly handover of institutional knowledge.
- Perform such other functions as the President may assign within the approved governance framework and consistent with the agreed time commitment.

5. Key deliverables

The following are the standing outputs by which the role is evidenced. Timings run from the date of appointment unless stated otherwise.

Deliverable	Timing
Annual governance calendar, agreed with the Secretary-General	Within 45 days, then annually
Executive Bureau agendas and meeting papers, circulated in advance	At least 7 days before each meeting
Decision and action log for the Bureau and the General Assembly	Continuous, reviewed monthly
Outlook for the President: commitments, decisions due, risks	Weekly
Summary of outstanding decisions and actions	Monthly
Briefing pack for each presidential external engagement	Before each engagement
General Assembly preparation dossier	Before each General Assembly
Register of correspondence and commitments of the Office	Continuous

6. Integrity, conduct and safeguarding

The Chief of Staff is bound by, and is expected to model, SPAG's policy framework, including the Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest, Anti-Fraud and Corruption, Safeguarding and PSEAH, Whistleblowing and Complaints, Data Protection and Privacy, and Research Ethics policies. In particular:

- **Interests are declared and managed.** A declaration of interests is made before appointment and updated within thirty days of any change. The Chief of Staff withdraws from any matter in which an actual or reasonably perceived conflict exists, including where it concerns a person with whom the postholder has a close personal or professional relationship.
- **Discretion is a condition of the role.** The Office sees material before it is decided. Nothing is disclosed, previewed or briefed onward without the President's authorisation, and privileged access is never used for personal advantage or to favour any faction within or outside the Association.

- **Zero tolerance.** Gifts and hospitality are accepted only within published thresholds and recorded. SPAG applies zero tolerance to fraud, bribery, facilitation payments and the misuse of Association resources.
- **Concerns are routed, not filtered.** The Chief of Staff ensures that any concern raised reaches the correct channel intact and promptly. A report concerning the President, the Director-General or the Chief of Staff is never handled by the Chief of Staff: it passes to the designated Focal Point or to a non-conflicted member of the Executive Bureau.
- **Confidentiality and data protection.** Confidential information acquired in the role is protected during and after the term, and personal data is processed only in accordance with SPAG’s Data Protection and Privacy Policy and applicable law.
- **Political impartiality.** The Chief of Staff does not commit SPAG or the President to partisan positions and manages personal public activity so that it cannot reasonably be attributed to the Association.

7. Competencies



8. Learning, Development and Professional Benefits



9. Qualifications and experience

9.1 Education

A university degree in public policy, public administration, international relations, political science, law, management, communications or a related field. An advanced degree is desirable. Additional relevant professional experience may be accepted in lieu of an advanced degree.

9.2 Experience

- A minimum of five years of progressively responsible professional experience in a chief-of-staff, executive-office, secretariat, governance-support or senior coordination role.
- Demonstrated experience preparing board, bureau or committee business, including agendas, papers, minutes and the follow-up of decisions to closure.
- Proven drafting experience at senior level: briefs, correspondence, talking points, reports and meeting records.
- Experience coordinating delivery across teams and individuals over whom the postholder holds no line authority.

- Experience working with governments, international organisations, research institutions, academia or civil society is desirable.
- Experience relating to Sudan, the Horn of Africa, fragile contexts or institutional transition is a strong asset.

8.3 Languages

Fluency in English or Arabic is required, and a working knowledge of the other is highly desirable given the drafting and correspondence load of the role. Knowledge of French is an asset given the Association's legal seat in France.