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Abstract:	This policy provides the procedures for developing and approving policy instruments for the NSDL community.

1.0 Introduction

This document describes the policy-making processes used by the NSDL. The focus of NSDL policy-making will be in its Committees. This document defines the steps taken to move recommendations for NSDL policy instruments through the Policy Committee for dissemination to the full NSDL community for consideration and possible acceptance as NSDL policy. This document describes the criteria used by the Policy Committee in its review of recommendations, and the mechanisms for establishing full public review of decisions.

2.0 Types of NSDL Policy Instruments

Policies instruments provide NSDL with a voice to advance its mission in ways that are informed by, and acceptable to the NSDL community. They describe agreements that enable the partners to work together.

There are five types of policy instruments:

2.1 Standard Policy: A specification, or set of specifications that all partners in the NSDL are required to observe for participation in the aspect of the NSDL governed by the Standard Policy.

2.2 Guideline: A specification, or set of specifications that all partners in the NSDL are encouraged to observe for participation in the aspect of the NSDL governed by the Guideline.

2.3 Revision: A modification of a Standard Policy or Guideline that replaces an earlier version.

2.4 Revocation: A statement that the NSDL community need no longer observe a specific Standing Policy, Guideline or Revison.

2.5 Decision: A full statement of the reasons for a Policy Committee action. Public dissemination of a Standard Policy, Guideline, Revision, or Revocation will have an accompanying Policy Committee decision. Similarly, an action of the Policy Committee declining to issue a Standard Policy, Guideline, Revision,

or Revocation will have a written statement explaining the Policy Committee's rationale.

3.0 Submitting a Recommendation

3.1 Sources of Recommendations

3.1.1 Policy Committee: The Policy Committee will occasionally put forward recommendations for Standing Policies, Guidelines, Revisions, and Revocations on its own initiative.

3.1.2 Standing Committees: Standing Committees receive, articulate, publicize, and sponsor most recommendations for Standard Policies, Guidelines, Revisions and Revocations and forward them to the Policy Committee for consideration and action. On occasion, this may be handled in a fast track mode. Usually, the process will be as follows:

3.1.2.1 Individuals may initiate consideration of a recommendation through a Standing Committee.

3.1.2.2 The sponsoring Standing Committee manages the development of a recommendation by the committee or may assign a Committee member to serve as editor of the recommendation.

3.1.2.3 When a Standing Committee reaches a decision to forward a recommendation, the Committee forwards it to the Policy Committee as a Standing Committee recommendation.

3.1.3.4 If the Policy Committee considers the recommendation to be incomplete as per section 3.2, the Policy Committee will return it to the Standing Committee for revision.

3.1.3 **Assembly:** The Assembly can forward a request to the Policy Committee Chair for a Standing Policy, Guideline, Revision, or Revocation generated through the Assembly's petition process. Such requests are assigned by the Policy Committee to the appropriate Standing Committee for consideration and articulation and then to the Policy Committee for action through the processes outlined in section 4.0.

3.2 Format of Standing Committee Recommendations

3.2.1 Components of a Standing Committee Recommendation

3.2.1.1 **Supporting Information:** One of the goals of the supporting information is for the Standing Committee to directly

address the criteria the Policy Committee uses in evaluating recommendations and in making its decisions as stated in section 4.1

3.2.1.2 **The Recommendation:** The following table contains the information necessary for a Standing Committee recommendation to be considered "well-formed."

Title	The title is a one-line description. The word "Interim" may be included in the title if there is an expectation that the document will be revised in the near future.
Type	Standard Policy, Guideline, Revision, or Revocation. The Policy Committee reserves the right to change the category—e.g., a proposed Standard Policy might be issued as a Guideline.
Status	Labeled as "Draft" or "Under Review"
Identifier	Recommendations are designated by a code that identifies the sponsoring Standing Committee (usually the initials of the Committee), the word "Draft" or "Under review" and a draft sequence number separated by hyphens. The code is followed by a URL where the document is posted.
Relation	Gives either "Replaces" with Identifier and URL to an immediately preceding draft or "Replaced by" with Identifier and URL to an immediately succeeding draft.
Source	The sponsoring Standing Committee
Creator	List the contributing authors who articulated the proposed recommendation.
Contributor	Committee Editor and any other responsible individuals.
Date	"Date Received": The date the sponsoring Standing Committee submits the recommendation to the Policy Board.
Abstract	Every recommendation should have an abstract. Although there is no strict limit on the length, authors are encouraged to keep abstracts short, preferably to less than 100 words. Setting the context for the recommendation is one function of the abstract.
Body	There is no prescribed format for a recommendation. However, authors are cautioned to consider the following factors:

	• The sponsoring Committee should specify means to evaluate the level of conformance and identify a strategy for encouraging full compliance (rewards and/or penalties). • To support unambiguous internal citation, sections and paragraphs of recommendations need to be numbered or otherwise uniquely identified in a consist manner (this document is an example). • Policy instruments are intended to be readable by anybody who is interested in the NSDL; therefore, terms that are unlikely to be clear outside the instrument's immediate community of interest should be defined. • Policy instruments remain in effect until revised or revoked. Therefore, they may remain current for many years. • As far as possible, policy instruments should be self-contained. In general, if a document needs to be modified, it is better to replace it, rather than to present a set of changes that have to be read in conjunction with the original.

4.0 Procedures for Policy Committee Review

4.1 Policy Committee Evaluative Criteria for Recommendations

4.1.1 Is the recommendation well-formed—i.e., does it include all of the relevant information defined in section 3.2?

4.1.2 Is the recommendation procedurally correct—i.e., does the recommendation actually represent a consensus reached through open discussion and other open processes?

4.1.3 Has the sponsor clearly demonstrated a need for the recommendation—i.e., is the recommendation necessary to advance some goal of the NSDL?

4.1.4 Are there identifiable negative effects or potential negative effects presented by the recommendation in terms of the NSDL mission, its community and its infrastructure?

4.2 Public Comment Period

4.2.1 If the Policy Committee considers a recommendation to be complete in terms of the criteria stated in section 3.2, it will place the text of the recommendation on the Policy Committee Website.

4.2.2 The Policy Committee will post a message announcing a one month public comment period for the Standing Committee recommendation on a list for all NSDL Assembly members and other relevant lists. The Policy Committee will periodically repeat the announcement throughout the public comment period.

4.2.2.1 Announcements will include:

4.2.2.1.1 Links to relevant information to be considered with the recommendation.

4.2.2.1.2 The relevant deadline for comments.

4.2.2.1.3 The address for comment submissions.

4.2.2.1.4 The name and contact information for the assigned facilitator as defined in section 4.3.

4.2.2.1.5 Information about the date and location of the meeting at which the recommendation will be discussed and acted on by the Policy Committee, including how to request an invitation to participate.

4.3 Facilitator Assignment

4.3.1 No later than the date announcing the public comment period for a Standing Committee recommendation, the Policy Committee will assign a member of the Policy Committee to serve as the facilitator for the recommendation. Nothing precludes the Policy Committee from assigning a facilitator at any time before the public comment period.

4.3.2 The facilitator will monitor the public discussion of the recommendation and summarize that discussion in writing for the Policy Committee.

4.3.3 The facilitator will serve as liaison to the Standing Committee during the time the recommendation is under discussion and after a decision has been made by the Policy Committee. If the facilitator is assigned prior to the public comment period, the facilitator may serve as

the Policy Committee liaison during the development of the recommendation.

4.4 Policy Committee Deliberations and Actions on Recommendations

4.4.1 Policy Committee Deliberations

4.4.1.1 Participation by Interested Parties: Participation by non-Policy Committee members of the NSDL during the Policy Committee meeting where the Committee discusses and votes on a recommendation is permitted through advance arrangements with the Policy Committee .

4.4.1.2 Documents for review during Policy Committee deliberations

4.4.1.2.1 The version of the recommendation as originally submitted to the Policy Committee by the sponsoring Standing Committee for release for public comment.

4.4.1.2.2 The facilitator's summary of the public discussion including issues raised. Where possible, links to relevant email messages in the listserv archives should be provided in the summary for critical issues.

4.4.1.2.3 Any other documents considered relevant to the discussion by any member of the Policy Committee or any member of the Standing Committee.

4.4.2 Policy Committee Voting on Policy Instruments

4.4.2.1 Voting shall be limited to publicly scheduled Policy Committee meetings and conference calls at which a quorum of the voting members of the Policy Committee are present.

4.4.2.2 A decision to issue a Standard Policy, Guideline, Revision or Revocation is achieved by a simple majority of the voting members of the Policy Committee present at the meeting where the vote is taken.

4.4.2.3 In all cases, a vote may not be cast by a Policy Committee member (or by his or her proxy) who is not actually present or present by means of a teleconference for the relevant discussion at the designated meeting.

4.4.2.4 Policy Committee members who cannot be present at the meeting designated for discussion and action on a recommendation may present their arguments for or against a recommendation in writing prior to the meeting. Such statements do not constitute a vote.

4.4.3 **Policy Committee Decision Documentation**

4.4.3.1 A draft of the Policy Committee Decision on a Standing Committee recommendation will be written by the facilitator and circulated among the members of the Policy Committee. The decision must include Policy Committee reasoning for its decision and, where appropriate and necessary, recommendations for possible future action.

4.4.3.2 A draft Policy Committee Decision will be considered final when a consensus is reached among the Policy Committee members who participated in the deliberations and voting on the recommendation that the draft Decision accurately reflects the decision reached.

4.4.3.3 Policy Committee Decisions will be assigned an unambiguous identifier in a form approved by the Policy Committee and the Core Integration Team.

4.4.4 **Actions Resulting from Policy Committee Decisions**

4.4.4.1 Decision to Issue a Policy, Guideline or Deprecation

4.4.4.1.1 A Policy Committee Decision to issue a Standard Policy, Guideline, Revision or Revocation shall include: (1) the Policy Committee's written decision, and (2) the text of the Policy, Guideline, Revision, or Revocation including an assigned unique identifier in a form approved by the Policy Committee and the Core Integration Team.

4.4.4.1.2 The Policy Committee will assign the policy instrument one of following statuses: Policy, Guideline, Revision, or Revocation.

4.4.4.2 Decision Not to Issue a Policy, Guideline, Revision or Revocation

4.4.4.2.1 The only public statement made by the Policy Committee when it declines to issue a Policy, Guideline,

Revision, or Revocation is its written Decision described in section 4.4.3.

4.4.5 **Publication of Policy Committee Decisions**

4.4.5.1 The Policy Committee will register Policy Committee policy instruments (Standard Policies, Guidelines, Revisions, Revocations and Decisions) with the Core Integration Team.

4.4.5.2 The Core Integration Team will publish and maintain a single linked index to all policy instruments of the Policy Committee divided into Standard Policies, Guidelines, Revocations, Revisions, and Decisions.

4.4.5.3 Once a policy instrument is publicly available, the Policy Committee will announce its publication to a list for all NSDL Assembly members and on the sponsoring Standing Committee list.