The National Organic Traceability Platform

Steering Committee – Terms of Reference

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the National Organic Traceability Platform Steering Committee?

The Steering Committee is a sector-led body that will provide governance and strategic oversight of the National Organic Traceability Platform project. It guides the design, delivery and adoption of the Platform, monitors progress against milestones and helps ensure the Platform delivers practical outcomes for Australia's certified organic supply chain.

What is the National Organic Traceability Platform?

The Platform is a multi-year AOL project, running from August 2026 to a target completion of June 2028, creating Australian Organic Limited's national traceability platform, which will capture organic certification data and makes it structured, searchable and interoperable, giving the sector a single trusted source for verifying operator, certification, product and certified-input status. It lets users monitor certification expiry and embed checks directly into procurement and quality-assurance workflows, and it forms the foundation to build out from. It is funded through The National Agriculture Traceability Grants Program sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and forestry, with co-investment from Australian Organic Limited.

Why is AOL establishing this Steering Committee?

A traceability platform only works if the people who use it help shape it. The Steering Committee brings producers, processors, exporters, certifiers, retailers and subject-matter experts together to guide the project from design through to adoption, so the Platform meets real supply chain needs, stays on track and is accountable to the sector.

Who is eligible to apply?

We are seeking expressions of interest from individuals with practical experience and a commitment to strengthening organic traceability in Australia. We are looking for representation across producers, processors, exporters, certifiers, retailers, the AOL Advisory Committee, and external subject-matter experts.

How large will the Steering Committee be?

The Steering Committee will comprise of approximately 10 members, alongside a Chair. Members are appointed through this EOI process and will generally serve for the life of the project.

Do I need to be from the certified organic sector specifically?

Not exclusively. Members with direct certified organic experience are a priority, but we also welcome external subject-matter experts in areas such as traceability, supply chain technology, data governance, and digital systems, who can bring valuable outside perspective.

What is the time commitment?

The minimum commitment is attendance at monthly Steering Committee meetings, held online or in person, plus time to review papers beforehand. Members may be asked to give input between

meetings or at key project milestones. The total time commitment is expected to be around10-15 hours per quarter.

Is the position paid?

Steering Committee members serve in a voluntary capacity. Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (such as travel to in-person meetings) will be reimbursed in accordance with AOL's expenses policy. We are seeking people who are genuinely motivated by the opportunity to shape how organic traceability works in Australia.

What happens after I submit my EOI?

All EOI submissions will be reviewed by AOL following the closing date of 6th December 2026. We aim to confirm the Steering Committee membership by 20th December 2026, with the first meeting planned for early January 2027. All applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application.

Can I apply if I have a conflict of interest?

Yes. Given the nature of this committee, we expect that many applicants will have a real, potential or perceived conflict of interest, and this does not prevent you from applying. You will need to declare any such conflicts in your application. Members are required to manage conflicts transparently in accordance with the Terms of Reference. If you are unsure whether a conflict is relevant, we encourage you to declare it and let AOL make an assessment.

Can my organisation supply or tender for the Platform if I join the Steering Committee?

Membership does not prevent your organisation from supplying or tendering for Platform products or services, but the conflict must be declared. Members with a material conflict must not take part in discussions or votes on the relevant item, including procurement and vendor selection.

Who do I contact if I have further questions?

For any questions about the Steering Committee or the EOI process, please contact Jacinta Vickers, Chief of Staff at Jacinta.vickers@austorganic.com

1. Purpose

Australian Organic Limited (AOL) is establishing the National Organic Traceability Platform Steering Committee (the Steering Committee) to provide sector-led governance and strategic oversight of the National Organic Traceability Platform project (the Platform).

The Steering Committee will guide the design, delivery and adoption of the Platform, monitor progress against project milestones, and ensure the Platform delivers practical, measurable outcomes for Australia's certified organic supply chain.

2. Background

The National Organic Traceability Platform is a multi-year AOL project, running from August 2026 to a target completion of 30 June 2028. It is funded through The National Agriculture Traceability Grants Program sponsored by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and forestry, with co-investment from Australian Organic Limited.

The Project Sponsor is Jackie Brian, and the Project Manager is Jacinta Vickers. The project is delivered under the AOL Project Management Framework.

A Platform of this kind only succeeds if the people who will use it help shape it. The Steering Committee is the mechanism by which producers, processors, exporters, certifiers, retailers and subject-matter experts guide the project from design through to adoption.

3. Objectives

The Steering Committee will:

- Provide strategic oversight and governance of the Platform project, ensuring scope, priorities and design decisions remain relevant, evidence-based and sector-driven
- Monitor progress against the project plan, funding milestones, budget and risks
- Advise on Platform requirements, data standards, user needs and integration with existing certification and supply chain systems
- Advise on procurement and vendor selection, within AOL's procurement policy and delegations
- Facilitate cross-sector engagement and support adoption among producers, processors, exporters, certifiers and retailers
- Advise on the Platform's governance, data ownership, privacy and long-term sustainability beyond the project period
- Support AOL in reporting to funders and the broader organic sector

4. Membership

4.1 Composition

The Steering Committee will comprise approximately 10 members, alongside a Chair, with representation across:

Sector / Expertise	Minimum Representation
Producer	At least 1 certified organic producer; diversity of scale, commodity and region encouraged
Processor	At least 1 certified organic processor or manufacturer
Exporter	At least 1 certified organic exporter
Certifier	At least 1 representative from each of the DAFF-registered certification bodies
Retailer	At least 1 retailer or supply chain representative
AOL Advisory Committee	At least 1 member of the AOL Advisory Committee
External Subject-Matter Expert	At least 1 independent expert in traceability, supply chain technology, data governance or related fields

The Project Sponsor and Project Manager attend ex officio and do not count toward membership or quorum.

4.2 Tenure

Members will serve for the life of the project, unless they resign or are removed under section 9. Members will be appointed through an Expression of Interest (EOI) process coordinated by AOL. Vacancies will be filled by AOL in consultation with the Chair, to maintain the representation in 4.1.

4.3 Roles and Independence

The Steering Committee is a sector-led body providing independent advice and direction to the Project Sponsor. AOL's role is secretariat and delivery: coordinating meetings, maintaining records and delivering the project.

4.4 Chair Appointment

The Chair of the Steering Committee will be selected by vote of the Committee members at the first meeting. Any member who wishes to stand as Chair may nominate themselves, or be nominated by another member with their consent, before or during the meeting. Each candidate will be given an opportunity to briefly outline their interest in the role and their suitability. Voting will be conducted among the Committee members, and the candidate receiving a majority of votes will be appointed as Chair. Where no candidate achieves a majority, the candidate with the fewest votes will be removed and a further vote held until a majority is reached. The first meeting will be facilitated by the Secretariat for the purposes of conducting the election, and the outcome will be recorded in the minutes.

The Chair will hold office for the duration of the project, subject to the review and removal provisions below. Should the position become vacant during that time, a new Chair will be elected by the Committee at its next meeting.

The Committee will review the Chair's appointment every 6 months. At that review, the Chair may elect to step down, or the Committee may, by simple majority of members present at a quorate meeting, resolve to hold a fresh election for the position. Where no such resolution is passed, the Chair continues in office.

Outside of the scheduled review, the Committee may remove the Chair by a two-thirds vote of members present at a quorate meeting, where written notice of the motion has been included on the circulated agenda. Where the Chair is removed, a new Chair will be elected at the next meeting in accordance with the process above.

5. Governance and Decision-Making

The Steering Committee will operate by consensus where possible. Where consensus cannot be reached, decisions will be made by simple majority vote of members present at a quorate meeting. Quorum requires a majority of members (50% + 1).

The Chair has a casting vote in the event of a tie. All decisions and the rationale behind them will be recorded in meeting minutes. Matters outside the Steering Committee's authority, or that materially affect scope, budget or timeline, will be escalated to the Project Sponsor and, where required, the AOL Board.

6. Meeting Cadence

The Steering Committee will meet a minimum of monthly, with additional meetings at key project milestones or decision points as required. Meetings may be held in person or online. Out-of-session decisions may be made by email where urgent and recorded at the next meeting.

7. AOL Secretariat and Project Responsibilities

AOL will provide secretariat support and project reporting, including:

- Preparing and circulating agendas at least 5 business days before each meeting
- Preparing and distributing meeting minutes within 10 business days of each meeting
- Maintaining Steering Committee records and correspondence
- Managing the EOI process for incoming members
- Providing a project status report for each meeting, covering progress, milestones, budget, risks and issues
- Providing relevant sector data, technical advice and partner updates

8. Reporting

The Steering Committee will receive regular project reports and will support AOL's milestone reporting to funders. A final project report will be prepared at completion, capturing:

- Progress against project objectives and milestones
- Platform adoption and sector engagement
- Outcomes achieved and lessons learned
- Recommendations for the Platform's ongoing governance and sustainability

9. Conflicts of Interest

All members must declare any conflicts of interest, whether real, potential or perceived, at the time of appointment and at the start of each meeting. This is particularly important where members' organisations may supply, tender for or directly benefit from Platform products or services.

Members with a material conflict in a specific agenda item (including procurement or vendor selection) must not participate in deliberations or votes on that item. AOL will maintain a Conflicts of Interest Register.

10. Confidentiality

Members will treat commercially sensitive project information, including procurement and vendor details and supply chain data, as confidential, and will not use it for any purpose other than the Steering Committee's work.

11. Remuneration and Expenses

Members serve in a voluntary capacity. Reasonable out-of-pocket expenses (such as travel to in-person meetings) will be reimbursed in accordance with AOL's expenses policy.

12. Review of Terms of Reference

These Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Steering Committee at its inaugural meeting and updated as required, then reviewed at least annually or earlier if material circumstances require. The Steering Committee will be dissolved on completion of the project, unless AOL and the Steering Committee agree to transition it to an ongoing governance body.