



British Interplanetary Society

Branch Guidelines

Issue 2.0 (Final, 12 Aug 2024)

Main Contents

Introduction	Page 3
Part 1: Vision & principles	Page 4
Part 2: Actual Guidelines	Page 6

Blank page

Detailed Contents

Introduction	page 3
Part 1: Vision & principles	page 4
Part 2: Actual Guidelines	page 6
Appendix 1: Agreement to form branch	page 9
Appendix 2: BIS policy for branch organisation	page 10
Appendix 3: Document control	page 11

Introduction

0.0 Scope

These guidelines are designed for BIS branches covering a whole region in the UK, and Internationally.

0.1 Formal approval by the BIS Management Council.

These guidelines were approved by the BIS Management Council at the meeting on 09 Aug 2024.

0.2 Prepared by

These guidelines were prepared by the ‘Branches’ working party established by the Council on 26th January 2024. The current working party lead can be contacted via branches@bis-space.com.

0.3 Glossary

BIS: ‘the Society’, ‘the British Interplanetary Society’, and ‘BIS HQ’ refers to the British Interplanetary Society Headquarters, its Council (being Trustees and Directors) and its waged staff. The HQ is located at 27-29 South Lambeth Road, London, SW8 1SZ, website address <https://www.bis-space.com/>.

BIS Council of Management: a term synonymous with ‘(BIS) Management Council’ or simply ‘(BIS) Council’.¹

BIS member: a paid-up individual of grade ‘Member’ or ‘Fellow’.

Previous guidelines: Release 1.1 dated 4th June 2021, which could be downloaded from the BIS webpage <https://www.bis-space.com/branches/>, until replaced by these later guidelines.

Words of obligation: "shall", "must" or "will" indicates a requirement; "should" indicates a recommendation; "may" indicates a permission; "can" indicates a possibility or a capability.

Memorandum of Association: the first part of the BIS constitution being a legal statement in the form of a relatively short (two-page) document setting out the objectives of the society as a company. The current issue available online via the Companies House website is dated “October 2021”. This is also available via the BIS webpage <https://www.bis-space.com/the-society/>.

Articles of Association: the second part of the BIS constitution being a longer document of nine pages and 70 clauses defining legally how the society as a company is managed. The current issue available online via the Companies House website is dated “October 2021”. This is also available via the BIS webpage <https://www.bis-space.com/the-society/>.

Bye-laws: a nine-page 38 clause document generated by the management council detailing the rules and regulations regarding the society’s finance, membership, committees, council conduct etc. The current issue is that “Amended 8th March 2021”. This is available via the BIS webpage <https://www.bis-space.com/the-society/>.

GDPR compliant: compliant with the General Data Protection Regulations applicable in the branch’s region or country.

¹ The Memorandum of Association uses “Council of Management”, the Articles and Byelaws “Council”.

Part 1

Vision and principles

1.1 The Mission of the Society

To quote from the BIS website: “*The British Interplanetary Society (BIS) is a membership society that promotes the exploration and use of space for the benefit of humanity, by connecting people to create, educate and inspire, and advance knowledge in all aspects of astronautics.*”

Or, more formally:

“The objects for which the Society is established are to promote the advancement of knowledge and the spread of education and particularly to promote the advancement and dissemination of knowledge relating to the science, engineering and technology of Astronautics and to support and engage in research studies and to disseminate the useful results thereof ...” (Memorandum of Association clause 3).

1.2 The goals of the Society

- Diversify engagement with our wider membership, stakeholders, and the public.
- Advance opportunities to participate in our technical projects.
- Evolve our professional offer.
- Celebrate innovation and excellence.
- Advocate for space within the UK and overseas.
- Strengthen outreach.

1.3 The Purpose of a BIS branch

A British Interplanetary Society branch is a collection of Members and Fellows of the Society who have an interest in coming together to pursue the mission and goals of the society in their local region within the UK or Internationally, and to expand the Membership of the BIS.

Typically, this is done by organising lectures and other events in their area, i.e. in a more convenient location than London, thus enhancing the reach of the BIS.

The specific guidelines for such branches are in Part 2 of this document.

1.4 Purpose and approach to updating the guidelines

The purpose of updating the previous (release 1.1) guidelines was to facilitate the formation of new branches and so enhance the BIS. The approach included implementing the BIS policy of simpler branch administration, as reproduced in Appendix 2.

1.5 Formal basis and membership of the BIS branches

The BIS is governed by its Memorandum of Association, Articles of Association and Byelaws (see glossary).

Clause 30 of the current bye-laws states “*The establishing of a Branch on a regional or country basis will be permitted under terms approved by Council by time to time, known as the Branch Guidelines. Such a Branch will not be a separate corporate entity, but will be part of the BIS, and its membership must be drawn from the membership of the Society.*”

1.6 Membership of branches

The membership of a branch will comprise those BIS members who have chosen or ‘opted in’ to be members of that branch

Branches may also have ‘supporters’, who are BIS non-members who partake in branch activities and wish to be informed of forthcoming activities.

1.7 Policy and strategy regarding branches

The policy approved by the BIS Management Council is reproduced in Appendix 2. This specifies that the strategy to be adopted in these branch guidelines is “*The relationship between the BIS HQ and its branches shall be revised to minimise administrative support required of both the BIS HQ, and its branches.*”

An analysis of the previous guidelines (release 1.1, see glossary) reveals that there are some six or seven situations where administration support or interaction from and with the BIS HQ was required. This has been reduced to two.

1.8 Main changes between guidelines release 1.1 and issue 2.0

- The relationship between the BIS HQ and the branches has been made explicit (see 2.6)
- The administration burden has been reduced from about seven requirements to two, where once a branch has been formed these are:
 - (i) The BIS HQ is obliged to promote branch activities in a timely manner, (see 2.6)
 - (ii) The branches are obliged to liaise with the Council Lead for branches (see 2.6)
- The concept of membership of a branch has been defined (2.8)
- Branches may run their own finances (see 2.7)
- Branches may maintain and use their own mailing lists, subject to meeting local GDPR regulations (see 2.4 and 2.9 (iv))
- Regular reports to the BIS HQ from individual branches are no longer required, instead the Council Lead for branches will submit an annual overall report to the Council at the meeting prior to the BIS AGM (see 2.6)
- A vision and principles section has been added as this Part 1.
- The branch lead may now be a BIS Member or Fellow, rather than only a BIS Fellow (see Appendix 1)
- A clause ‘How to start a BIS branch’ has been added (see 2.10)

Part 2

Actual Guidelines

2.1 Purpose

This Part 2 provides guidance for those involved in starting and managing a branch of the Society. Most of the content consists of suggestions and examples of good practice, to be adopted by branches as they see fit. The guidelines are not intended to be prescriptive, nor to reduce the ability of a branch to operate in whatever way best serves it. This issue of the guidelines is also intended to reduce the amount of administration required between the BIS HQ and branches.

2.2 Availability of these guidelines and starting a new branch

These guidelines can be viewed and downloaded from the BIS website at <https://www.bis-space.com/branches/>. This webpage also explains how to start a new branch. (See also Appendix 1 below.)

2.3 Definition of a branch

A British Interplanetary Society Regional Branch is run by Members and Fellows of the Society, who have an interest in coming together to pursue the mission of the Society (See Part 1) in their local region defined within the UK or Internationally, and to expand the membership of the BIS. Its formation needs to be approved by the BIS Management Council (see Appendix 1).

It is desirable that an international branch is active for the whole national territory, rather than just a region. Special cases can be considered.

2.4 Branch activities

Under the BIS name a branch typically:

- May prepare and organise its own meetings, activities, and events to suit its local members
- Should promote the Society to potential new members
- May participate in local events and manage local projects and activities.
- May be the point of contact in relationships between the BIS and institutions such as schools, academia, and industries.
- May facilitate orders for publications and other items.
- May collaborate with other local societies or groups to increase the reach of events and, where possible, share venues and costs
- May call upon the resources of BIS members and equipment to help with the above (e.g. for making talks available online.)
- May maintain and use their own mailing lists in accordance with local GDPR regulations (Note: these lists would comprise branch members and supporters whose details have been collected locally.)

However, Branches are not authorised to act in any legally or binding way on behalf of the Society. Such acts include, but are not restricted to, signing MOUs, contracts, or other agreements, which must be approved by BIS Council.

2.5 Encouragement of new members

Branches should actively encourage attendance at their events by persons who are not members of the Society, and event publicity should be aimed at encouraging this. Such persons are potential Society members and their attendance helps fulfil the Society's mission and goals.

2.6 Relationship with the BIS HQ

The branch undertakes to:

- Pursue the mission and goals of the society in their local region or nation
- Promote membership of the BIS and facilitate sales of BIS publications and merchandise
- Provide BIS history, projects, activities, and membership details
- Act within the constitution of the Society, by adhering to the BIS Articles and Bye Laws
- Uphold and protect the reputation of the Society, and declare any potentially harmful or damaging issue to the BIS CEO immediately
- Do nothing that could be detrimental to the BIS reputation or bring the Society into disrepute
- Liaise with the Council Lead for branches who will submit an annual overall branch report to the Council at the meeting prior to the BIS AGM
- In case of need, abide by the BIS Dispute Policy
- Abide by these guidelines

The BIS HQ undertakes to:

- Permit use of the BIS name and logo
- Allow branches to use their own logo variation subject to Council approval of the variation.
- On request and in a timely manner promote branch events and activities on the main BIS website, in magazines, newsletters and other (e.g., social) media, and by direct email to all BIS members
- Support the branch on an ongoing basis
- Abide by these guidelines

2.7 Finance

The BIS HQ is currently unable to provide financial support to branches, except under special circumstances. For instance, branches cannot claim from HQ any travel cost or out-of-pocket expenses for speakers. However, branches may make their own financial arrangements provided they do not charge BIS members to attend events, e.g., charge modest entrance fees to non-members, and/or invite voluntary contributions. The BIS HQ will not be held responsible for any debts incurred by any Branch.

To facilitate sales of BIS publications and merchandise (e.g., on a 'sale or return' basis) a formal account and process must be established for remitting money to the BIS HQ.

The financial arrangements may also include a separate local 'petty cash' account for incidental costs, such as speaker expenses.

2.8 Membership

The membership of a branch will comprise those BIS members who have chosen or 'opted in' to be members of that branch.

Branches may also have 'supporters', who are BIS non-members who partake in branch activities and wish to be informed of forthcoming activities.

2.9 Management

A branch may decide on the management team structure that best suits it and its activities, but it must assign three management roles, which must be held by Members or Fellows of the Society:

(i) One member of The Branch must be designated as the **Branch Lead**. The Branch Lead is responsible for all aspects of the Branch and its management team and ensuring that the Society's interests are protected. The Branch Lead must be a Fellow or Member of the BIS, and must be approved by Council.

(ii) One member of The Branch must be designated as the **Branch Secretary**. The Branch Secretary is usually the primary contact for the Branch and is responsible for all Branch admin and internal communications with the Society.

(iii) One member of the Branch must be designated **Operations/Finance Lead**. The Operations Lead is responsible for managing events, including the financial requirements for the Branch.

Note: Whilst the Society encourages a diverse range of people running each Branch, the aforementioned roles may be held by the same person, if no other Branch members volunteer.

(iv) One member of the Branch must be designated as the **delegated official of the Branch for all Data Protection and GDPR-related purposes** (although this can be shared with another role).

(v) One or more Branch members may also be appointed as **Activity Leads** for the management of specific projects or events.

2.10 How to start a BIS branch

- Contact the BIS Council Lead for branches (via email 'branches@bis-space.com' or via the online form at <https://www.bis-space.com/branches/>) to discuss the matter
- Consider the specific help the HQ may be able to provide to help start a branch, such as information on the numerical size of BIS membership in the applicable region or nation, and what potential support network the HQ could help provide
- Consider these guidelines in detail, including Appendix 1 listing the branch roles required to be filled
- Discuss any points of difficulty with the Council Lead
- Together with the Council Lead for branches, complete the form shown in Appendix 1, which the Council Lead will submit to the BIS Council for ratification
- Begin branch activities!

Appendix 1

APPENDIX 1 – BIS BRANCH GUIDELINES: AGREEMENT TO FORM BRANCH

This agreement is for the establishment of a Branch of the BIS, which will henceforth be referred to as 'BIS-<Nation/Region>'. The creation of a BIS Branch must be in line with the Branch Guidelines, as approved by the BIS Council from time to time.

In the first instance a conversation should be had with the Council Lead for Branches
 This form is then completed for final approval by Council.

BIS-<Nation / Region> <i>(Insert national or regional name)</i>		Branch Organisation	
Geographical Description	<i>Add a short description of the area of activity of the Branch</i>		
Main location	<i>Principal geographical location</i>		
BRANCH ROLES	TITLE	FULL NAME	Delete as appropriate
Branch Lead			MBIS/FBIS
Secretary and primary contact			MBIS/FBIS
Operations/Finance Lead			MBIS/FBIS
GDPR official			MBIS/FBIS

The above Branch Guidelines are herewith agreed by the undersigned:

For the **BIS <National / Regional>** **Branch:**
(Insert national or regional name)

Branch Lead:

Second Branch representative:

For the British Interplanetary Society:

BIS President:

Council Lead for Branches:

BIS CEO:

Date:

Location:

(Note: whilst the Society encourages a diverse range of people running each Branch, the aforementioned roles may be held by the same person, if no other Branch members volunteer.)

Appendix 2

The British Interplanetary Society Policy for UK regional and International Branch organisation



1. Introduction

This (deliberately single-sided) document defines the policy regarding the relationship between the BIS and its branches, and is proposed by the 'Branches' Working Party established at the 26 January 2024 Council meeting. It is anticipated it will lead to a revised version of the current UK Branch and International Branch Guidelines.¹

2. The Premise

The BIS Management Council recognises that at present the BIS HQ does not have the administrative resources² to properly support the current Branch Guidelines.

3. The Strategy

The relationship between the BIS HQ and its branches shall be revised to minimise administrative support required of both the BIS HQ, and its branches.

4. The Implementation

The relationship between the HQ and the branches as specified in the 'guidelines' will be clarified, in particular regarding (i) what the HQ expects of the branches (ii) what the branches expect of the HQ.

This policy including the corresponding implementation will be reviewed when circumstances change, or in two years' time, whichever is the sooner.

5. Approval

This policy was approved by the BIS Council of Management on Friday 9th Aug 2024.

RB 12/08/2024

C:\Users\robin\Documents\BIS committees etc\BIS WM & branch guidelines\Branches policy\BIS branches policy (final 2024-08-12).docx

¹ UK: "BIS Branch Guidelines" release 1.1, 4th June 2021. International Branches Terms of Reference: release TBC.

² Resources: according to the BIS website on 23/02/2024 (<https://www.bis-space.com/staff/>), the BIS currently has three members of staff, (i) CEO, (ii) Membership and Office Manager, and (iii) Papers & Archives Assistant (the latter believed to be part time).

Appendix 3

Document control

ISSUE: 2.0 (Final, 12 July 2024)

RELEASE DATE: 12 AUG 2024 (After approval by Council on 9 Aug 2024.)

DUE FOR REVIEW: 24 Months after approval (i.e. August 2026)

REVIEW AND EDITORIAL CONTROL: ‘Branches’ Working Party, via current Council member with responsibility for branches (Lead for Branches), email: branches@bis-space.com

MAINTAINED DISTRIBUTION: current Lead for Branches

MASTER PAPER DOCUMENT HELD BY: N/A

MASTER *.DOCX FILE MAINTAINED BY: current Lead for Branches

MASTER *.DOCX FILE LOCATED IN: BIS HQ

ARCHIVE BACKUP HELD BY: current Council Lead for branches, email: branches@bis-space.com.