

1 Meeting Format

Rounds start & end away from the facilitator, to maintain equivalence. Some groups start & end with silence

Opening Have an opening round. Always without discussion, each person

- Introduces self (first meeting)
- Relate recent experiences concerning the subject area of the meeting
- Bring up any questions and points for the agenda

Housekeeping Handle administrative matters. Facilitator proposes

Schedule breaks, ending time, and when to start evaluation go-round.

Agenda ask for any additions or changes; decide on times for each item.

Report summarize last meeting, ask for any corrections.

Discussion Facilitator leads discussion of each point on the agenda. Notetaker records each decision.

1. Make a policy decision.
2. Delegate someone to execute the decision.

Evaluation Have an evaluation round. Each person evaluates how well the facilitator managed time, how well the meeting used the consent process, and other relevant comments concerning the conduct of the meeting. NO DISCUSSION during the evaluation round.

2 Decision making

As much as possible, prepare proposals before the meeting. Decisions may be revisited.

Objections must be clear enough to engage, & must relate to the ability of the group &/or its members to embrace the proposed policy in pursuit of the group's purpose.

1. **Present** One person presents a proposed policy decision on any topic.
2. **Clarify** Others may ask clarifying questions, as facilitated and controlled by the chair.
3. **React** Members of the circle react to the proposition without discussion. The chair controls the amount of time allowed for these comments and ensures that all who want to speak have the opportunity.
4. **Respond** The proposer amends or reformulates the proposed decision
5. **Object** Do a round without discussion asking for any objections and the associated arguments.
6. **Improve** Using the objections that have been raised, discuss how to improve, eliminate parts of, or include precautions in the proposed decision. It is important to maintain equal participation here.
7. **Verify** Do a final round asking if there are any unresolved objections. If so, stop or return to #5.
8. **Action** As needed, discuss action items flowing from the decision. Each action item should identify
 - Who is responsible for the action.
 - Who must approve the action.
 - Who should be consulted on the action.
 - Who must be informed of the action and/or its results.
 - When the action will be completed.
9. **Record** The recorder notes the decision and any action items, and tests record with group.

3 Elections

- Look out for the following possible mistakes:
 - Don't ask beforehand who's interested in the job.
 - Don't ask who is not interested.
 - Don't have discussion during the first round.
 - Don't elect anyone for an unlimited time.
- Encourage:
 - proposals
 - feedback on the meeting process
 - objections backed by arguments drawn from personal concern or interest
 - questions that probe objections
 - brainstorming
 - laughter
- Discourage:
 - majority thinking
 - manipulation or factionalism or ignoring ideas
 - competitive challenges
 - striving for agreement
 - objections not founded in personal experience
 - arguments for absolutes
- Remember:
 - Tension can be your friend and so can silence.
 - Ask the circle for help and feedback.
 - Your aim is to produce decisions.
- The election process itself:
 1. Hand out small ballot papers for each voter.
 2. Review the function/responsibilities that the person to be elected will have and how long the job will be for.
 3. Write your own name on the ballot and below it write the name of your candidate.
 4. Collect the ballots.
 5. Round 1: Read one ballot at a time. Without discussion, each participant gives reasons for their choice.
 6. Round 2: Ask each person if they want to change their nomination.
 7. Open discussion.
 8. Name a candidate for whom there are solid arguments and few objections. If there are more than one, just pick — if someone objects, you can always try another candidate.
 9. Round 3: Start to the left or right of the named candidate, circling away from them, ask for objections; you will ask the named candidate last. If any objections cannot be resolved, repeat starting from Round 2. Otherwise, you have a result.

4 Proposals

The following may be valuable in crafting a proposal:

Title

Proposer(s)

Proposal

- Ultimate Goal/Intention
- Actual Detail

Background

Driver(s)

- Conditions, circumstances, events
- Why is that important?

Impacts

- What areas? How?
- What people/roles? How?
- What policies/processes? How?
- What budgets? How?

Provisions

- Supporting policy/process reflecting consideration of above

Measurement

- What will demonstrate success?
- When will we measure?

Implementation

- Possible critical path of tasks and people. (RACI chart may be helpful here, especially if $I_1 = R_2$.)

#	Action	Responsible	Approve	Consult	Inform	Due Date
1						
2						
3						

Table 1: A RACI table indicate who is responsible for what action, what person or group must approve it, which person or group should be consulted in advance, who should be informed after the fact, and by when it should be accomplished.

5 Engineering

1. Articulate the common aim.
2. Specify the “doing” process (middle row of LDM table).
3. Create a circle structure to steer the process (top & bottom rows).
4. Elect people to accomplish each function.

6 Acknowledgements

This is based on the work of Gerard Endenburg. The Sociocratisch Centrum in the Netherlands is the certifying body for compliance with the norms of that work. They can be contacted by email to info@sociocratie.nl or +31-10-452-3289, and their website can be found at <http://www.sociocratie.nl>. The author of this document is not a certified trainer in those norms, and this document has not been approved by the certifying organization.