

# HEMAS GROUP

## GUIDELINES FOR MEETINGS

### 1. The Purpose

Each Ad Hoc or Standing Committee must have a clear understanding of its objectives. It should formulate a concise statement on what it is expected to deliver and its mandate for doing so. In other words, each committee should have a firm grasp on its Raison d'être – the reason or justification for its existence.

### 2. The People

Committee members must commit to contributing towards the expected outcome of any given committee. In other words, committee members must constantly move the committee towards its stated objectives.

### 3. The Plan/The Priorities

The agenda must be compiled and circulated to attendees a week prior to the meeting. Adequate time must be allowed for additions or suggestions to the agenda. Agendas should be realistic and set tangible goals for the allotted meeting time. The final agenda must communicate clearly, as far as possible, the expected outcome of the meeting.

### 4. Participation

Chairpersons must ensure active and effective participation of all present. They should invite and encourage everyone to express their opinions and ideas.

Chairpersons must be attentive to the abilities and comfort levels of all those present, while simultaneously urging participants to step out of their comfort zones to contribute to a productive meeting.

### 5. The Practice

- i) **Effective listening** will be key to a meeting's success. All participants must listen before formulating opinions or counter arguments. Try and focus on the content, rather than on the speaker personally. Hear a person out to the end. Try to reformulate their contribution in your own words before countering it. Above all, keep an open mind.
- ii) **Effective speaking** will also help meetings run smoothly and quicker. Try to respond directly to points raised by others when making your contribution. Make notes before speaking to ensure you make your point succinctly and clearly.

- iii) **Dissent and discussion** are crucial elements of an effective meeting. While keeping an open mind, do not be too quick to reach consensus. Many original and creative ideas arise from contradicting opinions within a group. If you have strong objections do not hesitate to communicate them but strive for constructive dissent and criticism.

## 6. Outcome

Before the meeting is adjourned, the chair must \*briefly\* review the list of assignments or tasks allocated during the meeting and ensure that everyone leaves with a clear understanding of their follow-up duties.

The group as a whole should take 10 minutes to assess the meeting – was the agenda followed? Did the meeting achieve its desired objectives? In other words, was the purpose of the meeting fulfilled and any problems adequately resolved or tabled by consensus for the next meeting?

## 7. Postmortem

All those present agree to uphold the confidentiality of information and opinions discussed during meetings. Once a decision has been reached, we agree to uphold that decision outside of the meeting room, regardless of personal disagreements. In other words, we should be prepared to discuss the outcome of the meeting in one voice.

## 8. Housekeeping

- i) Meetings must begin and adjourn promptly time.
- ii) The first order of business must be to assign a note-taker. Minutes of the meeting must be circulated within 24 hours.
- iii) Phones, ipads, blackberries and other technology must not distract participants from real-time discussion. Limit use of technology to breaks except in the case of real emergencies.
- iv) A designated point-person should organize refreshments for any meeting exceeding 60 minutes, so as to keep participants at optimal operational levels!