

## PLANNING AND PREPARATION OF MEETINGS

### Questions to Consider

#### Who? What?, When? Where? Why? How?

1. Why have a meeting? What are your objectives and expectations?
2. What type of meeting do you want to have?
3. Who do you want to attend?
4. What kind of involvement and participation do you want?
5. How many people do you want? What size of meeting?
6. Where are you going to meet? How should the room be arranged?
7. What roles and responsibilities should individuals have during the meeting?
8. Who will have the power and authority to make decisions?
9. What methods and techniques of discussing, planning, problem-solving and decision-making are you going to use?
10. How much time will you allow?
11. How will the agenda be determined? Can it be prepared and sent out in advance?
12. Will there be presentations?
13. Will there be some kind of record?
14. What are the desired outcomes of the meeting?
15. How are you going to determine tasks, deadlines and responsibilities?
16. How will you publicize the meeting?
17. How will the meeting be evaluated?

## Planning The Agenda

1. If possible, plan the agenda ahead of the meeting. If very few agenda items are known before the meeting starts, try to anticipate by thinking about the people who will be there and what kind of process will be helpful for them.
2. Agenda review: Have the agenda written on large sheets of newsprint or a blackboard so that everyone can see it. With the participation of the whole group review, revise, and list items in the order in which they will be discussed.
3. Main items: If more than one item needs to be dealt with, set priorities
  - a) If possible, start with something which can be dealt with easily. It will give the group a sense of accomplishment.
  - b) Place the more difficult or lengthier items, or those of most pressing importance next.
  - c) Break a big item into several issues and discuss one issue at a time to make it more manageable. It may be helpful to have a presentation of the item with background information and clarification, break into small groups for discussion, and then return to the main group.
  - d) Finish with something short and easy to provide a sense of accomplishment.
  - e) Leave time for announcements
  - f) Evaluation: can serve to provide a quick opportunity for people to express their feelings about the proceedings and to learn how to improve future meetings.

Estimate the time needed for each item and put it on the agenda. This will:

- Indicate the relative importance of each item to participants.
- Help participants tailor their participation to the time available.
- Give a sense of the progress of the meeting.