

Decision Making

How to Make Sustainable Decisions

When an organization makes a decision, it represents agreement among members. But all too often, decisions are made but not carried out. There are many reasons this happens, including:

- Members agree because they feel tired of the discussion or feel pressured and give in.
- Members are confused about decision-making processes.
- Members have different interpretations of the decision.

Here are a few things you can do to help your organization make decisions that have solid support and result in action.

- 1. *Define and agree on how decisions will be made***
 - a. What is your organization's Decision Rule?*
e.g. consensus, majority rule, autocratic, etc.
 - b. Who decides what*
Does the Core decide everything? Do the committees decide certain things?
 - c. What is the basis for making decisions?*
e.g. does the proposal support the organization's goals?
- 2. *Set the Tone***
 - a. It's okay to disagree*
Don't take disagreements or challenges personally.
 - b. It's okay to make mistakes.*
If the group makes a decision that results in errors, the group can sum it up and learn from it together.
 - c. Be open-minded.*
Remember that it's a group decision. Welcome new ideas. Try new ways.
 - d. It's not life or death.*
Even if you "know" you're right, it's not worth fighting over.
- 3. *Key Steps in Deciding***
 - a. Summarize the main points of the discussion. (Include all "sides.")*
 - b. Clarify the decision being made.*
 - c. If it doesn't seem like a clear consensus:*
 - *Poll the group*
 - *Have more discussion*
 - *Try adjusting the proposal and look for a compromise*
 - *Discuss the option of postponing the decision*
 - d. Use your organization's Decision Rule to reach a decision.*
 - e. Record it!*