

Conducting Executive Meetings

Meetings are the formal structure where executives make decisions about the direction of the MSA. Meeting topics can include funding and other financial reporting, committee reporting, key initiative updates, policy development, specific strategic issues (e.g., a review of progress against a strategic priority; a decision on an issue that is expected to have significant impact), and key governance stewardship responsibilities.

Meetings are best spent focused on high-level strategic conversations rather than operational or administrative issues. To ensure the executive does everything it is responsible for and uses its time efficiently, a calendar may be used to set out the schedule and key content of meetings for the year (see sample calendar on FE website.) In conjunction with the calendar, intentionally designed agendas help the president/chair manage meetings by structuring discussion content, required actions, and timelines.

Fast Facts: Executive Meetings

Where?	At the places executives think fit to conduct business.
When?	To be determined by executives.
How often?	As required, to fulfill executive duties. We suggest one meeting per quarter at a minimum, one of which should be to prepare in advance of the AGM.
Quorum	A majority of the executives then in office.
Voting	Questions are decided by a majority of votes. In the event of a tie, the chair does not have a casting (deciding) vote.
Chair	President.
Minutes and actions	Taken by the secretary (Refer to template agenda, minutes, and sample calendar.)
What?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General business. • Quarterly review of financial statements. • Approval of disbursements. • A pre-AGM meeting to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Receive expression of interest for anyone interested in being an executive. ○ Approve financials for presentation to members. ○ Approve annual report for presentation to members.

TOP TIPS FOR EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

Design effective meetings: Effective meetings don't happen by chance. They happen when they are intentionally designed to focus on the important issues and facilitate informed discussion. High-quality meeting materials, calendars, and well-designed agendas that focus on broader strategic issues before more routine items are helpful tools in designing effective meetings.

Plan ahead: The meeting actually starts before the set meeting time—for everyone. Ideally, meeting materials are distributed well in advance (1 to 2 weeks), so that everyone has an opportunity to prepare. Operate under the assumption that everyone has read the materials in advance. As much as possible, ensure information is presented consistently (e.g., using a briefing note).

Encourage a culture of continual improvement: Learn what works at meetings and what doesn't. Use this intelligence to refine agendas, meeting norms, and personal behavior. A 5-minute feedback discussion at the end of each meeting is a powerful way to shape future meetings and executive conduct.

Set norms: Together, create a set of norms or ground rules for meetings and executive interactions. These can be as simple as starting and finishing on time or using a "parking lot" for flagging important conversations to be discussed in the future.

Follow through: Remember that meetings are only one piece, albeit an important piece, of the executive's shared work. Much of the executive's work is done between meetings, by individuals and committees. This work can only happen with shared and consistent follow through supported by clear decisions, action items, next steps, and accountability.