

# Tips for effective meetings

Groups should meet at regular intervals to review progress and decide on future actions. This way, all minor problems can then be addressed as they arise. It is your responsibility to turn up to group meetings. If you have a problem and cannot attend you must let someone in your group know. Here are some tips on how to run successful meetings:

## Before the Meeting

- Schedule your first meeting early in the project to clarify group goals and objectives.
- Choose a convenient place to meet with minimum distractions.
- The frequency of your meetings may vary depending on the scale and duration of your project, but meeting on a weekly basis is a good starting point.
- It may be necessary to devise an agenda for your meetings to allow you to make good use of your time together. This document should give details of the venue, time and duration of the meeting, a list of expected attendees, a list of topics to be covered at the meeting and supporting material to be discussed. Allow all members to add items to this list. See the example agenda.
- Be organised and prepared.

## During the Meeting

- It is important that meetings are to the point and productive, keeping the focus on the agenda. It may be necessary to establish roles in the meeting such as a chairperson and a scribe:

Chairperson: Keeps things in focus and ensures that everyone has the opportunity to participate.

Scribe: Records minutes of the meeting, which gives details of, attendees, the decisions made, actions needed and what people need to do and when by. A copy of the minutes should be given to each team member so that everyone is sure of their tasks. See example minutes.

- A good way to start the meeting is to review the agenda and set priorities for the meeting.
- Work through the agenda addressing each point in turn.
- Ensure that all team members contribute and feel able to disagree.
- Use open communication and listen actively.
- When the group encounters a problem confront it openly and attempt to find a solution.
- A flip chart can be useful for recording and summarising new ideas and suggestions.
- Concentrate on what other team members have to say and show interest and respect for their feelings and information.
- Take a few minutes at the end of each meeting to summarise what has been accomplished, what issues need to be followed up and how this is going to be done.
- Look ahead and set the agenda for the next meeting and agree on each person's actions to be completed by the next meeting.