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PUNTLAND STATE OF SOMALIA
Ministry of Interior Affairs, Local Government & Rural Development

Office Management & Administration for Local Governments

MODULE 2. ***EFFECTIVE*** ***MEETINGS***



PARTICIPANT BOOK (DRAFT)

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Introduction

Aims, Objectives and Timing

This set of Office Management & Administration training modules is designed to provide district staff with supporting skills development to complement the training in the HRM modules 1–5, as well as the everyday work practices of the district administration. It should be noted that these topics are designed to be delivered as ‘stand alone’ training topics, and do not have to be delivered in sequence or at the same time. The topics are listed below along with estimated timings for each.

Overview of Office Management & Administration Training Modules

Module	Timing
Module 1: Written Communication	6 hours
Module 2: Effective Meetings	6 hours
Module 3: Organising the Office	
Module 4: Managing Office Assets, Travel and Procurement	

Introductory Session

Getting Started

Session Objectives:

- Create a comfortable and encouraging learning environment.
- Provide an overview of the training, including aims and objectives.
- Understand participants' expectations of the training.
- Set some agreed ground rules for the training.

! In this session you will get to know your trainer/s and the other participants. You will find out what the training involves and what you are expected to do.

Here are some points your trainer is likely to cover in this session:

- Welcome, Introductions and 'Housekeeping'
- Aims and Objectives
- Expectations and Ground Rules
- Pre-Assessment Task
- Action Plan



'Icebreaker' Questions:

Discuss the following question with a partner:

This module is about running effective meetings. In your opinion, what does an 'effective meeting' look like?

Action Plan

- **What is an Action Plan?** An action plan is simply a way of putting down in writing what action you and your colleagues plan to take to achieve certain outcomes. Action plans can help clarify and commit us to **what** needs to be done, **who** is going to do it, by **when**, and what **support** might be needed.
- At the end of this module, you will be asked to make an entry in your action plan, of something that you can implement when you are back in your workplace, as a result of what you learn in this training. There is an action plan template at the end of this Participant Book.

Session 1.

Organising and running effective meetings

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session participants will be able to:

- Distinguish between effective and ineffective meetings.
- Organise and run an effective staff meeting.
- Engage more effectively as a participant in a meeting.



Questions for Discussion

- What are some of the different types of meetings held in your district local government? (thinking about meetings of the Executive, the Council and the district departments).



Links to the Office Management & Administration Manual

For more information, refer to:
4.1.1 Purpose of Meetings

Key points:

Effective meetings

Effective meetings are those which:

- achieve the meeting's objective/s
- take up a minimum amount of time
- leave participants feeling that a sensible process has been followed.

You need to keep these points in mind throughout the **planning, preparation, running** and **follow up** of your meeting.

Checklist—should we hold a meeting?

Do not hold a meeting if any of the following apply:

- Preparation cannot be done or information is incomplete
- People who need to be there cannot attend. Only allow a substitute if that person is authorised to make decisions.
- Something could be communicated better by telephone, memo, or in a one-to-one discussion, for example, a sensitive matter like salaries.
- The subject matter is trivial OR is so confidential that it can't be shared with some group members.
- There is too much anger and hostility in the group and people need time to cool down.



How to be an effective meeting participant

1. Understand why you have been asked to participate and who else is there

For example: 'Am I representing a department or section?' 'Am I here as the voice of experience?' 'Who else will be attending this meeting?'

2. Be prepared and punctual

Be prepared so you can contribute to the discussion and desired outcomes of the meeting, for example, by studying the agenda and/or any papers in advance. Plan in advance to make at least one specific contribution (but not just talking for the sake of it!). Make sure you arrive on time, so you can prepare yourself.

3. Speak up

Make your comments clearly, succinctly and positively, for example, bring solutions to meetings and not only problems. Avoid repetition. Do not introduce irrelevant issues to the meeting. Listen, observe and save your arguments until you can make a useful point. Be considerate not to dominate the discussion.

4. Be an active listener

Be respectful and courteous to all participants. Allow speakers to make their contributions without interruption. Ensure that all relevant views are listened to before a decision is made. Don't allow animosity between participants to get in the way of active listening.

5. Be willing to learn

Go into meetings with the attitude of being prepared to learn from others. Effective participation in meetings does not always mean getting your own way. Rather, it means learning from others and accepting feedback.

6. Adhere to the rules of meeting etiquette

For example:

- Avoid interrupting others when speaking
- Refrain from distracting or rude behaviour, such as pencil tapping, phone use, or side comments to a neighbour.
- Always be courteous and tactful. Disagree with an idea, not a person!

7. Ensure you follow up on your delegated responsibilities

Read your meeting minutes to ensure action items are followed up on time. If you have been assigned an action item, failure to deliver will cause inconvenient delays to other people and their own deadlines. Be considerate of your responsibilities.

Source: Adapted from 'Snapshots: Effective Meetings, Participant Workbook', Australian Bureau of Statistics

Key points: Formal and Informal meetings

Meetings can vary in their level of formality and usually depends on the following:

- Whether the meeting is internal, or with external parties.
- Whether the meeting is for an official body, such as a committee, or is an informal discussion between colleagues.
- How well the participants know each other.
- The nature of the topic or topics to be discussed.

Regardless of whether the meeting is 'formal' or 'informal', all meetings should have **clear objectives**, an **agenda** and somebody recording **notes** or **minutes**. Some differences between formal and informal meetings are outlined below.

Informal Meetings

1. Agenda

The agenda can be agreed on at the beginning of the meeting to ensure that everyone knows what different topics will be discussed. These topics can be written on a whiteboard or flip chart.

2. Minutes

Minutes or notes should be recorded for these meetings. This should include any action points decided on. These can be written up and sent to all participants if necessary, or they can be done individually.

Formal Meetings

1. Agenda

The agenda and meeting information should be circulated before the meeting—even up to 1 or 2 weeks in advance. Agendas are usually written in point form. In some cases it is possible to contribute topics to the agenda, but this must be done before the agenda is finalised and circulated.

2. Invitation

Information that should be circulated by invitation to all the participants before the meeting includes: Location, Time and Date, List of Participants, Agenda.

3. Timing

All meetings should start on time, but formal meetings in particular will have a start time identified on the agenda and this should be adhered to.

4. Chair

The meeting should have a Chair or facilitator who ensures that the agenda is being followed and that all participants are involved.

5. Meeting Rules

Depending on the rules of the meeting, there may be a code of conduct or other restrictions on behaviour, to ensure that the meeting does not get out of hand. For example, in some meetings participants may only address the Chair. Such meeting rules are called 'standing orders'.

6. Meeting Secretary

The meeting should also have a secretary who is responsible for recording attendance and taking meeting minutes.

7. Meeting Minutes

Meeting minutes must be recorded which document all the decisions made at the meeting, as well as any actions that need to be taken and who will take them. Appropriate staff members should be appointed to follow-up on the completion of all action items.



Important!

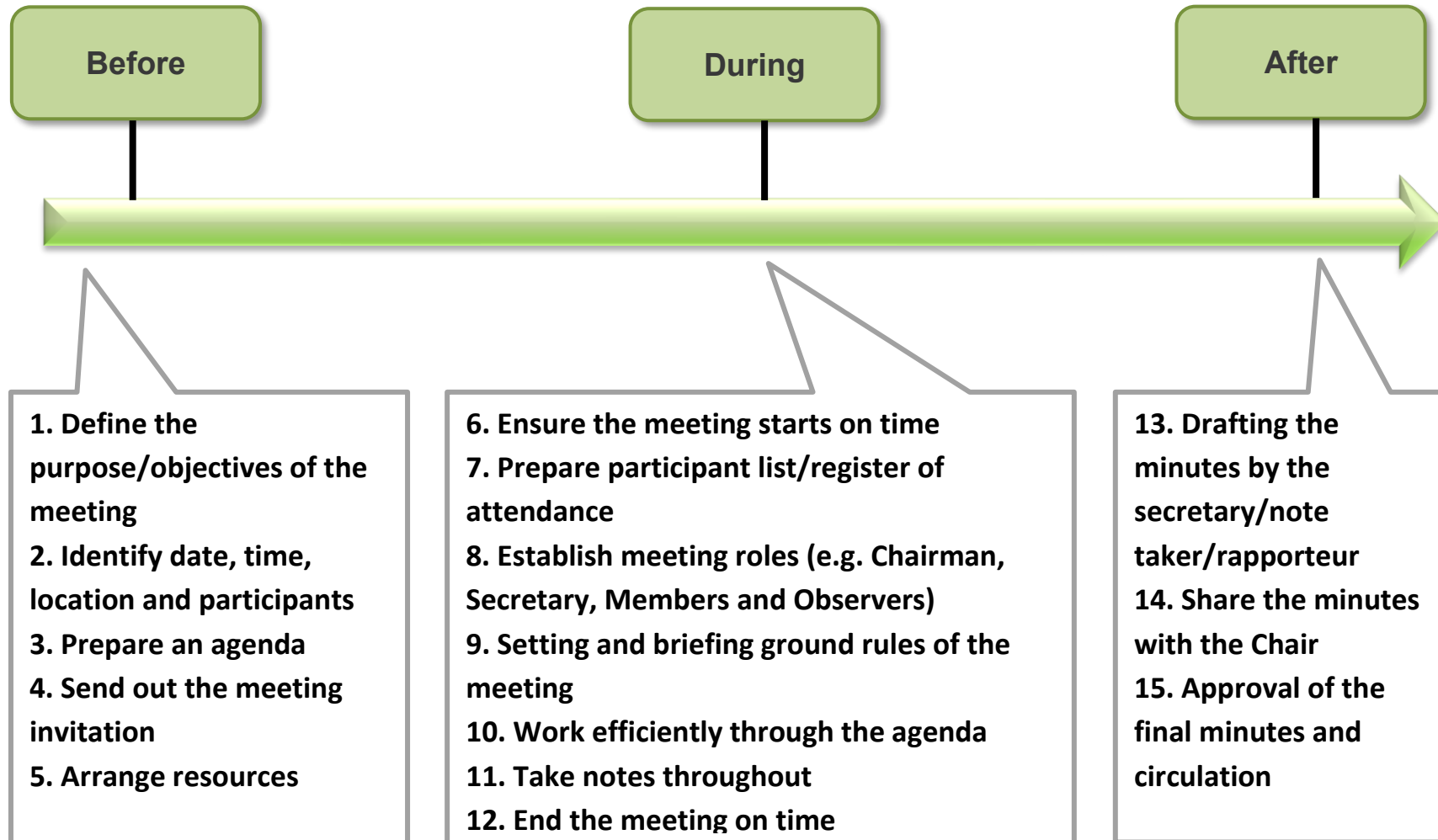
District Council meetings have some specific protocols and requirements, to which they must adhere. For more information, refer to the Regions and Districts Self-Administration Law (Law No.23/2002) Articles 47-53.



Questions for Discussion

Based on the information above, and the earlier discussion, which district local government meetings are usually more formal, and which are more 'informal'?
Is there much difference in practice around the way these meetings are run?

Diagram 1: Before, During and After a Meeting



Key points: Before the meeting

1. Define the purpose/objectives of the meeting

- Is it to gain input and ideas, make a decision, resolve a problem, share information? Or all of these?

2. Identify date, time, location and participants

- Invite those who can benefit enough for the meeting to be worth their time, and those who can contribute enough to justify their attendance.
- If someone is only needed for one topic it could be made to be the first topic for discussion, and they can exit the meeting after their item.
- Consider the quorum for the meeting (if needed).

3. Prepare an agenda

- A meeting agenda is a list of all the topics that need to be discussed at a meeting. It is an important tool, because it helps the meeting to stay focussed, rather than getting sidetracked on other issues.
- Agendas allow time to prepare for the meeting and encourage transparency of discussions and processes.
- Agendas can be formal or informal, short or long, specific or general. The rule is: If there is a meeting, there should be some kind of agenda.
- Ensure you prepare the agenda well in advance if it needs to be approved before sending out.

The agenda should include:

- all topics for discussion
- the presenter or discussion leader for each topic, if relevant
- the time allotment for each topic.

If possible, the agenda should be prepared in cooperation with some of the key participants.

See **Example 1** below for an example agenda.



*Links to the Office
Management &
Administration
Manual*

For more information, refer to:



Important!

Don't confuse meeting 'agenda' with meeting 'objectives'. Objectives are outcomes to be accomplished. The agenda is the order in which subjects will be covered. An agenda focuses discussion on certain matters and provides a reason to cut discussion off on irrelevant topics, so that the meeting objectives can be met.



Example 1: Meeting Agenda, Barako District

Name of meeting: _____ *Planning Department monthly staff meeting* _____

Meeting Chair and contact: _____ *Department Director, Mr Mohamed A.* _____

Minutes Recorder: _____ *Hodan E., Planning Officer* _____

Date of meeting: _____ *11 May 2016* _____

Start and end time of meeting: _____ *9-10 am* _____

Location: _____ *Meeting room, District Office* _____

Brief Statement of Purpose of the meeting: _____ *Discuss plans for visit to Barako District by Director General, MOI (30 & 31 May 2016) and assign tasks and a timeframe for completion.*

Topics in the order to be discussed:

1. Welcome to the District and lunch for Day 1.
2. Transport and Accommodation for site visits.
3. Liaison with VCs and other key people about timing of site visits (Mayor, District Engineers, Community Monitoring Groups etc).
4. Oversight and coordination of visit.

4. Send out the meeting invitation

- Ask for RSVPs (this means a reply to say if you will attend or not).
- Include a copy of the agenda, any follow up action items or previous meeting minutes, and/or pre-reading material so that participants can come prepared.
- Give adequate time for material to be read.

5. Arrange resources

- Room set up, equipment and materials, for example, water for participants.
- If papers need to be prepared for the meeting or to attach to the agenda, remember to prepare these with the participants in mind.

*Key points: During the meeting***6. Ensure the meeting starts on time****7. Prepare participant list/register of attendance****8. Establish meeting roles (e.g. Chairman, Secretary, Members and Observers)**

- Note that this will vary depending on the formality of the meeting.

9. Setting and briefing ground rules of the meeting

- Welcome the participants and thank them for taking the time to meet. If people do not know each other, allow time for introductions.
- Brief participants on roles or expectations from them for the meeting, for example, 'we would appreciate your input on these key issues...'
- Address housekeeping issues (if applicable).

10. Work efficiently through the agenda

- Focus on the desired outcomes.
- Keep to the time schedule (if more time on an agenda item is needed, confer with the group to decide how to proceed. The group can decide to stop, postpone or continue the discussion).

11. Take notes throughout

- Includes background of the topic, discussed topics, record all the decisions, action points, including dates of who, where and what should be done.

12. End the meeting on time

- You may wish to announce the meeting is due to end soon to check if there is any business that must be concluded during the meeting that has not been addressed or cannot wait for the next meeting.
- Summarise what has been accomplished and what needs to be done, by whom and by when.
- Review any items that needed to be addressed that were unable to be covered during the meeting.
- Ask for participant feedback, is there anything further to add or clarify?
- Thank people for their time and participation.

Key points: After the meeting

13. Drafting the minutes by the secretary/note taker/rapporteur

- Write minutes in concise phrases and not full sentences. Link in any references cited in the meeting, and clearly list a summary of outcomes and action items.
- See **Annex 21** of the District Office Administration & Management Manual for a Meeting Minutes Format.

14. Share the minutes with the Chair

- Within 48 hours after the meeting (for Council meetings).

15. Approval of the final minutes and circulation

- Circulate 72 hours after the meeting (for Council meetings).
- Quick action reinforces the importance of the meeting.
- Confirm with those responsible for action items to ensure clarity of responsibilities and timely progress.
- Follow up on items or unfinished business.

Source: Information in Steps 1-15 above adapted from 'Snapshots: Effective Meetings, Participant Workbook', Australian Bureau of Statistics.

How can the Chair ensure a successful meeting outcome?

Discussions on agenda items should not be open ended. To be useful, they need to end in some kind of resolution or plan for action that includes a timeline, otherwise a lot of talking time can be wasted for no result. The meeting Chair has a key role to play here:

- It is the role of the Chair to make sure that each agenda item has concluded with an outcome such as a resolution or plan for action, before moving on.
- It is the role of the Chair to guide participants in discussions of the agenda items. For example, if someone starts to talk about something unrelated to the agenda item, the Chair must bring him/her back to the topic.
- The Chair may need to enforce order during a meeting, for example, if people are speaking out of turn or interrupting each other, it is the job of the Chair to stop this and ensure that the person who was speaking first has a chance to finish their point before anyone else can comment.

Checklist for organising and running meetings

***Note that the suggested timeframe may vary depending on the nature of the meeting (how formal or informal), how many people will attend and where they will come from.*

Activity	Suggested timeframe**
Before the meeting	
Identify the purpose and objectives of the meeting.	1-2 weeks before
Identify date, time, place and participants.	1-2 weeks before
Develop the agenda, and seek approval if needed.	1-2 weeks before
Send out a meeting invitation including the meeting agenda.	1-2 weeks before
Identify meeting venue and book if needed	1-2 weeks before
Follow up with participants to check if they will attend.	At least 2 days before
Make catering arrangements (if needed)	Confirm 2 days before
Prepare copies of the agenda and any other background documents (for example, reports) needed for the meeting.	At least 1 day before
Prepare 'Register of meeting attendees' form, for signing.	1 day before
Visit meeting venue to set up furniture and equipment.	1 day before (if possible)
During the meeting	
Record the time the meeting starts and finishes.	During the meeting
Record everything that happens, even if not in the order as listed in the agenda.	During the meeting
Record the name of the proposer and seconder of any formal motions during the meeting.	During the meeting
Check the timeframe and person responsible for any action points to be taken before the next meeting.	Before the end of the meeting
After the meeting	
Using your notes, prepare a draft of meeting minutes.	As soon as possible
Present draft to the Chair for comment and approval.	Within 1 or 2 days after the meeting
Prepare a final copy of the minutes and forward to Chair for distribution.	Within 1 week after the meeting
Follow up on progress of action points coming from the meeting	Ongoing

Source: The above checklist developed from information contained in 'How to take minutes of meetings', J. Hawthorne (1993), Kogan Page, London.

Exercise 1: Meeting practice

In this activity we will look at some aspects of running a meeting, including what meeting behaviour is needed for a successful meeting.

Your trainer will guide you through the steps in this activity, as follows. You will need to refer to **Exercise Sheet 1** below, which is an invitation letter for the meeting, including the topics for discussion.

There are two scenarios—an ineffective meeting, and an effective meeting. One group (5 people) will act out an ‘ineffective meeting’ and another group (5 people) will act out an ‘effective meeting’. The rest of the participants will act as observers.

This meeting is a staff meeting within the Planning Department of Barako District. The main issue for discussion is the preparation for a 2 day visit by the Director General of MOI, who is going to visit a number of the projects that Barako District has implemented in the past year.

In the role play scenarios, each group will need to discuss the upcoming visit by the DG and develop action points by assigning people to the tasks in the meeting letter of invitation.

After the role play meeting, discuss the following questions in plenary:

- What were the good and bad aspects of this meeting?
- How did the Chair handle the meeting from start to end?
- How well did the different staff members contribute to the meeting?
- What are some suggestions for holding a successful meeting?

To help you prepare, refer back to the earlier sections in this Participant Book:

- *Key points: Effective Meetings*
- *How to be an effective meeting participant*
- *Formal and Informal meetings*
- *Key points: Before, During and After the meeting*
- *How can the Chair ensure a successful meeting outcome?*

Exercise Sheet 1

Scenario 1: Ineffective Meeting

Role	Behaviour
Chair of meeting (Director of Planning Department)	This person is the Chair who tries to get everyone to participate in a productive discussion about the agenda items, but this is very difficult to achieve!
Officer 1 (Note taker)	Is supposed to be the note taker but doesn't take any notes during the meeting.
Officer 2	Disagrees with everything that anyone else says.
Officer 3	Makes jokes all the time and is not serious about anything.
Officer 4	Keeps bringing up discussion points which are completely irrelevant to what is being discussed.

Scenario 2: Effective Meeting

Role	Behaviour
Chair of meeting (Director of Planning Department)	The Chair does a good job of keeping the meeting on track, ensuring that everyone has an opportunity to speak, and making sure that all comments are relevant to the topic.
Officer 1 (Note taker)	Does a good job of taking notes and asks for clarification if there is anything that he/she does not understand.
Officer 2	These three officers contribute well to the discussions, have good ideas and relevant comments, and listen to what others have to say.
Officer 3	
Officer 4	

Preparing effective meeting minutes

Learning Objectives

By the end of this topic participants will be able to:

- Prepare a set of meeting minutes in a style appropriate to the type of meeting being held.
- Prepare a set of meeting minutes that are brief, accurate, clear and objective.



Questions for Discussion

Meeting minutes are a record of what was said at a meeting and what decisions or actions were taken. Why is it important to have such a record?

Key points: Meeting Minutes—why important?

Minutes are a permanent, formal record of what happened in a meeting. Their purpose is to provide members of a group with:

- A clear, objective summary of the meeting outcomes.
- A reference of future expected follow up actions.
- Information to people who were unable to attend the meeting.
- Background on the decisions of the group and the reasons for these decisions.

It is also important to have a written record such as minutes because:

- They are useful to refer to at subsequent meetings, to ensure that no points are forgotten, repeated or remembered incorrectly.
- They are available for use as evidence at legal proceedings.
- They are useful for problem solving, for example, as evidence of what decisions were taken.
- Good meeting minutes reflect the overall performance of a district local government.

The style of meeting minutes will vary, depending on the nature of the meeting:

Informal Minutes

These are written in a narrative format in complete sentences. They include some background information, keeping in mind they are written solely for the benefit of people already familiar with the group and its activities.

Action Minutes

These are best suited for meetings that operate in a purely conversational manner. They can be written in point form. You need to identify the person or people responsible for future actions and set time limits.

Formal Minutes

In formal meetings, decisions are reached through motions. Motions are proposals placed before the members for debate and voting. These motions must be recorded verbatim.

Key points: Meeting Minutes—what to include?

Meeting minutes, particularly for formal meetings, need to include the following:

- The time, date, place and duration of the meeting.
- The name of the person who chaired the meeting, as well as the name of the meeting secretary/note taker.
- A register of all members and observers present at the meeting.
- A list of members absent from the meeting.
- A record of the discussions for each agenda item, including any reports received from any of the group's officers or committees.
- Any unfinished business or business arising from the previous meeting.
- New business, which includes new information, as well as the assigning of specific tasks to individuals and timelines.
- A record of the voting and resolutions to come from each agenda item.
- A record of any action to be taken for each agenda item and the names of those who are responsible for taking this action.
- Record the time the meeting ends, and the date, time and location of the next meeting.

Source: Adapted from 'How to take minutes of meetings', J. Hawthorne (1993), Kogan Page, London and 'Snapshots: Effective Meetings, Participant Workbook', Australian Bureau of Statistics

What do I record?

In summary, use the following as a guide:

Record <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Don't Record <input type="checkbox"/>
All relevant discussion points, including the pros and cons raised about an issue.	Anything not relevant to the discussion topic.
All motions and their results (both passed and defeated motions)	Personal comments (for example, comments that are critical of a person)
New information	Redundant information
Expected action	Your own opinions



Important!

The aim of meeting minutes is to give an accurate summary of what happened without recording 'word for word' what people said. Minutes need to be brief, accurate, clear and objective, showing no political or other bias. These characteristics are outlined in the table below.

Table 1: Characteristics of good meeting minutes

Desired Characteristic	How to achieve it?
How to be brief	It is not necessary to record everything that is said at a meeting. Therefore, it is essential to distinguish between what information <i>is</i> important and what is not. This can take some practice and becomes easier with experience.
How to be accurate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Record what decisions are made, even those where a formal vote is not taken. For example, a decision which gets unanimous support should be have the discussion recorded and the consensus noted. Ask for a clarification of any point not clear to you, or about any aspect of a decision which you do not understand and record it immediately. Note down the names or initials of all the main speakers. You may need to include recommendations not adopted and the reasons for this. You may need to attach other documents such as background papers to the minutes for future reference.
How to be clear	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Keep your writing factual and succinct. There is no need to use big words or long explanation—just keep it simple. There is also no need for fancy headings, borders or graphics in the minutes.
How to be objective	It is difficult to write accurate minutes which are balanced, but which also reflect the tone of the meeting. For example, if a point of discussion was contentious or disagreements occurred, you can record this, but without recording names. Keep your own personal opinions out of the minutes.



Examples of different formats used

1. Numbering Format

A numbering system can be useful to keep track of the different topics discussed.

1. Name of Topic as written in the agenda.

1.1 Background information about the topic—provides the reader with some contextual information about the matter to be discussed.

1.2 Discussion about the topic—gives a succinct account of the discussion that took place. It contains the key points, not everything that everyone said.

1.3 Decision made about the topic—gives details of any decisions made as a result of the meeting discussion.

1.4 Action points—gives details of any follow up action to be taken, by whom and by when.

2. Table Format

Some meeting Chairs and minute takers prefer to use a table format for their minutes.

Agenda item	Decision	Action	By Whom?	By When?
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				

Source: The above information adapted from 'How to take minutes of meetings', J. Hawthorne (1993), Kogan Page, London.



*Links to the Office Management
& Administration Manual*

**For a standard meeting minutes template, refer to:
Annex 21: Meeting Minutes Format**

Key points: Steps for preparing minutes

To be a good minute taker, you should:

- Understand the organisation's 'jargon' (the terminology that is used by people working in the organisation).
- Have background knowledge of the topics being discussed.
- Know meeting participants or at least the spelling of their names.
- Be familiar with minutes of previous meetings.

1. Pre-planning

Here is a checklist of things to ask before the meeting:

- Are you taking notes for someone else to transcribe, or will you do it yourself?
- Are there previous minutes to examine?
- When are you expected to have the first draft prepared?
- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- Are you permitted to voice your own comments in the meeting, or is your function simply to take notes?
- Will you be expected to have certain information on hand?
- Has an agenda been sent out to all the participants?
- Are you also responsible for organising the meeting, booking the room, and room setup?
- Do you have enough time to capture what is being said in the meeting, or are you expected to play other roles during the meeting as well?
- Ideally the meeting minute taker will be a separate person from the person who is responsible for logistics during the meeting, for example, getting water for participants, fixing IT issues etc.

What is the role of the note taker?

- Take notes at the meeting and produce first draft of minutes.
- Ask for clarification if a point is unclear.
- Capture relevant ideas and don't record own opinions.
- Share draft minutes with meeting Chair for approval.
- Circulate/distribute minutes if assigned this function.
- Attach other relevant documents or information to the minutes.
- Work with meeting organiser before, during and after the meeting.
- Meeting organiser shouldn't be note taker, Chair shouldn't be note taker

2. Note taking and Preparing Draft Minutes

- In formal and semiformal minutes, always write in complete sentences using the past tense and the third person, and write out names in full.
- Use a straightforward writing style and simple words.
- Use subheadings for individual topics in the body of the minutes. Each item on the agenda can become a separate heading.
- Double check all figures, dates, and spelling of names.
- You may choose to circulate the minutes to the entire group or to ask for any amendments before finalising.

3. Finalising and sharing meeting minutes

It is a good idea to proofread your meeting minutes before they are circulated. Here are some principles to guide you:

- Use a dictionary or spell check, but don't rely on it totally.
- Ignore the content of the minutes and just focus on the spelling, grammar, etc. As soon as you start paying attention to what the text is saying, you'll start assuming and stop looking.
- Assume there's at least one typo or spelling error in the text.
- Forget what you meant when you wrote the notes. Read the minutes as though you have never seen them before, and from the perspective of someone who was not at the meeting.
- Don't try to do something else when you proofread. It takes a lot of focus to proofread properly.
- Take your time. When you hurry, you guess and skim, and that usually doesn't work.
- Proofread a second time, now paying attention to the content of the text.
- Read it out loud. It is more difficult, but still not impossible, for your eyes to skip over errors when you read aloud.
- Try to have someone else proofread your work, particularly if the document is important or going public.

4. Filing of meeting minutes for future reference

- The final set of minutes, once approved and circulated, should be kept on file, both electronically and in hard copy, if possible. Depending on the type of meeting, the minutes may also need to be made public (For example, appear on a public noticeboard or website).

Source: The above information adapted from 'Snapshots: Effective Meetings, Participant Workbook', Australian Bureau of Statistics

Exercise 2: Meeting minutes analysis

In this activity we will look at a set of meeting minutes and analyse these in terms of how **accurate, brief, objective and clear** they are.

The example meeting minutes below are developed from a planning department staff meeting that took place in Exercise 1. The purpose of that meeting was to assign responsibilities for arrangements relating to an upcoming visit to Barako District by the Director General of MOI.

Your trainer will guide you through the steps in this activity, as follows. You will need to work in pairs or small groups and refer to **Exercise Sheet 2** below, which is the agenda for the meeting, plus **Exercise Sheet 3**, which is the set of minutes that was prepared following the meeting.

The activity will be to read through the minutes and identify the following:

- Is there anything in the minutes that is **inaccurate**, for example, in terms of who was (or wasn't) at the meeting?
- Is there anything in the minutes that is **not relevant** to the main points of the meeting and can be taken out?
- Is there anything in the minutes that is confusing or **unclear**?
- Is there anything in the minutes that reflects a bias, or a viewpoint that is not **objective**?

For each point that your group identifies, suggest an alternative, more appropriate way to report.

To help you prepare, refer back to the earlier sections in this Participant Book:

- *Key points: Meeting Minutes—what to include?*
- *Table 1: Characteristics of good meeting minutes*
- *Key points: Steps for preparing minutes*

Exercise Sheet 3: Meeting Minutes

Title of Meeting: _____ Monthly staff meeting, Department of Planning _____

Date: _____ 11 May 2016 _____

Place: _____ Meeting room, District Office _____

Attendees:

- Mohamed A., Director, Planning Department (Chair)
- Abdi B., Senior Planning Officer
- Halima C., Planning Officer
- Ali D., Planning Officer
- Hodan E., Planning Officer

Absent:

- Mohamed F., Planning Officer

Agenda

1. *Discuss plans for visit to Barako District by Director General, MOI (30 & 31 May 2016) and assign tasks and a timeframe for completion.*

1.1 Welcome to the District and lunch for Day 1.

1.2 Transport and Accommodation for site visits.

1.3 Liaison with VCs and other key people about timing of site visits (Mayor, District Engineers, Community Monitoring Groups etc)

1.4 Oversight and coordination of visit.

Points Discussed

Update since the last meeting (Chair). Confirming that the DG and two of his staff will be visiting the district on 30 and 31 May.

1.1 Welcome to the District and lunch for Day 1.

- Update on progress (Chair): Mayor, Executive Secretary and Department Directors will be available to welcome the DG on the morning of 30 May.
- Action: Ali D. and Hodan E. are tasked with arrangements for lunch on Day 1, action to be completed by ????????????

1.2 Transport and Accommodation for site visits.

- Update on progress. Mohamed F. told the meeting that transport arrangements are in place for visiting projects in Village A, Village B and Village C. Accommodation arrangements are still underway.
- Action: Halima C. to follow up on accommodation arrangements for the night of Monday 30 May, and have this confirmed by Thursday 19 May.

1.3 Liaison with VCs and other key people about timing of site visits (Mayor, District Engineers, Community Monitoring Groups etc)

- Update on progress. Abdi B. told the meeting that he has made contact with key people for site visits and that they are all ready for the DG’s arrival. Abdi B. also reported that he would be wearing a new suit on that day to make a good impression. The Chair suggested it would be useful to have a list of these key people, and the exact time and location of where it is planned to meet them.
- Action: Abdi B. to provide a list of key people with specific information on the time and place of the site visits to ensure the group knows who to expect. This is to be done by Sunday 22 May.

1.4 Oversight and coordination of visit

- Update on progress. The Chair reported that as he has responsibility for the oversight and coordination of the visit, it is his job to make sure that everyone completes their actions on time. Also, the Chair reported that he thinks the other district departments are so lazy, there is no possibility that they could organise and coordinate such an important visit. Only the Planning Department is good enough for this responsibility.
- Action: Chair to follow up on tasks 1.1 to 1.3 above and ensure they are completed by their due dates.

Decisions and Action points

1.1 Ali D. and Hodan E. are tasked with arrangements for lunch on Day 1, action to be completed by ????????????

1.2 Halima C. to follow up on accommodation arrangements for the night of Monday 30 May by **Thursday 19 May**.

1.3 Abdi B. to provide a list of key people with specific information on the time and place of the site visits to ensure the group knows who to expect by **Sunday 22 May**.

1.4 Chair to follow up on tasks 1.1 to 1.3 above and ensure they are completed by their due dates. **Ongoing**.

Next meeting: A special meeting will be held in the week before the visit, scheduled for Monday 23 May, at 9am.

Name	Position	Signature
1. _____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____
3. _____	_____	_____
4. _____	_____	_____

Action Plan – Module 2. Effective Meetings

Prepare an action plan for at least *one thing* that you will try to implement on your return to the workplace, based on what you have learned in this training. Some examples have been provided for you.

Activity	Who is responsible?	By when?	What do I need to help me achieve this goal?
<i>Example 1: Prepare a meeting agenda according to the format provided in the District Office Administration & Management Manual</i>			
<i>Example 2: For the next meeting where I am the note/minute taker, I will proofread my minutes before circulating them to the meeting group.</i>			
<i>Your entry here...</i>			

Conclusion

Summary

In this topic you have learned about the following:

- The important steps to consider before, during and after a meeting.
- How to prepare so that you can be an effective meeting participant.
- The key requirements for organising and running an effective meeting.



Important!

You have also been asked to make an entry in an Action Plan, which needs to be put into place back in your district, with specific responsibilities, timelines and mechanisms for follow up identified.

Assessment and Evaluation

You will be asked to complete some post-test questions, to gauge how much you have learned in this training. Your trainer will ask you to provide some feedback on the training you have just participated in, through the conduct of an evaluation activity. Your feedback will be most helpful for the ongoing improvement of these training modules.

Thank you!

Further Reading

- The 5 Star Toolkit: Running Effective Meetings

<http://www.umdni.edu/uhnetweb/fivestartoolbox/toolkits/runningeffectivemeetings.pdf>

- Be an Effective Participant: Factoidz

<http://factoidz.com/how-to-be-an-effective-participant-in-a-meeting-and-not-just-a-passenger/>

- Running Effective Meetings: Communication Skills Training from MindTools

www.mindtools.com

- Streibel, Barbara J. *The Manager's Guide to Effective Meetings*. McGraw-Hill, 2002.
- Streibel, Barbara. *Plan and Conduct Effective Meetings*. McGraw-Hill, 2007.