



GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

This is an outline of MICO's meeting and decision-making structures. The philosophy for our decision-making is: 'Good enough for now, safe enough to try'. This removes tension created by pressure to find the perfect solutions, promotes innovation and allows responsiveness to changing conditions.

1. GENERAL MEETING (GM):

Attendance: All full members are encouraged to attend. Members will be consulted on suitable dates and times.

Frequency: Bi-monthly, alternating with bi-monthly information/update meetings taking reports from Working Groups (WGs).

Quoracy: 50%

Business:

- Proposals for decision, from WGs and full members, must be submitted and circulated 48 hours before a GM
- GMs can review make up of WGs and set up new WGs as necessary or proposed by a WG
- Decisions are by consensus unless decided otherwise by the GM (see definitions of consensus and consent)
- Decisions can be locked in, usually for six months, then reviewed against agreed criteria set at time of decision
- Minutes will be kept and made available to all members

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2. SPECIAL EMERGENCY MEETINGS (SEMs)

Held when a decision is required quickly due to cost or risk that would follow from delay. If a decision is required urgently the proposal can be emailed and otherwise communicated to all members with a 48 hour deadline for response via email. The quorum in this case is 75% and

the decision is by majority.

3. WORKING GROUPS

Establishment: GMs will agree to set up working groups as the need is identified.

Membership: By nomination from GM, volunteering, co-option and rotation. Membership will reflect different points of view and skills.

Terms of Reference (ToR): these will define the remit of the group and be written by the Group and ratified by GM.

Convenor: to be agreed by members of the group. The convenor is responsible for calling meetings and ensuring a note of decisions and actions is made and filed. No MICO member should be convenor of more than one working group.

Decisions: by consent or consensus (see definitions and methods). Consent may be used for a routine decision made within the ToR of the group.

4. CO-ORDINATION GROUP

This working group has a project management function. It drives the coordination of activities to achieve MICO's [purpose, vision and values](#). It has responsibility for ensuring all other working groups are meeting and functioning according to their ToRs. It includes a representative from each of the working groups (ideally the same person). It has a project management function.

Business includes:

- Reviewing WG activities to ensure groups are sufficiently resourced and supported for a timely completion of their actions
- Identifying and communicating dependencies and risks across WGs
- Ensuring coherence across working group ToRs
- Reviewing membership of WGs to see if additional skills are required
- Reviewing WGs to see if a new group is needed
- Reviewing WG records to ensure they are accessibly stored
 - Reviewing WG activities to ensure decisions are referred to GM as appropriate

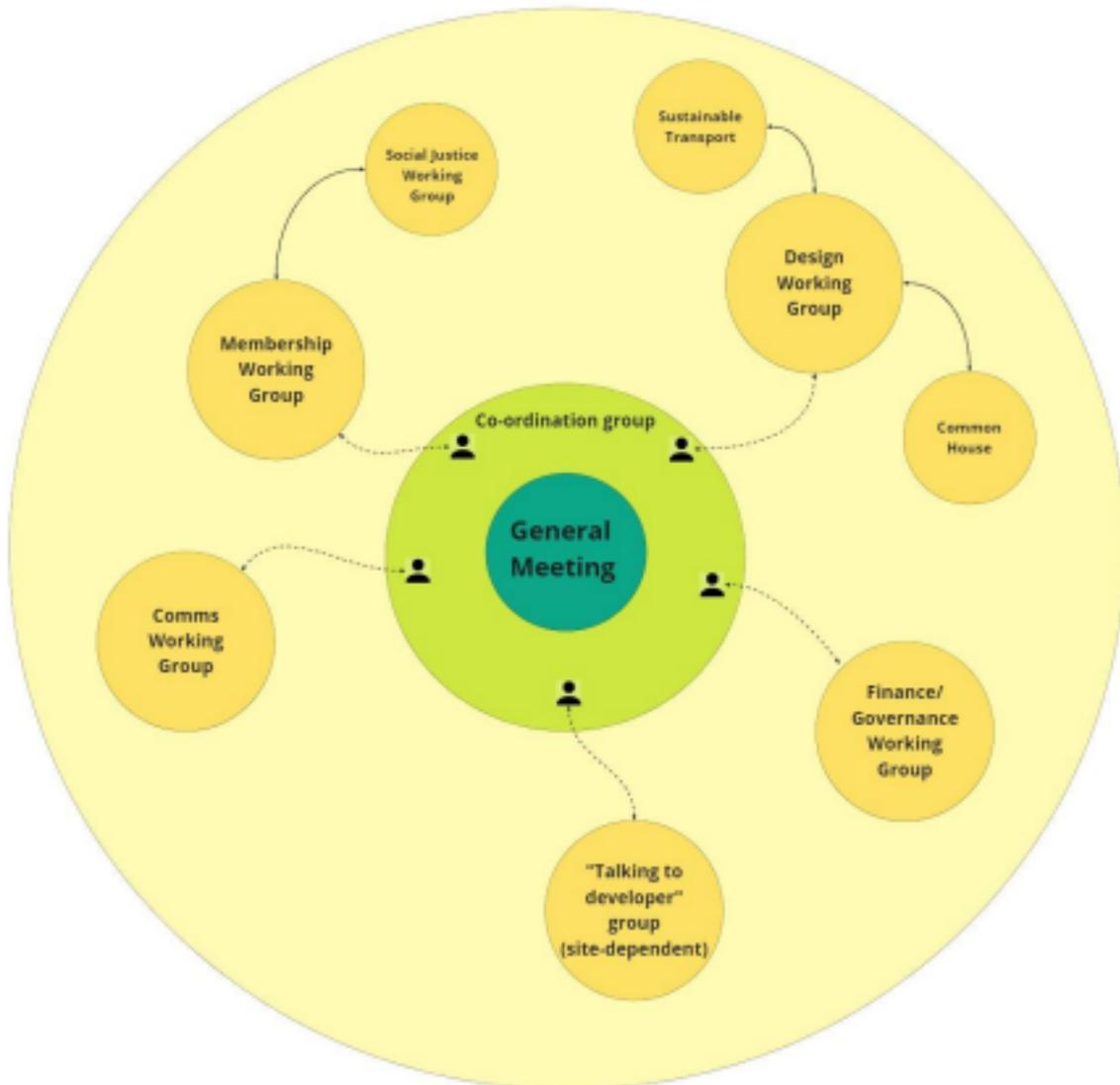
5. ACCESS TO RECORDS AND INFORMATION

Records: All WGs will file a note of their meetings and decisions, GMs will keep minutes.

Storing: the Comms group will identify through consultation a system for storing all documents that is readily accessible for all members of MICO. If training is required on that system it will be arranged by the Comms Group.

Document to be reviewed by 1/9/22

Our ecosystem of meetings and groups...



MICO Decision Making - Definitions and Methods

As we begin to get used to using these new methods of decision making, we will find out what works for us as a group. So this definition is very much a work in progress, and once the initial definitions are 'agreed', they will be reviewed and may be updated after a suitable trial period.

Introduction

Traditional majority voting processes can leave some people feeling unheard, frustrated and overruled.

MICO are intending to use a variety of different non-hierarchical decision making methods, depending on what kind of decision needs to be made.

Consensus is a way of making decisions that helps ensure everyone's voice is heard and valued and that everyone can support the decision. The eventual decisions tend to have more buy-in from everyone involved.

"Consensus decision making is a creative and dynamic way of reaching agreement between all members of a group. Instead of simply voting for an item and having the majority of the group getting their way, a group using consensus is committed to finding solutions that everyone actively supports, or at least can live with. This ensures that all opinions, ideas and concerns are taken into account." ([Consensus Handbook. Seeds for Change](#))

Consent is a form of consensus, but the focus is on 'no-one objecting' rather than 'everyone agreeing' so there is scope for decisions to be made more quickly and action to happen.

"Consent means there are no significant objections to a policy. Consent does not require agreement, affirmation or even preference. Consent is reached when no one is aware of a risk that we can't afford to take." ([Circle Forward: Consent vs. Consensus – What's the Difference?](#))

There is also still a place for majority voting, but this will be reserved for those rare occasions where not making a quick decision will have unacceptable consequences for the group.

Consensus is usually used when a complex or major issue which affects the whole of the group has to be resolved.

Consent can be more appropriate when a simpler or minor decision is needed.

Similarities

The desired outcome is a decision that everyone can live with and is often, although not always, “*Good enough for now and safe enough to try*”. Policies and community agreements can be reviewed after a period of time and processes can be changed if they’re not working for the group. For example plans to build a communal hot tub can be postponed or abandoned if the money is needed for something else this year.

There are a number of steps common to both methods.

Introducing the issue: For both consensus and consent the process begins with one person or a small group circulating enough information about the issue which needs to be decided to allow the group to be able to take part in making the decision. Time is allowed to check that all involved understand the issue, and clarification is provided where necessary.

Discussion of the proposal: Proposals are discussed, with the whole group being given the opportunity to speak and be heard. Time is allowed to modify or re-form the proposal to address any concerns raised, before being tested for consensus or consent.

Testing for agreement or consent: If a proposal is thought to go against the purpose, vision or values of the group, or may damage the group, or is outside the range of tolerance of one or more group members, then a group member can block or object to the proposal. Blocks or objections can be seen as strengths of the group, where the group members are asked to raise potential pitfalls or detrimental effects of implementing a decision.

Responding to non-agreement or objections: The group make every effort to fully understand the reasons and then consider if they can be overcome by making any further amendments to the proposal wording, shortening the trial period, incorporating additional measures to collect data on concerns, or other tweaks to achieve consensus or consent. If not then a new proposal may be required.

Continued blocks or objections can sometimes mean that the group as a whole is not yet skillful enough to find a solution or write a proposal that everyone can live with, and may benefit from practising decision making on something less contentious!

Differences

There are also some steps which differ.

1. Creating a proposal.

Consensus: a proposal is not formed until everyone has taken part in the initial discussion, and been heard, about the issue. The whole group is then invited to contribute ideas towards the initial proposal, and one or more individuals weave those ideas into a proposal. The next step is discussion of the proposal as described above.

Consent: an issue is identified within the group and one or more individuals take ownership of drafting a first proposal to bring to the group.

2. Responding to a proposal.

Consensus: each member of the group is asked whether they:

- **Agree with a proposal:** I support the proposal, and I am willing to help implement it.
- **Or have reservations:** I have some reservations but am willing to let the proposal pass, and help implement it
- **Or stand aside:** I can't support this proposal because... but I don't want to stop the group, so I'll let the decision happen without me. But I won't actively help implement it.
- **Or block a proposal:** I have a fundamental disagreement with the core of the proposal that cannot be resolved. We need to look for a new proposal.

If anyone blocks a proposal then there is no consensus and those blocking are involved in amending or creating a new proposal.

If more than 10% of the group stand aside then there is no consensus and those not in agreement must help modify the proposal in order to get enough support to implement it.

Consent: Each member of the group is asked whether they

- **Consent:** I have no objections to the proposal as it stands, and I am willing to help implement it.
- **Or object:** I can't consent to this proposal because....

