ACTIVITY SHEET 1: DECISION-MAKING
How to make sustainable decisions

When an organization makes a decision, it represents agreement among members. But 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.

DEFINE AND AGREE ON HOW DECISIONS WILL BE MADE

- What is your organization’s “Decision Rule”?
  - Consensus, majority rule, autocratic, etc.
- Who decides what?
  - Does the core or officers decide everything? Do committees decide certain things?
- What is the basis for making decisions?
  - Do members understand the organization’s purpose?

SET THE TONE

- It’s okay to disagree.
  - Don’t take disagreements or challenges personally.
  - Check-in with those who disagree
- It’s okay to make mistakes.
  - If the group makes a decision that results in errors, the group can discuss what happened and learn from it together.
- Be open-minded.
  - Remember that it’s a group decision. Welcome new ideas. Try new ways.
- It’s not life or death.
  - Even if you know you’re right, it is not worth fighting over.

KEY STEPS IN DECIDING

- Summarize the main points of the discussion.
- Clarify the decision being made.
- Check decisions for full-investment
  - Draw out remaining questions
- 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.
- Use your organization’s “Decision Rule” to reach a decision.
- Record it!

This Activity Sheet was written by staff and student leaders of SOMeCA. The concepts and tips have been developed through application and reflection.