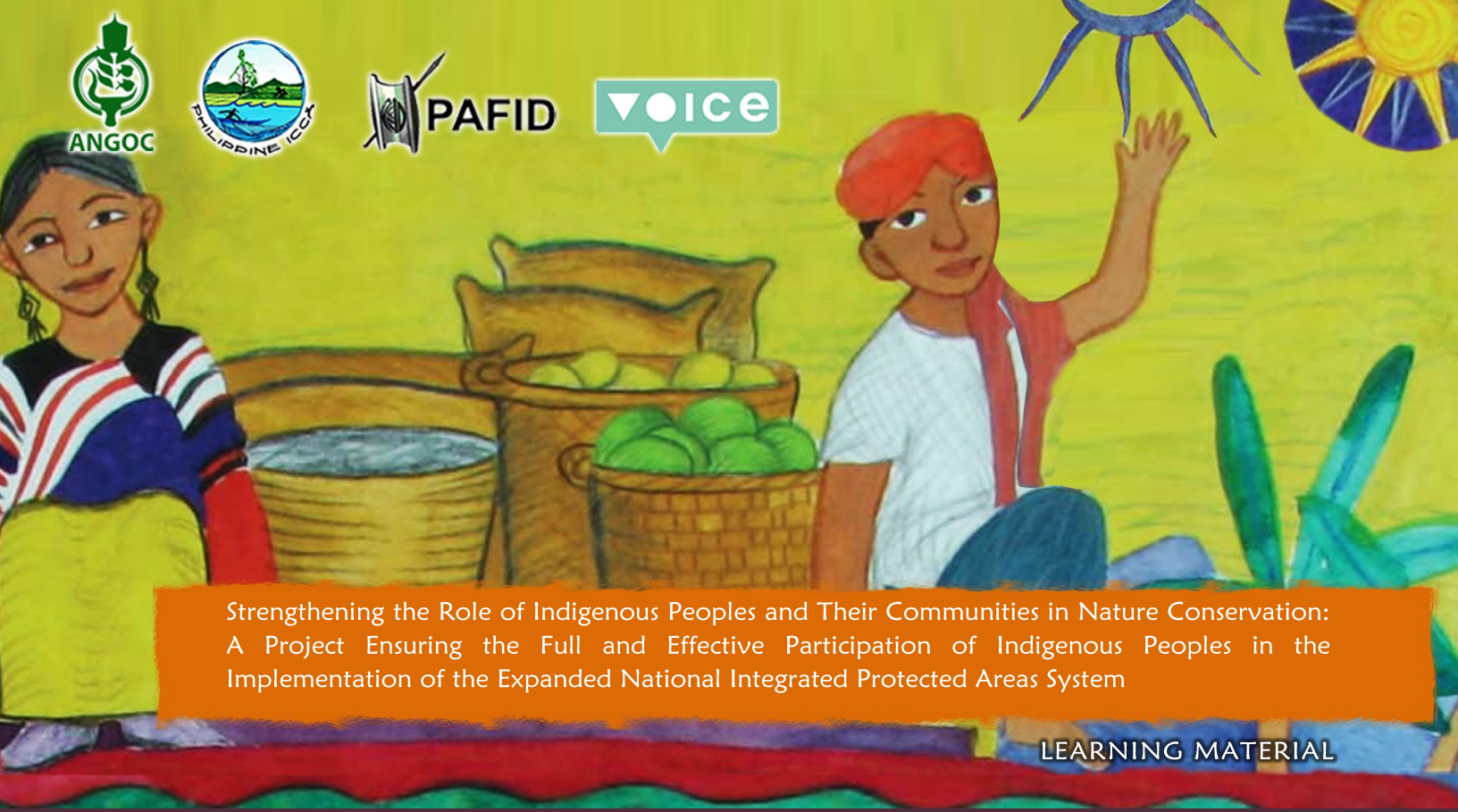




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Strengthening the Role of Indigenous Peoples and Their Communities in Nature Conservation: A Project Ensuring the Full and Effective Participation of Indigenous Peoples in the Implementation of the Expanded National Integrated Protected Areas System

LEARNING MATERIAL

Basics of Meetings: Setting the Agenda

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Introduction

A meeting is when two or more people come together, by arrangement or by chance, to discuss one or more topics towards achievement of a common goal – such as sharing of information or coming to an agreement.

Types of meetings

There are several types of meetings, the most common are:

- **Committee meeting** - A meeting of a particular committee, whether within one group/organization or among individuals from different groups/organizations
- **Investigative meeting** - Generally when conducting a pre-interview, exit interview, or a meeting between an investigator and witness or suspect
- **Kickoff meeting** - The first meeting of a project team to discuss the role of each party in the project
- **Townhall meeting** - An informal public gathering, either hosted by management for employees or politicians for constituents
- **Work meeting** - Produces a product or tangible result such as a decision (those involved in the meeting are typically referred to as the *working group*)
- **Board meeting** - A regular or special meeting of an organization’s Board of Directors
- **Management meeting** - A meeting among managers of an organization
- **Staff meeting** - A meeting presided over by a manager with his/her staff

- **Team meeting** - A meeting among project team members on various aspects of the project

The Protected Areas Management Board (PAMB) meeting is both a *Board meeting* and a *Team meeting*, at the same time, since the participants are members of the PAMB, which is a “Board” that meet to discuss various aspects of the protected area.

Purpose of meetings

People come together for meetings for a purpose or an objective; otherwise, the activity will just be a waste of time. The need for meetings can be explained by the five (5) general purposes of meetings:

Decision-making meetings	This type of meeting is all about making or arriving at a decision.
Innovation meetings	Brainstorming sessions generally fall under this category. Innovation is key to every organization; that is why innovation meetings are some of the more important meetings that an organization does.
Information sharing meetings	Information sharing meetings are all about informing attendees about a specific issue or subject matter. These types of meetings are usually educational (ex. seminars and panel discussions).
Status update meetings	Status meetings provide opportunities to share project updates and keep your team on top of decisions in your organization.
Team building meetings	Meetings designed to help staff work better together. Team building meetings can be in the form of a discussion, group games, or even a session with a motivational speaker.

As in the case of PAMB meetings, the objectives are dovetailed with the Board's reason for existence, which include:

- Decide on matters relevant to the protected area;
- Approve proposals, plans, and guidelines;
- Delineate boundaries and buffer zones;
- Ensure implementation of programs; and,
- Monitor compliance with governing laws and regulations.

Each type of meeting has its purpose, but they all require a considerable degree of planning to be successful.

Components of Meetings

There are three main components of meetings:

Content	What will be discussed during the meeting
Interaction	How the participants behave during the meeting
Structure	How the meeting will go smoothly; the agenda discussed and process; and the rules of engagement

Planning and Preparation for a Meeting

Of prime importance for the success of any meeting is the attitude and leadership of the **Chairperson or Facilitator**. The Chairperson or Facilitator drives the direction and pace of the meeting and basically plays the role of leader of the group.

For a meeting to be effective, the Chairperson or Facilitator has to:

- Manage how the subjects on the agenda are discussed.
- Maintain harmony within the group by encouraging and fostering harmonious discussions.
- Persuade participants to actively participate and contribute to the discussions.

For PAMB meetings, the DENR Regional Director is the Chairperson. If the protected area falls under the jurisdiction of two regions, then one of the Regional Directors is designated as Chairperson.

Before any meeting, the Chairperson/Facilitator with the aid of the secretariat, should ask and resolve the following questions:

- What is the purpose of the meeting?
- Is a meeting appropriate?
- How should the meeting be planned?
- Who should attend the meeting?
- What preparation is required for the meeting?

PAMB secretariat functions such as preparing the function room prior to the meeting, tracking attendance, documentation and note-taking, and following-up the attendees after the meeting are handled by the Protected Area Supervisor (PASu).

What is the Purpose of the Meeting?

All meetings work towards a purpose and the Chairperson must ask the following questions:

- What is the meeting trying to achieve?
- Does a particular issue require outside intervention for it to be resolved?
- Does a particular problem require prompt discussion?
- Is this just a meeting to keep members "in touch" with each other and the with the workplan?

Is a Meeting Appropriate?

The Chairperson/Facilitator or the secretariat should always consider whether a meeting is necessary or if some other means of communication is more appropriate; for example, memos or emails targeted to individuals inviting comments on particular documents (e.g., reports, proposals). Some meetings may be perceived by participants as a waste of time and may lead to frustration and less motivation to participate in succeeding meetings.

By law, the PAMB en banc is required to meet at least twice a year while its Executive and Technical Working Committees must meet every quarter. In addition, the PAMB Chair may convene special meetings when there are urgent matters to discuss. The same goes for the Technical Working Committees.

How Should the Meeting be Planned?

In the context of the PAMB, the PASu sends a notice of the meeting, signed by the chairperson, to all PAMB members at least 10 days before the scheduled meeting. The notice of the meeting shall contain the date, time, venue, provisional agenda and pertinent documents (such as minutes of the previous meeting).

Who Will Attend the Meeting?

This depends on the nature of the meeting. For small organizations, a meeting can involve all staff while a committee meeting already has its identified members. For large departments or organizations, a meeting can involve staff who can represent others. It is important that the individuals concerned realize the full implications of such representation, as they are not merely speaking for themselves.

Attendees of PAMB en banc meetings are all of the PAMB members, to wit:

- The DENR Regional Director (Chairperson);
- One Autonomous Regional Government representative (if applicable);
- The Provincial Planning and Development Officer of each province covered by the protected area;
- One representative of each of the municipalities/cities covered by the protected area;
- One representative of each barangay covered by the protected area;
- At least three but not more than five representatives of local NGOs and community organizations; and,
- One representative each, if necessary, from other departments or national government agencies involved in the protected area.

In addition, the PAMB Chair may invite as resource persons other DENR officers, representatives of other national government agencies, civil society, and individual experts, who may be able to provide relevant inputs in the meeting.

What Preparations are Needed for the Meeting?

If a maximum contribution is to be forthcoming from all participants, all should recognize the purpose of the meeting. Of utmost importance is the circulation of the agenda beforehand to all meeting participants. The agenda should:

- provide the meeting date, time, and venue/place;
- contain the topics and issues to be discussed, and identifying who will introduce them;
- have any relevant documents attached; and,
- give the time the meeting will close.

The agenda is the outline plan for the meeting or simply the list of items to be discussed at a meeting. It should include:

- What the meeting is about and what should it achieve; and
- How will the items be discussed to achieve the meeting's purpose?

Depending on the organization and participants, the agenda may have more or less details. However, it should contain when a particular topic or issue will be discussed (timeframe).

In most formal meetings it is drawn up by the secretariat, in consultation with the Chairperson. The secretariat must circulate the agenda well in advance of the meeting, including any accompanying documents. The secretariat also requests items for inclusion in the agenda.

An example of an agenda might be:

- Minutes of the last meeting;
- Matters arising (from minutes of last meeting);
- Item 1: Training & Development;
- Item 2: Report on Funding;
- Item 3: Finance & Equipment;
- A.O.B. (Any Other Business); and,
- Time and date of next meeting.

In the context of the PAMB, the secretariat recommends the provisional agenda to the Chair based on pressing issues and concerns of the protected area. Matters that have been left hanging from the previous meeting should also be included in the agenda. The agenda also includes updates from the Technical Working Committees.

Any member of the PAMB may propose additional items to the provisional agenda. The calendar of business for regular PAMB meetings is as follows:

- Approval of the provisional agenda;
- Reading and approval of the Minutes of as well as matters arising from the last meeting;
- Specific agenda items for discussion;
- Status of existing programs;
- Technical Working Committee Reports, as applicable; and,
- Other matters.

An agenda serves several functions, before, during, and after a meeting.

These functions include :

<i>Helping attendees plan their schedule.</i> A clearly mapped-out schedule of topics to be presented and discussed helps potential attendees to decide whether they need to be present for a particular part of the meeting. They can decide whether to attend, just send written contributions, or send a representative.
<i>Helps invitees to prepare for the meeting.</i> Along with any documents, it allows them to understand what will be discussed and to think about the issues in advance. They can also conduct necessary research so that they have information on-hand to make an effective contribution.
<i>Provides a structure for the meeting.</i> An agenda presents the main topics to avoid and discourage participants to diverge from it.
<i>Allows the Chair to effectively preside over the meeting.</i> A timed agenda helps the Chair decide whether to move on to the next item when the time allotted for a particular item is up. S/He can then ask the attendees to continue the discussion elsewhere if necessary.
<i>It is a way to evaluate the success of the meeting.</i> An agenda that clearly includes the purpose of the meeting enables attendees to see whether the meeting has achieved its aim. This also means that the agenda may clarify if there is a need for another meeting(s) on the subject.

How to Set an Agenda

There are, in general, at least six broad areas to be covered in an agenda:

Logistics. Includes when the meeting will take place and at what times, the venue, the title of the meeting, and the list of participants.

Objective. What is the meeting about? Is this a one-time meeting or the first in a series of meetings on a particular subject or project?

Housekeeping. This item includes all the opening rituals: **welcome and round of introductions (if needed), approval of previous minutes,** and any **matters arising** from the last meeting.

Housekeeping may also cover any amendments to the last set of minutes, which is formally documented in the minutes of the current meeting.

Items. This section is the main part of the agenda. Each agenda item should have a number, a title, and should indicate the name and designation of the person who will present it, along with a suggested time limit on the discussion.

To accurately ascertain the time to be allotted for discussions, the secretariat may ask the presenter how long they think a particular item will take, and then discuss it with the Chair. The final allocation must be based on the items' relevance to the meeting's objectives. (AOB)

While "Any Other Business" or "AOB" item can be important in order to discuss other topics that have not been included in the agenda, it is crucial that the Chair determine how this item will be discussed.

At the end of the day, a well-run meeting, with a well-prepared agenda, should mean that nobody wishes to raise any other business.

Close. The meeting should close with the Chair's summary, the date and time of the next meeting, any actions agreed upon, and those responsible for them. This is important for accountability for tasks and will be evaluated before or during the next meeting.

TIP!

Agendas should be short and sweet, ideally no more than one page. Brief explanatory notes should be included for every item to enable attendees to prepare and effectively participate.

Breaks in the Agenda

There are meetings that can go all day or even more than a day. In these cases, breaks in the agenda are advised. However, PAMB meetings are usually done within one day.

Making Meetings More Productive

An effective agenda ensures free-flowing and focused discussion during the course of the meeting. It ensures that the meeting achieves its aim, and that attendees do not feel that their time has been wasted. □

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The Asian NGO Coalition for Agrarian Reform and Rural Development (ANGOC) a regional association of national and regional networks of civil society organizations (CSOs) in Asia actively engaged in promoting food sovereignty, land rights and agrarian reform, sustainable agriculture, participatory governance, and rural development. ANGOC member networks and partners work in 10 Asian countries together with some 3,000 CSOs and community-based organizations (CBOs). ANGOC actively engages in joint field programs and policy discussions with national governments, intergovernmental organizations (IGOs), and international financial institutions (IFIs).

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The formation of Bukluran Para sa Pangangalaga ng Kalikasan ng Pilipinas (BUKLURAN, Inc.) or the Philippine Indigenous Peoples Community Conserved Territories and Areas Consortium (Philippine ICCA Consortium) is a nationwide network of community membership-based indigenous people's organizations (IPOs) of all ethnographic types. It is premised on bringing together indigenous peoples who assert and utilize traditional governance to protect community-conserved areas. Common to its members is the shared view that indigenous peoples' survival depends on the protection of valuable knowledge systems and the ancestral lands on which we thrive and persist. Our community-conserved areas can become the ultimate driving force in the conservation of biodiversity when our rights to our land and resources are respected and recognized.

Our main purpose is to carry out and realize the full recognition and respect for the rights, governance and self-management of our ancestral lands.

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Philippine Association for Intercultural Development, Inc. (PAFID) is a social development organization which has been assisting Philippine indigenous communities to secure or recover traditional lands and waters since 1967. It forms institutional partnerships with indigenous communities to secure legal ownership over ancestral domains and to shape government policy over indigenous peoples' issues. PAFID works exclusively with the indigenous peoples' sector, specifically upon written or signed requests for assistance from indigenous communities or their representatives. PAFID envisions indigenous communities as responsible stewards of their resources.

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