EARN EXECUTIVE

Proposal for more effective EARN Executive meetings

issued by
P Bryant
December 2, 1988

---

1 Background

The decision making within the EARN Executive is not as effective as it should be. The reasons seem to be:

* Members can only meet infrequently.

* Electronic communications have proved to be very useful but no substitute for face to face meetings.

* Members are confronted by a large amount of paper.

* The items requiring decision and the options available are not clear.

* There is some difficulty in differentiating between items requiring a decision and those for information.

This paper suggests a way in which meetings can be made more effective.

2 Agendas

The agendas could be:

* Minutes

* Action list

* Items for decision.

* Confidential items for decision.

* EXEC planning

* Items for information.

3 Items for decision

Items for decision should be accompanied by a paper. Papers should contain a proposal or set of proposals. Papers should summarise the issues and reasoning behind the proposals. This should not be a collection of mail documents but key documents may be appended if really necessary. Normally the proposal should take all the relevant correspondence into account.

The result of a proposal should be:

* Acceptance of one or more of the proposals perhaps with minor amendments.

* Referral back to the author or sub-group for re-drafting.

* Rejection. In this case the proposal is not expected to ever be approved.

Proposal papers should be numbered, filed, and if appropriate published.

4 Confidential items for decision

As for section 3 except that documents and minutes for these items will not be published.

5 EXEC planning

The draft agenda will be developed for the subsequent meetings. Actions will be placed for the development of proposals either from members or from sub-groups.

Attendance at future external meetings will be agreed and any policy for these meetings developed.

6 Items for information

Items will be circulated. There will be un-minuted discussion if time permits. Any papers will not be catalogued.

Items should include:

Reports of meetings. Any proposals from these meetings should be in the decision section.

Reviews of relations with other organisations.

General discussion.

7 Minutes

The minutes will contain:

* Any amendments to the minutes

* Decisions. These will record the action taken on a proposal and any minor amendments.

* Confidential decision. As above except that the published version will not contain this section.

* EXEC planning. This will be a schedule of proposals for future meetings together with the officers responsible for the proposals. The list of expected external meetings and attendees should be recorded.

* Actions. This will be a rolling list of actions.

Minutes will be published as soon as approved together with accepted proposals. Confidential items will be removed.

8 Commentary

The aim of this proposal is to ensure that decisions are taken and that such decisions are clear and complete. If a decision cannot be arrived at then this is a sure indication that discussion should cease and a person or sub-group should produce a revised proposal at their

leisure. This should prevent long discussions with no concrete outcome.

The hope is that good meeting preparation and taking important items first will reduce the time to take decisions and leave the remainder of the meetings for less important items.