



**ESAAMLG PROCEDURES FOR HOLDING TASK FORCE OF SENIOR  
OFFICIALS AND COUNCIL OF MINISTERS' MEETINGS**

5 September 2020

## **ESAAMLG General Procedures for holding meetings and making decisions:**

The following detailed procedures are set out in terms of Articles VII(2), VII(4)(p), IX(2), IX(4)(q) and X of the ESAAMLG Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to provide for holding of ESAAMLG Task Force of Senior Officials (Task Force) and Council of Ministers' (Council) meetings.

1. The Council or the Task Force Plenary may make decisions in any of the three following ways: (1) through physical meetings; (2) through virtual meetings; or (3) by "written process".
2. The Task Force and Council Plenary meetings are normally held as physical meetings except under extraordinary circumstances<sup>1</sup>.
3. Under extraordinary circumstances, the President of the Council or the Chairperson of the Task Force, following consultation with members, may call for a virtual Council of Ministers or Task Force meeting, respectively (including video conference and online meetings) instead of the normal physical meeting. The decision to hold a regular Plenary meeting in virtual form may also extend to the working group meetings of that Plenary cycle unless expressly decided otherwise.
4. Under certain circumstances (for example, when the need arises for the Council or Task Force Plenaries to decide on an issue urgently/before their next meeting), the President of the Council or the Chairperson of the Task Force on his own or through prior agreement of the Plenary, may call for a decision through a "written process" without convening a physical meeting as per their respective mandates under the ESAAMLG MoU. The Procedures in this regard are as follows:
  - a. Circulating the proposal in writing to Members of the Council (in the case of Council of Ministers) or Heads of Delegation (in the case of Task Force) for their written response by a designated deadline.
  - b. The President or the Chairperson, giving a reasonable time for consideration to all members, may ask for a response from all members; or may indicate that no response by the deadline will be considered as agreement with the proposal; or the proposal shall be considered adopted if one third (1/3) of members does not object to the proposal in writing.
  - c. All comments received from members of the Council or Heads of Delegation should be shared with all members.
  - d. Once a decision is reached, the President of the Council or the Chairperson of the Task Force may communicate it to all members and may also include the decision as an information item on the agenda of the following Plenary meeting/s so that it will become part

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<sup>1</sup> An unexpected prohibiting hinderance happening, for example, when a physical meeting is impossible due to the COVID-19 pandemic

of the record of that meeting/s.

- e. Notwithstanding Sub-paragraphs 9 and 10 of this Paragraph, the decision taken shall be valid as if it was taken at a meeting of the Council or the Task Force, *only if one third (1/3) of members does not object in writing to the decision.*
5. For the Task Force, or Council Plenary decisions to be valid: a quorum of members should be present (for physical meetings); or should have validated their presence (for virtual meetings); or should have expressed themselves (for written process). A quorum for a meeting of either the Council of Ministers or the Task Force will exist when at least one half of the member countries are present.
6. All member countries participate in meetings. Co-operating and Supporting Nations and Observers may attend and participate in meetings, unless Member Countries at a meeting of the Council of Ministers or Task Force decide otherwise.
7. Only member countries present during meetings held physically or virtually, have the right to vote and each member country has one vote at meetings of the Council of Ministers or Task Force. The process for written procedures is as described in paragraph 4, above.
8. Notwithstanding paragraph 7, Observers and Supporting Nations may participate in the discussion of mutual evaluation reports.
9. Resolutions of the Council of Ministers shall be adopted by three quarters majority of the Member countries present.
10. The Task Force Plenary makes decisions by consensus. Deciding an issue by consensus does not mean achieving unanimous agreement but seeks to have all members of the Plenary consent to the decision. As this requires members' engagement and ownership of issues on which the Plenary decides, sufficient time should be given to allow the Plenary to substantively discuss the issues.
11. The procedure for making decisions through consensus is as follows:
  - a. The Chairperson of the Task Force (or his representative in his absence) presents an item (proposal) to the Plenary for discussion.
  - b. The Plenary discusses the item. This discussion may include input not only from members but also from Cooperating and Supporting Nations and Organisations and Observers.
  - c. At a certain point, the Chairperson calls on members to decide on the item. He/she may call on members: either (1), to agree with the item (proposal); or (2), to express their disagreement with it.
  - d. If consensus is not achieved, the Chairperson may potentially start another round of discussion to allow members who disagree with the item (proposal) to clarify their concerns.
  - e. On the basis of this next round of discussion, the item (proposal) may be modified to address the concerns expressed, and the Chairperson may then once again call for a decision, and the cycle of discussion is

repeated until a decision is reached or the discussion is postponed to allow delegations to make further consultations.

- f. When consensus is blocked, no decision is made. This means that if a proposal to change something is not accepted, the decision is understood to leave the item unchanged. If there is no consensus on an entirely new proposal, the decision is understood that the proposal is not adopted.