

## Preparing meeting minutes

This exercise introduces a fictitious planning situation, set out on the exercise sheet on page 3, to practise minute-taking. The situation and the characters involved have been chosen with the aim of providing a lively but not too technical discussion related to topical issues of environmental planning. You may use any other situation and characters to adapt the exercise to your own requirements and local conditions.

### Requirements

- Approx. 45 min for one presentation and discussion of results (see item 7 below), about 10 min more for each subsequent presentation and discussion;
- A room with enough space so that several groups can convene and discuss without disturbing each other.

### Schedule

1. Students are divided into groups of four to five, each group representing the board of a local action group. They are handed out copies of the exercise sheet on page 3.
2. Every student must choose one of the characters to represent. One person of the group is appointed to be a secretary who will take the minutes.
3. The groups, separated from each other, will then each hold a meeting of 15 minutes. Within this period they should produce a result as stated on the fact sheet. The participants should be encouraged by the teacher to take controversial standpoints and bring in their own factual knowledge in order to ensure a lively discussion.
4. Having finished their meeting, the group will have five more minutes to prepare a neat copy of their meeting minutes, if they consider it necessary. This task can be delegated to anyone in the group.
5. Minutes will now be passed round so that group B gets hold of the minutes of group A etc.
6. Group B has five minutes to get familiar with group A's proceedings and elect a spokesperson.
7. Group B is now to state and justify the results of group A's meeting as if they were their own. Any other group may bring up questions to group B. The focus is on making clear how the decisions of group A came about. This may be repeated for all groups if there is enough time left.

## Evaluation

The presentations will reveal the quality of the meeting minutes. Based on the minutes taken by others, the speakers should be able to reproduce a discussion they did not take part in themselves. If they cannot make things clear, they should say why, and the shortcomings of the respective meeting minutes should be discussed.

### Tips for organising the exercise

- ✔ Before the meetings start, make sure that everybody understands the planning situation to be discussed.
- ✔ If you know about a real, suitable case – use that instead of the fictitious one outlined here.
- ✔ If you have time, you can encourage the students to use one of the collaborative planning methods from the 'Methods and tools' section of CoPack in their meetings.

## Exercise sheet

### THE SITUATION

A rural municipality of approx. 1,000 inhabitants is seeking **energy self-sufficiency** by exploiting renewable energies available on their territory. For this purpose, a local action group has been constituted, and there is a **citizens' cooperative** who is willing to invest in any kind of energy complying with the rural character of the village. The village borders a landscape protection area featuring valuable forests and has retained a fairly traditional quality, with tourism generating revenue for some of its inhabitants.

Possible forms of renewable energy to be exploited are:

- Wind energy by erecting turbines of 100 kW to 1 MW, varying in size and visual impact on the scenery, whose output can be fed to the electric grid.
- Solar energy from rooftop or ground-mounted photovoltaic arrays, which can also be fed to the grid,
- Biomass accruing from conventional agriculture, mostly slurry, which can be turned into biogas, powering a combined heat and power station to be erected in the village. The side-effect of gasification is emissions of gaseous ammonia which may damage trees.

### MEETING PARTICIPANTS

The board of the action group holding the meeting consists of the following:

- **Mayor-representative** of the village – is eager to increase the grade of self-sufficiency but keep the village attractive and open to visitors;
- **Local farmer** – would like to supply biomass as well as sell a certain area of derelict farmland to mount solar panels on to the community;
- **Environmentalist** – is concerned about nature and landscape conservation;
- **Representative of the citizens' cooperative** – may take any point of view complying with preservation of the village character;
- **Manager of an electrical company** living in the village – favours wind turbines as a solution, is also member of the citizens' cooperative and holds a 45% share in its investment capital.

### THE MEETING

The meeting is to decide which forms of renewable energy should have priority with the planning and investment decisions to come. It should produce a **scheme of energy forms** to develop with their respective percentage in the total power to be installed, and a rough **schedule of next steps** to be taken.