

## **COLLABORATION**

### **Definition**

Collaboration between IEA and IEASO means the ability to work well together in order to identify and achieve goals and to identify and solve problems. The three anchor groups (the IEA Management, the IEA Executive Committee and the IEASO Executive Committee) will work together to foster an atmosphere conducive to collaboration. However, the absence of agreement does not mean an absence of collaboration. Successful collaboration requires trust, good communication, time, patience, honesty, candor and respect.

### **Why Collaborate?**

1. To achieve best quality decisions by sharing and considering multiple perspectives and views prior to the making of decisions.
2. To ensure that the implementation of decisions will be supported and enabled by the people impacted by those decisions.
3. To change the way the groups interact with each other so that collaboration involves more than decision-making. It includes sharing information, and seeking feedback to related issues the parties identify.

Collaboration may require changes in the traditional roles of groups, although it does not require giving up any advocacy.

### **Desired Results**

1. High quality, more widely supported decisions.
2. A clear understanding of the scope and the process of collaboration.
3. Each group feels as if it is treated equitably.
4. Each constituency group accepts responsibility for both participation in and the outcomes of the collaborative process.

### **Acknowledging and managing the tension between advocacy and collaboration**

No constituent group will be expected to give up its advocacy role in order to collaborate. When conflict arises between advocacy and collaboration, an interest-based process will be utilized to resolve those differences. When differences cannot be resolved each group will respect the other's right to pursue alternative forms of advocacy.

## ***TRUST***

**Definition:** Trust is confidence or a belief in the honesty, reliability and integrity of the people, entities and processes of the Association.

### **To Build and Maintain Trust**

1. Be trustworthy. Commit to act consistently in a manner in which you have said you would.
2. Share information and exchange interests before reaching conclusions.
3. Develop an atmosphere conducive to collaboration through open and honest communication and active listening.
4. Include stakeholders in making decisions that affect them.
5. Resolve conflicts as soon as possible at the level where they occur.
6. Assure that respective constituencies are given the same message.
7. Do not repeat rumors. Go to the person/leadership involved.
8. Maintain a risk free atmosphere in which to communicate and explore ideas.
9. Be respectful, courteous and accepting of each other's perspectives, needs, roles and interests.
10. Treat and respond to people as individuals, recognize their dignity, and appreciate the unique talents and contributions they bring to the organization.
11. Assume positive intentions.
12. Model and positively reinforce the behaviors that we want to foster.
13. Encourage and support risk-taking.
14. Have a willingness to suspend disbelief.

### **If Trust is Broken ...**

1. Confront rumors and problems immediately.
2. Verify that trust was, in fact, broken.
3. Acknowledge responsibility, apologize and assure it won't happen again.
4. Practice forgiveness.
5. When any party feels trust is violated or in question, discuss it explicitly.
6. Develop ground rules which allow us to work together until trust is rebuilt.
7. Be patient in rebuilding trust.

### ***ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES***

IEASO, IEA Management, and IEA Governance are committed to carrying out their responsibilities and duties in a collaborative manner. This commitment requires that all parties have meaningful involvement in key decisions which give direction and purpose to IEA. Such involvement shall include but not be limited to:

#### **Strategic Plan**

The Strategic Plan will be developed jointly by the three anchors (the IEA Executive Committee, the IEA Management & the IEASO Executive Committee) to be presented to the IEA Board of Directors for approval.

The Board will seek and consider input from the IEA Management and the IEASO Executive Committee in making policy decisions as outlined in the Strategic Plan.

#### **Budget**

The Board will align a budget consistent with the Strategic Plan.

IEASO representatives and IEA Management will serve without portfolio on the Budget Committee to share, advise, and consult on budget development.

## **United Council**

The parties will participate as full partners in a United Council to address, share, and jointly problem-solve issues which directly impact the parties involved.

## **United Council Structure**

The United Council shall consist of 9 members: the 3 Officers from Governance; the IEASO President and 2 Vice-Presidents; and from Management, the Executive Director, the Director of Field Services, and an Administrative Assistant Representative.

The United Council does not replace any of the currently existing groups, i.e. Labor/Management, Strategic Planning Committee.

## **What the United Council Does:**

1. Plans Strategic Planning sessions.
2. Monitors directions, charges and activities of IEA's Strategic Plan and the collaboration document.
3. Encourages the IEASO Executive Committee, the IEA Management, and the IEA Executive Committee to be responsible and accountable to their respective constituent groups in an on-going manner.
4. Identifies and addresses obstacles that block effective decision-making.
5. Provides a forum to promote and share innovative ideas that affect the future of IEA.
6. Plans an annual meeting of the Board of Directors and all IEA employees regarding the status of our collaborative relationship and the Strategic Plan.

## ***Decision Making Guiding Principles***

The following groups should apply these guiding principles for decision making:

1. Strategic Planning Group
2. United Council
3. Those implementing critical IEA decisions, which are decisions directly related to Strategic Issues.

We further believe these guiding principles can be used as a model for other decisions made by the IEA.

We recognize that some decisions must conform to procedures contained in other governing documents or laws, such as the IEA and IEASO Bylaws, the collective bargaining agreements, and labor laws. However, even in those situations these guiding principles should be used to the extent allowed.

1. Decisions should be made in a timely manner.
2. Decisions should be reached in a collaborative manner using interest-based principles, such as those in Getting to Yes.
3. Decisions should be made as close as possible to those stakeholders affected by the decision.
4. The level of involvement by stakeholders, e.g., inform, consult, negotiate, should be agreed to in advance by the stakeholders.
5. People affected by the decision should be represented as part of the decision-making process.
6. All relevant and pertinent information to make a decision will be shared among decision-makers in a timely manner.
7. All decision-makers will have reasonable access to necessary resources, including personnel and technology.
8. In the circumstance when time requires that a decision be made by the IEA without collaboration, all affected stakeholders will be promptly informed of the decision.
9. The decision and the decision-making process will be promptly communicated to all those affected by the decision.

### **Assessment**

1. To learn how to make better decisions in the future, decision makers and stakeholders will assess what was effective and ineffective with (a) the decision and (b) the decision-making process.
2. These assessments will be made without casting blame.
3. All decision-makers should conduct a self-evaluation with all decisions.
4. All affected stakeholders may conduct an additional assessment.

5. In some instances, the Strategic Planning Group or United Council will conduct an assessment of a decision and the process.

### ***Communications***

The anchors (the IEA Executive Committee, the IEA Management, and the IEASO Executive Committee) will establish and maintain a culture in which there is a free flow of information between and among the stakeholder groups by:

1. Honoring requests for information in a timely manner.
2. Evaluating and enhancing all systems of information-sharing between and among stakeholders and within each stakeholder group on a continuous basis.

### **Commitment to a Learning Organization**

The anchors will establish and maintain a culture which:

1. Fosters a learning organization.
2. Provides for individual input into professional growth opportunities.
3. Provides opportunities to further enhance individuals' communication skills and effectiveness as participants in the group.

Individuals are responsible for taking advantage of these opportunities.