

Hydropower Sustainability Assessment Forum - Principles for Consensus Building

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1. The Forum seeks to operate with transparency, good will and by consensus.
2. Forum members will inform themselves about and endeavour to apply basic principles of partnership, consensus building, and conflict prevention¹.
3. Forum members recognise the importance of the diverse values, interests and knowledge of all parties involved, and accept that participants are accountable both to their constituencies and to the Forum process.
4. Forum members understand the healthy role that opposing viewpoints can play in moving towards agreement, and will use these as opportunities to build greater collective understanding and consensus.
5. If opposing viewpoints are entrenched and a path to consensus is not evident, Forum members will agree on the necessity, timing and approach for conflict resolution, and factor this into the Forum work plan.
6. The conflict resolution process will involve objective evaluation of a conflict, clarification of the issue, and if appropriate re-framing of the issue.
7. In the conflict resolution process, Forum members commit individually and collectively to:
 - construct a fair, equitable and open process in which all parties are able to participate effectively;
 - ensure respect and understanding amongst all parties;
 - focus on interests and not positions;
 - employ active listening;
 - find common ground;
 - be creative, generate options; and
 - be willing to move on initial positions to achieve win-win solutions.
8. Forum members will set a timeline and agree on the outcomes of the conflict resolution process, and how they will be handled within the Forum process.

¹ Notes on some relevant reference material are provided on page 2.

**Partnering, Consensus Building, Conflict Prevention and Conflict Resolution:
Some Useful References**

Tennyson R. (2003) **The Partnering Toolbook**. International Business Leaders Forum and the Global Alliance for Improved Nutrition. <http://www.iblff.org/docs/PartneringToolbook.pdf>

This 40-pg document draws on the evidence from many partnering initiatives to show that cross-sector collaboration can be highly effective and sustainable when it is designed, developed and managed in a systematic way. It offers a concise overview of the essential elements that make for effective partnering, encompassing The Partnership Challenge; Building Partnerships; Partnering Agreements; Managing the Partnering Process; Delivering Successful Projects; Sustaining Partnerships; and Successful Partnering.

Building Consensus for a Sustainable Future: Guiding Principles. Association for Conflict Resolution, Washington DC. <http://acrnet.org/pdfs/sustainable.pdf>

This document was developed by Round Tables of Canada to bring together the experiences in using consensus processes. It proposes guiding principles to make consensus work: 1) purpose driven; 2) inclusive not exclusive; 3) voluntary participation; 4) self-design; 5) flexibility; 6) equal opportunity; 7) respect for diverse interests; 8) accountability; 9) time limits; and 10) implementation.

Tips for Transforming Conflict. Search for Common Ground, Washington DC. http://www.sfcg.org/resources/resources_tips.html

This is a 2-pg set of tips for transforming an adversarial approach to a cooperative or common-ground approach.

Fisher R. & Ury W. (1983) **Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement without Giving In**. New York, Penguin Books.

This is a classic text that describes four principles for effective negotiation: 1) separate the people from the problem; 2) focus on interests rather than positions; 3) generate a variety of options before settling on an agreement; and 4) insist that the agreement be based on objective criteria. The text also describes three common obstacles to negotiation, and discusses ways to overcome these.

There is a 5-pg book summary at <http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/example/fish7513.htm>

Treating Complicating Factors. International Online Training Program on Intractable Conflict. Conflict Research Consortium, Univ. of Colorado.

http://www.colorado.edu/conflict/peace/!treating_overlays.htm

This on-line training program guides how to treat problems with conflict framing (what the conflict is and how it is being addressed); scoping (who is involved, what they think, and the context); communication, fact-finding, procedural processes; and conflict escalation. It offers a wealth of in-depth support materials on each of these topics and more.