

## FACILITATING TELECONFERENCES

Teleconferences can be an efficient way of transmitting business and are used extensively by TAC project committees. Here are some tips for teleconference Chairs:

1. The principles of meeting planning covered in this manual also apply to teleconference. They must have clear meeting outcomes, a climate setting phase, a facilitation plan, a detailed time frame and a strong closure activity.
2. It is important to be realistic when choosing the teleconference technique. If the issues to be addressed are difficult or contentious a face-to-face meeting may be required. In any event, the maximum length of a teleconference should be 90 minutes and a shorter time is preferable.
3. The Chair should model and enforce good teleconference etiquette by:
  - Encouraging promptness. Calls patching in after a conference has started can be just as disruptive as late entrances to face-to-face meetings
  - Introducing people when they sign on (Roll call)
  - Ensuring participants state their names prior to speaking
  - Keeping comments short. With a 60 minute teleconference with 12 participants, the average air time per participant is only 5 minutes
4. Use participant names frequently, solicit input from all participants and avoid letting one participant dominate the discussion. It is easier to lose energy on a phone conversation than in person.
5. If necessary, coach participants on the proper use of equipment.
6. Systematically track participant input on each item. A sample form you may find helpful appears on the next page.
7. If polling for response to a document, ask those “not in favour” to identify themselves and seek a reason (if not already evident in the discussion).
8. Ensure a strong closure. Teleconferences should not “go out with a whimper” as time runs short and participants sign off. Ensure good time management, specify follow-up activities and make closing statements before this occurs. Refer to the next steps, next meeting and meeting minutes.

**Sample Chair's Teleconference Tracking Form**

	<b>Participant A</b>	<b>Participant B</b>	<b>Participant C</b>	<b>Etc.</b>
Agenda Item 1				
Agenda Item 2				
Agenda Item 3				
Agenda Item 4				
Etc.				

As people speak, you may find it helpful to place check marks in the appropriate cells.