



Stockholm, Sweden
2015-01-26

Dear Member Groups of Servas International,

I would like to invite you to participate wholeheartedly in the pursuit of developing our organisation.

One of your best opportunities to do so is at the 2015 Servas International Conference and General Assembly, SICOGA, will occur 10-16 October 2015.

For this conference, the SICOGA team is planning a week in which there will be as much time as possible for focused discussion and planning. To do this, the business part of the meeting (the General Assembly, GA) will need to be kept as short as possible.

The only way that the GA can be shortened, is if the motions discussed are relevant and clear, and the preliminary work has been done on them. There will be a requirement that all member group representatives have prepared themselves to participate in the GA, including reviewing the motions and related documents, ensuring they understand them and joining a Subject Working Group (SWG) if they have something to contribute to the motion.

Any Servas Member Group may submit motions for decision at the GA. At the last three GAs, the process used to manage the motions was as follows:

1. Six months before the start of the GA is the deadline for submission of motions. This means that the deadline for your motions is April 10, 2015
2. The Agenda Working Group (AWG) reviews all the motions as they are submitted. If the motion is not clear to the AWG, they may write back to the submitter to get clarification. Also, if a similar motion has been submitted, the AWG may suggest that the two motions be combined.
3. After the deadline for motions, the AWG will group the motions into Subject Working Groups (SWGs), so that motions that relate to a single theme, such as Financial or Membership, can be discussed as a group.
4. Each SWG has an AWG member as convenor. Discussion of the motions in the SWG occurs before the GA. The motions in the group are clarified, refined, combined, and otherwise prepared as much as possible for the beginning of the conference. This is done to ensure that the work at the conference is as efficient as possible. A report will be prepared by the SWG to take to the conference.
5. There will be SWG meetings at the conference before the GA session begins. All conference attendees are welcome to join these discussions. It is assumed that all discussion participants have prepared themselves, by reading the motions in the SWG and the SWG report. As much as possible, the member groups that submitted motions to the SWG should be present.
6. During the GA session, the SWG convenor will introduce the motion, as it has been finalized by the SWG. The original member group that made the motion usually speaks about it as well. The intention is that at the GA session, there is minimal debate over details, since those were to be done at the SWG meetings.



7. If debate at the GA sessions gets too complicated, it may be suggested that the motion be taken back to the SWG for further discussion, and brought to a later GA session. That way, those who feel strongly about it can meet together outside the GA session.

The AWGs and SI ExcOs have noticed several challenges in the past, which we hope that this letter will minimize.

1. The experience from the last three GAs has been that this approach is a good one. However, active participation in the SWGs has significantly decreased since the first time we used this approach for the 2006 GA.
2. Many motions are submitted very close to the deadline, making clarification of the motions more difficult
3. Many motions are general, without specific details such as cost, people required, skills required and plans or timeframes. These details take time to be clarified before the motions are ready to be recorded.
4. The experience has been that some of the same motions tend to appear each GA. Because Servas is volunteer-based, it seems that the reason they appear each GA is because there are no volunteers who find them important enough to plan, organize, find financing and complete. Each motion needs a champion to make it happen.
5. There is great enthusiasm and commitment at the GA, and unfortunately most people do not stay involved in working on the identified priorities after the GA ends.
6. Because of the disappearing volunteers between GAs, historically a lot of the work has fallen to SI Exco. SI Exco has a lot of work running the organization. To manage the SI Exco workload, it is assumed that SI Exco will not be responsible for any motions which do not directly fit into an SI Exco official's job description. In other words, the motion will not be acted upon unless the responsible person does it.

For the 2015 GA, we are going to work hard to ensure that motions are clear, defined, detailed and owned before they are finalized for the GA. Below you will find a template for a motion, giving guidance on how to prepare one.

Member Groups are encouraged to work together before submitting a motion, to try to keep the number of motions as small as possible, and focused on the priority concerns for Servas International in 2015.

When a motion is received, it will be reviewed by the AWG and SI Exco as soon as possible, and questions will be asked to help to refine it. Motions will not be published until they have been reviewed.

As soon as motions close on April 10, 2015, SWGs will be set up. For each motion in each SWG, a representative of the Member Group that proposed it must participate.

You will soon be able to download documents, find information et cetera about SICOGA 2015 on our website

<http://servas.org/index.php>

The webpages about SICOGA 2015 are under construction.

In peace,
Jonny Saganger
President, Servas International



Motion Template:

1. One line description of the motion
2. Short description of the motion
3. Reasons for the motion
4. Type of motion for the improvement of Servas International (e.g. administrative, future, vision and mission, technology assets, communications, national groups interactions, travelers and hosts, other matters)
5. Contact person, and contact details – this person is also responsible for coordinating or doing the volunteer work required, unless a separate person is identified here. If there is no one suitable identified, the motion cannot be passed until a person is identified, during the SWG discussion stage. A motion cannot go to the GA without a responsible person identified.
6. What is the result if the motion is not done
7. How much SI financial funding is required
8. How much volunteer effort is required
9. What special skills are required
10. What other requirements are there to complete the motion
11. How will it be measured that the motion is completed