

Servas Regulations for Distant Voting – Revised February 2010

Principles

- 1/ The Distant Voting process shall operate by sending the motions and the voting information to the National Secretary of each member group who shall ensure the Distant Vote is sent in for counting.
- 2/ The aim of the Distant Voting process is to allow all member groups to participate without being unduly disadvantaged by issues of language, distance, available finances and access to information technology.
- 3/ Each member group shall decide itself who will cast the distant vote on their behalf and how the group will determine if the vote on each motion is to be 'for', 'against' or 'abstain'.
- 4/ The Distant Voting process shall be conducted in a fair, open and transparent manner with information about the Distant Vote and the results available on request to all Servas hosts and travellers.
- 5/ The Distant Vote Administrator shall facilitate informed discussion of items to be decided by distant vote. (For example, by setting up a web based forum and/or providing mailing lists to the submitter of the item and member groups).
- 6/ To protect the integrity of the voting process details of how each member group voted shall be available on request to all member groups, except where the motion was to be decided by secret vote.
- 7/ These Principles shall be used to clarify particular issues relating to the Distant Voting process that are not clear or have not been anticipated in the Responsibilities and Procedures set out below.

Responsibilities and Procedures

- 1/ The President shall be responsible for ensuring that the Distant Voting process is conducted in accordance with the Statutes and these Regulations.
- 2/ The General Assembly shall be responsible for appointing an independent person to be responsible for the organization of the Distant Voting process. This position shall be called the Distant Vote Administrator. The Distant Vote Administrator shall be appointed from suitably qualified candidates recommended by the Executive Committee and shall not hold any other position in Servas International.
- 3/ The Distant Vote Administrator's duties include:
 - a) advising the General Secretary of the timetable for each Distant Vote in accordance with the schedule determined by the Executive Committee;
 - b) recommending to Executive Committee, if considered necessary, that one or more independent persons or organisations be engaged to assist in the running of the Distant Vote;
 - c) receiving and counting the votes, except when a secret vote is required in which case the receiving and counting of votes shall be done by a person or organization independent of Servas;

- d) reviewing the wording of the submitted motions and referring them back to the submitter for revision if the wording is unclear or not in a form that can be voted on by a “yes” or “no”;
- e) arranging the translation of voting information and supporting material in accordance with current Servas practice.

4/ The General Secretary shall be responsible for:

- a) advising member groups of the timetable for each Distant Vote, including the closing date for votes, the date by which the motions and supporting material will be sent to member groups and the date by which any changes to Authorised Voter details must be received;
- b) keeping a record of the name and contact details of the person designated by each member group to be their Authorised Voter for the Distant Voting process;
- c) providing the Distant Vote Administrator with a list of the member groups allowed to vote and contact details for the Authorised Voter for each member group;
- d) assembling the supporting information to be sent with the voting material;
- e) sending advice of the results of the Distant Vote to member groups within one month of receiving them from the Distant Vote Administrator.

5/ The National Secretary of each member group shall be responsible for advising the General Secretary of:

- a) the name and contact details for the Authorised Voter for their member group;
- b) the preferred methods of communication for the Distant Voting process;
- c) the preferred language for written material and if possible, one or more other languages that would be acceptable;
- d) any changes to this information, in particular when an upcoming Distant Vote has been notified.

6/ The Distant Vote Administrator’s duties shall also include:

- a) preparing a report, including recommendations for approval by the Executive Committee on: a budget and timetable for the Distant Vote process, the method of electronic voting, the postal address and the vote authenticity checks to be used;
- b) sending the motions, the voting material and supporting information to the Authorised Voter for each member group as advised by the General Secretary;
- c) receiving the votes cast, verifying that they are valid and can be counted, and then recording how each member group voted on the motions. Votes may be disallowed on the grounds that they were not received on time, that they are not authentic, that the voter's intention is not clear or that the vote cannot be counted for any other reason;
- d) counting the valid votes: "support/yes", "against/no" and "abstain", to determine the result of the vote on each motion and to identify any motions passed by the double majority needed to give the decision the same effect as a General Assembly vote;

e) reporting the results to the General Secretary within one month of the closing date for the vote;

f) preparing a written report to the Executive Committee on the Distant Vote within two months of the closing date for the vote. The report shall include the voting results on each motion, the number of member groups allowed to vote, a detailed list of how each member group voted on non-secret motions and the number of votes received but not counted with the reason they were disallowed;

g) holding all votes received in a secure place and keeping the votes and the results confidential until member groups have been advised of the results by the General Secretary;

h) handing over all voting papers and such other information as may be requested as part of an independent recount and audit of the Distant Vote;

i) destroying all votes received and any other confidential information if no request for a recount has been received within three months of the date the results of the Distant Vote are sent to member groups;

j) disposing of any confidential information and other records relating to the Distant Vote process in consultation with the General Secretary.

7/ The voting material and supporting information to be sent to the Authorised Voter for member groups shall in all cases include details of the voting procedure, the date by which votes must be returned to be counted and a voting paper containing the motions to be voted on. One or more of the following shall also be included as is appropriate for each of the motions to be voted on:

a) a copy of the annual accounts and auditor's report, with comments from the Treasurer and/or Executive Committee if they wish;

b) details of budget changes proposed and the reasons for them;

c) a balanced outline of the background to the motion with a summary of the key issues for and against the proposal,

- estimates of the financial implications, if any, of adopting or not adopting the motion,
- additional information or submissions in support of and against the motion or details of how this additional information can be obtained;

d) a statement of the grounds for the suspension or removal from office of the Servas International officer concerned and their statement in reply;

e) brief CVs and statements from the candidates nominated for election and a job description for each position to be elected;

f) any other information that in the opinion of the General Secretary or Executive Committee will assist member groups to make an informed decision.

The voting information and supporting material shall be translated and distributed in English and other languages in accordance with current Servas practice.

8/ If the matters to be voted on in a particular Distant Vote create a conflict of interest for the President or the General Secretary the remaining Executive Committee members shall appoint another member of EXCO as a replacement to carry out their Distant Vote responsibilities until the voting process has been completed.

9/ An independent recount and audit of the results of the Distant Vote may be called for by a written request to the President by:

- a) one tenth of the Authorised Voters for the Distant Vote,
- b) or any Servas International officer who is the subject of a motion under Section VII, Sub Clause 5b of the statutes,
- c) or any candidate for election under Section VII, Sub Clause 5c,
- d) or any of the submitters of a motion included in the Distant Vote,
- e) or the Executive Committee.

The request must be made within three months of the date the result of the Distant Vote is sent to member groups. A request for an independent recount and audit of the results shall not suspend the effect of the Distant Vote.

The President shall be responsible for appointing an independent person to conduct the recount and audit of the running of the Distant Vote. The results of the recount and the audit report shall be completed and given to the President within two months of receipt of the request.

The result of the recount shall be declared as the result of the Distant Vote and advised to member groups. Details of the recounted voting and the audit report shall be available on request to member groups. Any further challenges to the results shall be resolved at the next meeting of the General Assembly.

10/ The term of office of the Distant Vote Administrator shall end 3 months after the next General Assembly.

As amended at Mar Del Plata, September 2009.