



Changes on the way

This paper draws attention to the key elements of administrative changes on the way that will be enshrined in amendments to Procedures for Cooperative Ventures going to the Partner Churches this year. It is intended for use by Regional Forums and local churches.

THE RATIONALE FOR CONVENING AND APPOINTING PARTNERS

The current designation of “Coordinating Partner” combines the *general* role of convening the two or three Partners in a Cooperative Venture with the *particular* role of implementing a process for appointing ministry. The first is a leadership role in terms of initiation; the second brings the denominational character of one Partner to the appointing of ministry.

It is recognised that the rotation of coordinating roles is a healthy feature of CVs. But, currently, the rotation (supposedly every five years) may not happen as intended in the *Procedures* – or it may be interrupted by a change of ministry. The lack of regular change in the coordinating role can lead to an imbalance of denominational influences. On the other hand, it is important that the prerogative of all the Partners (alongside the local church) to determine the ‘flavour’ of the next ministry appointment is maintained.

This has led logically to the separation of two roles – convening and appointing – that have until now been rolled into one. Because the role and rotation of coordinating/convening has not operated smoothly in all places, the first tasks in this process of change have been:

- (i) to consult with Regional Forums and local churches around the concept of “convening”;
- (ii) to negotiate a new ‘starting point’ schedule of Coordinating, to be **Convening Partners**

The essential role of selecting an **Appointing Partner** remains, as now, with all of the Partners. And the implementation of the particular denominational process does not change. At a change of ministry, the Partners (alongside the local church) still negotiate as to whether there will be a change of Appointing Partner for the next ministry. The on-going role of convening most meetings, however, stays with the Convening Partner until the next scheduled change. (It will be evident that the Appointing Partner may or may *not* be the current convening Partner: there is no essential linkage between the two).

THE MECHANISM FOR CONVENING PARTNER CHANGE

UCANZ Standing Committee and the Biennial Forum of Cooperative Ventures have endorsed these changes because they believe there are benefits to local churches and Partner Churches in the smoother and more automatic running of the systems for coordination and, subsequently, for financial assessment.

The rotation of Convening Partner will be every three years. Once the initial conditions are set, this will be largely automatic from 1 July 2019 (viz. 1 July 2022, 2025, etc.).

There are regional and national elements to this new scheme:

- The level of Partner Church that relates most directly to the local churches is the **regional** court – the Presbytery, Methodist Synod, or Anglican Diocese. These regional bodies are the ones that provide direct pastoral and administrative support to local congregations. The task of convening – in a sense being the lead Partner – needs to be shared sensibly between the Partners: there should be an initial ‘balanced’ schedule of Convening Partners, and one aspect of this are the initial settings.
- Furthermore, Presbytery and Synod should cooperate in the level of their levies. These regional levies will be paid (from 1 July 2019) to the Convening Partner only. The Anglican ‘quota’ is a little different, being effectively regional and ‘national’ Anglican assessments combined
- One element of the scheme that relates directly to the national Partners is the assessing and collecting of national levies. This will become the prerogative of the **national** denominational bodies. UCANZ representatives will be meeting with the national Partners to encourage them, amongst other matters, to better coordinate the levels of national financial assessment local churches

The period from now until 1 July 2019 will be the first phase: establishing Convening Partner and Appointing Partner as separate and implementing the schedules changes – notionally on 1 July 2018, but realistically over the next year.

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