DRAFT International Council Decision-making Protocol (09.04.25)

All issues explored at the International Council requiring decisions will follow these three stages:

1. Steering Group agree terms of reference
2. Decision-making process
3. Communication of decision

1. Steering Group agree terms of reference for: X decision

The steering group will clarify the terms of reference by considering the following questions to arrive at the appropriate decision-making process:

Define the nature of problem

a. what is the problem that needs to be addressed?

b. why does this problem need to be addressed?

c. is it acceptable to drop the proposal in the case of lack of agreement, without significant detriment?

d. is there a necessary timescale/deadline for the decision?

e. are there any legal/statutory/governance implications?

f. how great is the impact of the decision: long- or short-term effects? Does it involve a change to recognised principles or Triratna lore? Does it affect a few or many people? Might it have an impact on the unity of the Order?

g. who will the decision affect? ie who are the stakeholders? Who has already been consulted and still needs to be consulted?

h. will any further consultation take place? Who will be consulted? What will be the status of their input (advisory, co-creating etc)?

i. is it advisable to seek specialised advice? If yes, then from whom?

j. does the decision require consent from other bodies beyond the IC before ratification?

k. based on the information above, what will be the minimum level of consent required for the decision to carry and be effective? (e.g. all members must agree within the range of 1-3 on the Gradient of Agreement Scale).
Does the decision require the consent of all parties or will a majority vote be acceptable?
If the latter, by what margin – simple majority or super-majority?
Is a majority vote needed in each Area?
NB: in general, it is recommended to only take recourse to majority voting only if there is a clear need for a decision outcome, and the impact is not high. The higher the impact, the greater the level of consent is recommended.

Before proceeding, the International Council will need to agree to the terms of reference prepared by the IC Steering Group by a supermajority of 85% of members who are present.

2. Decision making process

The IC will strive to achieve the highest level of consent from the broadest range of parties (e.g. Areas and Strands) involved in the decision-making process.

- all parties indicate levels of consent – refer to the Gradient of Agreement Scale in the Appendix (NB. This general scale is likely to be appropriate for most decisions. However, there may be unusual instances when the IC Steering Group decides that the use of a different scale is more appropriate. When this happens, it must be explicitly stated in the Terms of Reference.)
- if consensus is achieved (i.e. everyone present wholeheartedly agrees to the proposal) the proposal is accepted
- if there is a lower level of consent, the proposal can be discussed to improve its acceptability
- if there is broad agreement except for one party (i.e. Strand / Area / grouping) then they can be offered the opportunity to propose an alternative acceptable solution within an agreed timescale.
- the party that is re-working the proposal must work in collaboration with the Steering Group and achieve its full agreement of the alternative solution before it becomes a proposal. If this cannot be achieved, the attempt will be deemed unsuccessful.
- if this does not work, the dissenting party/parties are asked whether they can give consent even at a low level, or else be requested to step aside so the decision can be taken forward (refer to the Appendix)
- if this is not successful and the terms of reference allow, go to majority voting with the agreed margin. No decision can be taken unless there is a majority in all three Strands.
- if the decision doesn't go to majority voting, or the majority voting is unsuccessful, the proposal is rejected.

Any decision decided by an International Council that is not quorate must be presented as a recommendation to the Area Councils for consent.

3. Communicating the decision

The Area Councils will be informed about the outcome of the decision along with the level of consent achieved. They will be responsible for its implementation within their Area.

Appendix: Gradient of Agreement Scale

1. Full support - Strongly Agree: I completely accept the proposal.

2. Moderate support - Agree - I accept the proposal.

3. Mild support - Somewhat agree: On balance, I accept the proposal.

4. Mild opposition - Somewhat disagree: On balance, I reject the proposal.

5. Moderate opposition - Disagree: I reject the proposal

6. Full opposition - Strongly disagree: I completely reject the proposal.