**Article 42. Global Networking Groups**

**42.010. Networking and Service Groups Committee**

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**42.010. Networking and Service Groups Committee**

The RI president shall appoint a seven-member Networking and Service Groups Committee to oversee the operations of all Global Networking Groups. The members of the committee shall serve staggered three-year terms, with the exception of the director and trustee. The Committee shall consist of a chairperson, one RI director, one TRF trustee, one Rotary Action Groups representative, one Rotary Fellowships representative, one vocational service representative, and one member at large. *(October 2018 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 58)*


**42.020. Rotary Fellowships**

**42.020.1. Terms of Fellowships**

A Rotary fellowship is a group of individuals who globally unite around a common interest, vocation, or recreational activity with the primary purpose to network and further friendship. Membership in a fellowship is open to any interested individual. Fellowship activities must be conducted independently of RI, but must be in harmony with RI policy, including the use of the Rotary Marks. Fellowships may not be used to promote religious beliefs, political issues, or other organizations. Recognition of a fellowship by RI in no way implies legal, financial or other obligation or responsibility on the part of RI, or any district or club. A fellowship may not act on behalf of RI, or represent or imply that it has authority to act on behalf of RI. A fellowship is not an agency of RI. Fellowships must be self-sustaining financially, administratively, and otherwise. Fellowships may not exist or function in any country in violation of the laws of such country. Individual Rotary Fellowships are not covered by RI insurance and are encouraged to assess their own risk and secure coverage as appropriate. *(January 2020 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 100)*


**Cross References**

40.010.1. Definition of Program Participants
40.050.1. Definition of Rotary Alumni
42.020.2. Criteria for Recognition
The general secretary recognizes Rotary Fellowships on behalf of the Board.

To be recognized as a fellowship, a group shall:

1) Have at least 25 members representing at least five countries.
2) Not duplicate the purposes of an existing fellowship.
3) Be led by an active Rotarian, Rotaractor, or Peace Fellow.
4) Have governing documents (charter, constitution, bylaws, or similar documents), which shall be consistent with RI policy.
5) Propose a web presence strategy (such as a website, social media page, etc.) (January 2020 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 100)


42.020.3. Maintaining Active Status
The general secretary will promote fellowships as member engagement and retention opportunities.

Fellowships meeting the following criteria will receive promotional preference through Rotary media and at events such as the International Convention, subject to space availability:

1) Maintain a web presence (website, social media page) with current information
2) Report their chair annually to Rotary International
3) Submit an annual report to the general secretary by 1 September
4) Respond to inquiries from its members, prospective members, and the general secretary (January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 115)

Source: January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 115

42.020.4. Termination of Recognition
The general secretary, acting on behalf of the Board, may terminate a fellowship, with or without the consent of the fellowship's officers or members, for failure to comply with RI policies.

The general secretary, acting on behalf of the Board, may terminate a Rotary Fellowship in cases where the group has decided to voluntarily disband. Disbanded and terminated fellowships shall donate any remaining funds to The Rotary Foundation. (January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 115)


42.020.5. Statement in Publications
A prospective Fellowship must prominently identify itself as a “prospective” group.
Rotary Fellowships must prominently display the statement “This fellowship is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International” or similar language approved by the general secretary in newsletters, publications, brochures, and websites. Following is an approved example of how such language may be incorporated into a statement describing the fellowship.

“The International Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians is a group of Rotarians dedicated to promoting golfing as an opportunity for fellowship. This fellowship operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.”  


42.020.6. **Agreements with Other Parties**
Any agreement between a fellowship and other parties must clearly state that the fellowship is not an agency of, or controlled by Rotary International, an Illinois corporation, and that Rotary International is not liable for the activities of the fellowship. Any such agreement must also clearly state that Rotary International is not a party to the agreement, and that Rotary International is not liable for the performance of, or any obligation under, the agreement.

A fellowship may not enter into cooperative relationships with other organizations on behalf of RI.  

*(June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302)*


42.020.7. **Youth Protection**
Rotary Fellowships must protect the safety and wellbeing of all youth participating in their activities and comply with Rotary International’s youth protection policies. A Rotary Fellowship may not grant membership or affiliation to a person who is known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment or who is prohibited from being a member of a Rotary club.  (Upon obtaining information that a fellowship has knowingly failed to terminate the membership or affiliation of such an individual, the RI Board may terminate the Rotary Fellowship for failure to comply).  

*(January 2017 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 113)*


42.020.8. **Fellowships at RI Conventions**
RI will provide gratis booth space for active Rotary Fellowships in good standing, on a space available basis and when the budget permits, with the provisions that no fundraising may take place.  

*(October 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 29)*


**Cross References**

8.020. **Special Observances**
42.030. **Rotary Action Groups**

42.030.1. **Purpose**
A Rotary Action Group shall be an internationally organized group with subject-matter expertise and experience in a particular service area whose purpose is the advancement of the Object of Rotary by providing assistance and support to Rotary clubs, districts, and multidistricts in planning and implementing large-scale, community development and humanitarian service projects. *(January 2020 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 100)*


**Cross References**

40.010.1. **Definition of Program Participants**
40.050.1. **Definition of Rotary Alumni**

42.030.2. **Relationship with Rotary International**
Rotary Action Groups are a resource to Rotary clubs and districts in their specialty. Rotary Action Group activities must be in harmony with RI policy. Rotary Action Groups may not be used to promote religious beliefs, political issues, or other non-Rotary organizations, or for the sole purpose of advocacy. Recognition of a Rotary Action Group by RI in no way implies legal, financial or other obligation or responsibility on the part of RI, or any district or club. A Rotary Action Group may not act on behalf of RI, or represent or imply that it has authority to act on behalf of RI. A Rotary Action Group is not an agency of RI. Rotary Action Groups must be self-sustaining financially, administratively, and otherwise. Rotary Action Groups may not exist or function in any country in violation of the laws of such country.

Individual Rotary Action Groups are not covered by RI insurance and are encouraged to assess their own risk and secure coverage as appropriate. *(January 2017 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 113)*


42.030.3. **Governance and Membership**
Rotary Action Groups must adhere to standard bylaws as approved by the Board. Rotary Action Groups shall be governed by a board of directors with at least five members who must be active Rotarians, Rotaractors, or Peace Fellows.

Membership in the Rotary Action Group is open to any interested individual. Membership may also be offered to Rotaract clubs, Rotary clubs, and districts on an annual basis at the discretion of the Rotary Action Groups’ board of directors. *(January 2020 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 100)*

42.030.4. **Obtaining Provisional Recognition as a Rotary Action Group**

All prospective Rotary Action Groups must apply for provisional recognition by the Board.

To apply, the group must

1) Secure at least 50 prospective members representing at least five countries and three zones, who share a common interest in a specific worthwhile service activity that advances the Object of Rotary.

2) Submit an application, including a description of the founding members’ expertise in the subject matter, the types of projects it intends to promote or conduct, and an action plan that outlines how the group plans to accomplish its service goals.

3) Be organized in accordance with RI policy.

4) Complement the service activities of Rotarians, clubs and districts and not conflict with the purposes of an existing Rotary Action Group, RI program or Rotary Foundation program.

Groups that are denied provisional recognition may not reapply for a period of two years from the date of such denial. *(January 2017 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 113)*


42.030.5. **Requirements for Provisionally Recognized Rotary Action Groups**

Within two years of the date of provisional recognition, a Rotary Action Group must demonstrate its viability by doing the following:

1) Maintain at least 50 members representing at least five countries and three zones
2) Provide evidence of support for at least three multi-club or district community development and humanitarian service projects
3) Help clubs and districts obtain partners (within or outside of Rotary) and other resources for their projects
4) Maintain a website with current information and resources
5) Meet all of the requirements and policies for Rotary Action Groups

Provisionally recognized Rotary Action Groups shall have all the rights and responsibilities of Rotary Action Groups. At the end of the two-year period, the Networking and Service Groups Committee shall evaluate and recommend that the Board recognize or terminate the provisional Rotary Action Group. Groups that are denied recognition may not reapply for a period of two years from the date of denial. *(January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 115)*


42.030.6 **Maintaining Status as a Rotary Action Group**

To maintain its status as a Rotary Action Group, a group must:

1) Function in accordance with its recognized purpose and in accordance with RI policy.
2) Regularly collaborate with clubs, districts, and multidistricts on international service projects in their area of specialty.

3) Annually support at least three multi-club or district community development and humanitarian service projects. Groups shall maintain a record of their involvement and project outcomes.

4) Consistently distribute print or electronic communications to members of the Rotary Action Group.

5) Maintain a website with current information and resources.

6) Hold an annual meeting, in person or online, through which members can interact.

7) Submit an annual report of activities and finances, as requested by the general secretary, with a copy to its members by 1 October.

8) Annual reports shall be reviewed by the general secretary and the Networking and Service Groups Committee to determine whether groups are maintaining their active status. *(January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 115)*


42.030.7. Rotary Action Group Communication Policies

1. Websites
Rotary Action Groups must maintain websites that promote their activities and inform their members. Groups in formation that have not yet received recognition from the Board may organize a website to seek potential members, as long as the website clearly states that the group is not a Rotary Action Group, and does not use the Rotary Marks. Groups in formation that are denied recognition must disable these websites upon notification of the Board’s decision.

2. Contact with clubs and districts
Rotary Action Groups may contact district governors and district governors-elect. Rotary Action Groups may contact clubs only when a district governor grants express permission. This permission must be renewed annually with the change in district leadership.

3. Conflicts of interest
It is not permissible for a member of a Rotary Action Group to circularize on matters affecting his or her individual business interests.

4. Statement in communications and publications
Rotary Action Groups’ communications (electronic and print), publications, and websites must prominently display the statement “This Rotary Action Group is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International” or similar language approved by the general secretary. This language must also be prominently included in any communications to, or agreements with, outside parties.
Following is an approved example of how such language may be incorporated into a statement describing a Rotary Action Group.

“The Rotary Action Group for Urban Concerns is a group of Rotarians whose purpose is to mobilize Rotarians and provide global leadership to address issues such as crime, unemployment, substance abuse, and homelessness. This Rotary Action Group operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International.”  (*January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 115*)


42.030.8. Promotion of Rotary Action Groups

Rotary Action Groups shall work through the existing structure of clubs, districts, and multidistricts to support their service projects. Rotary Action Groups may list club, district, and multidistrict projects on their websites seeking financial support and provide direction on how individuals and/or organizations may contribute to those entities directly.

District governors, district International Service chairs and club presidents are encouraged to facilitate collaboration opportunities between clubs and Rotary Action Groups on projects and activities pertaining to the groups’ respective areas of specialty.

Governors-elect and club presidents-elect shall be trained in the purpose, operation, composition, and targeted expertise of Rotary Action Groups. This should include how to use Rotary Action Groups to assist clubs and districts in supporting RI strategic plan priorities.  (*January 2017 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 113*)


42.030.9. Independent Review of Financial Statements

Rotary Action Groups with annual gross receipts or expenditures of more than US$25,000 or equivalent are required to provide an annual financial statement and report that has been independently reviewed by a qualified accountant or by an action group audit committee, as may be decided by the membership. This report is to be provided to the membership with a copy to the general secretary by 1 October in each year.

If an audit committee approach is selected, the committee must

a) Be composed of at least three members who are not current officers
b) Be composed of active Rotarians
c) Have at least one member who is a past governor or past club president
d) Have at least one member with accounting and audit experience
e) Be selected by the group at its annual meeting in accordance with the procedures established by the group.  (*January 2017 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 113*)

42.030.10. Services
Services include use of the Rotary Marks; listing in program publications, and on the RI website; and priority access to booth space and meeting space at the International Convention at no cost, on a space available basis.  *(January 2020 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 99)*


42.030.11. Suspension and Termination of Recognition
The general secretary, acting on behalf of the Board, may suspend services provided to a Rotary Action Group, with or without the consent of the group’s officers or members, for failure to function in accordance with RI policy. To be reinstated, the group must address the concerns communicated by the general secretary within six months of the date of suspension. The general secretary, acting on behalf of the Board, may reinstate a suspended Rotary Action Group. In the case of non-compliance, the Networking and Service Groups Committee may recommend that the Board terminate the group.

Groups that are terminated may not reapply for a period of two years from the date of termination.

The general secretary may, acting on behalf of the Board, terminate a Rotary Action Group in cases where the group has decided to voluntarily disband.

Disbanded or terminated Rotary Action Groups shall donate any remaining funds to The Rotary Foundation.  *(January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 80)*


42.030.12. Rotary Action Group Dues and Fundraising
Rotary Action Groups shall disclose how dues are used in their governing documents, and on their membership application materials. Rotary Action Groups shall prepare and circulate a statement of income and expenses annually to their members.

Rotary Action Groups may have paid staff. Groups may pay staff salaries and other administrative costs through membership dues, through project administrative fees paid as part of a grant, or through donations designated for such expenses.

Rotary Action Groups may solicit funds, including on their websites, from individuals and/or organizations, provided that donations are for the purpose of supporting:
--a Rotary club, district, or multidistrict project
--The Rotary Foundation
--a separate implementing organization working with Rotary clubs on a project (provided there is no conflict of interest between the Rotary Action Group, its officers and/or directors, and the entity receiving the funds)
Rotary Action Groups may hold donations for the groups listed above in an amount not to exceed US$100,000. Rotary Action Groups seeking to hold funds in excess of US$100,000 shall first obtain approval from the Networking and Service Groups Committee. *(January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 80)*


42.030.13. **Rotary Action Groups and Other Organizations**

1. **Grant-seeking policy**
   Rotary Action Groups approaching other organizations for funds in excess of US$25,000 shall first provide a draft copy to the general secretary and obtain express approval prior to submitting any formal applications. This provision also applies to funds that will be disbursed to a third party organization working with the group.

2. **Cooperative relationship policy**
   Rotary Action Groups approaching other organizations with the intention of establishing formal, written cooperative relationships or other agreements shall first provide a draft copy to the general secretary and obtain express approval in advance of any formal action. *(January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 80)*


42.030.14. **Incorporation of Rotary Action Groups**
   The advisability of incorporation is a matter the members of a Rotary Action Group should determine in light of their activities. Applications for incorporation must be submitted to the general secretary for review prior to submission. The articles of incorporation, or equivalent corporate document, of a Rotary Action Group must include a statement to the effect that the group is not an activity or agency of RI and must be in accordance with RI policy. *(January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137)*


42.030.15. **Rotary Action Group Advocacy Guidelines**
   The general secretary shall circulate to all Rotary Action Groups the Rotary Action Group Advocacy Guidelines, as follows:

Rotarians are advocates for ending polio and for improving lives through service in Rotary’s six areas of focus. Rotary Action Groups are organized with the purpose of supporting clubs and districts in planning and implementing large-scale, community development and humanitarian service projects in a particular domain in which their members have expertise. As part of their work, it is understood that RAGs promote awareness of an issue and advocate for action to address the issue. When dealing with governments for which a particular issue is politically sensitive, RAGs are expected to avoid taking partisan positions and are encouraged to submit suggested calls to action to Rotary International for review.” *(April 2018 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 135)*

Source: January 2018 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 102
42.030.16. **Youth Protection**

Rotary Action Groups must protect the safety and well-being of all youth participating in their activities and comply with Rotary International’s youth protection policies. A Rotary Action Group may not grant membership or affiliation to a person who is known to have engaged in sexual abuse or harassment or who is prohibited from being a member of a Rotary club. (Upon obtaining information that a group has knowingly failed to terminate the membership or affiliation of such an individual, the RI Board may terminate the Rotary Action Group for failure to comply). *(January 2017 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 113)*


**Cross References**

2.120. **Youth Protection**

40.010.1. **Definition of Program Participants**

40.050.1. **Definition of Rotary Alumni**

Article 34. **Rotary Marks**

35.010.3. **Contact with Other Organizations**

**42.040. Incorporation Guidelines For Global Networking Groups**

The following recommended minimum guidelines apply to all Global Networking Groups that choose to incorporate:

1. The name of the incorporated Global Networking Group shall be the same as the name approved by the RI Board

2. The corporation shall be a not-for-profit entity, and it shall pay no dividend and no part of its money, property or other assets shall be distributed to its members, directors, or officers

3. Where any provision of the corporate documents of the incorporated Global Networking Group is not in conformity with the constitution, bylaws, or policies of RI, the terms of the constitution, bylaws, or policies of RI shall prevail at all times

4. All members of the Global Networking Group shall be members of the incorporated entity

5. The initial membership of the Global Networking Group shall be the members of the Global Networking Group as of the time of the incorporation. The addition or removal of a member from a Global Networking Group pursuant to the Global Networking Group’s governing document shall immediately and automatically result in a corresponding change in the membership of the corporation

6. The board of directors and officers of the Global Networking Group corporation shall be limited to members of the Global Networking Group

7. The number and terms of the directors shall be as required by local law and as provided for by the incorporated Global Networking Group’s corporate documents
8. The board of the Global Networking Group at the time of the incorporation shall be the board of the incorporated group. Incorporated Rotary Action Groups must have at least five board members who are active Rotarians; incorporated Rotary Fellowships must have at least three board members, chaired by an active Rotarian. The Global Networking Group may elect such other officers as required by local law and as provided for in its corporate documents.


10. The Global Networking Group corporation is not an activity or agency of RI.

11. The Global Networking Group corporation shall immediately and automatically cease operations and begin dissolution upon directive of the RI Board or upon the approval of the members of the corporation. The chair shall provide the Board notice of a decision by the Global Networking Group to dissolve the corporation, and shall provide a final report upon the completion of the dissolution process. (January 2019 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 80)


Cross References

32.090.5. General Secretary Authority to Incorporate Global Networking Groups