

## **42.020. Rotarian Action Groups**

### 42.020.1. Purpose

A Rotarian Action Group shall be an association of Rotarians who have as their purpose 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 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137)*

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; *Amended by* January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

### 42.020.2. Relationship with Rotary International

Rotarian Action Groups are a resource to Rotary clubs and districts in their specialty. Rotarian Action Group activities must be in harmony with RI policy. Rotarian Action Groups may not be used to promote religious beliefs, political issues, or other non-Rotary organizations, or for the primary purpose of advocacy. Recognition of a Rotarian 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 Rotarian Action Group may not act on behalf of RI, or represent or imply that it has authority to act on behalf of RI. A Rotarian Action Group is not an agency of RI. Rotarian Action Groups must be self-sustaining financially, administratively, and otherwise. Rotarian Action Groups may not exist or function in any country in violation of the laws of such country.

The RI president shall appoint a seven member Rotarian Action Groups committee to oversee the operations of all Rotarian Action Groups. The members of the committee will include four RI directors or immediate past RI directors, two Rotarian Action Group representatives, and one trustee. The chair of the committee shall be a director or past director. Committee terms should be staggered, with directors serving three year terms so they remain on the committee for one year as a past director. This committee will consider requests from Rotarian Action Groups for alternative funding models for referral to the RI Board.

Individual Rotarian Action Groups are not covered by RI insurance and are encouraged to assess their own risk and secure coverage as appropriate. *(January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137)*

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; *Amended by* November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 75; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

### 42.020.3. Governance and Membership

Rotarian Action Groups must adhere to standard bylaws as approved by the Board. Rotarian Action Groups shall be governed by a board of directors with at least five members. Each officer and director must be an active Rotarian.

A group's membership shall be open to all Rotarians, family members of Rotarians, program participants and alumni. *(May 2014 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 143)*

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; *Amended by* November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 75; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137; September 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 88; May 2014 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 143

#### 42.020.4. Obtaining Recognition as a Rotarian Action Group

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

To apply to become a Rotarian Action Group, the group must

- 1) Secure at least 25 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) Complete an application, including an action plan that outlines how the group plans to accomplish its service goals, what types of projects it intends to promote or conduct, and the expertise its founding members have in the subject
  
- 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 Rotarian Action Group, RI program or Rotary Foundation program

Groups that are denied recognition may not reapply for a period of one year from the date of such denial. (*January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; Amended by November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 75; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

#### 42.020.5 Maintaining Status as a Rotarian Action Group

To maintain its status as a Rotarian 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) Distribute a print or electronic newsletter to all members of the Rotarian Action Group in good standing, at least once during each Rotary year, and file the newsletter and other important communications and documents with the general secretary
  
- 4) Hold an annual forum by way of a newsletter, annual meeting, or other activity appropriate to the group, through which members in good standing can interact
  
- 5) Respond to inquiries from members, potential members, and the general secretary
  
- 6) Submit an annual report of activities, including incorporation status, a summary of service activities, a financial statement showing revenues and expenditures during the previous Rotary year, and a statement of funds on hand at the time of the report, to its

members with a copy to the general secretary by 1 October in each year. Groups' annual reports shall be reviewed by the general secretary to determine whether they are maintaining the criteria for recognition. (*January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; *Amended by* January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

#### 42.020.6. Rotarian Action Group Communication Policies

##### 1. Websites

Rotarian Action Groups are encouraged to 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 Rotarian 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

Rotarian Action Groups may contact district governors and district governors-elect. Rotarian 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. Compliance with Rotary Marks policies

Rotarian Action Groups' communications must comply with RI policy for use of the Rotary Marks, including use of proper identification and qualifying language.

##### 4. Conflicts of interest

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

##### 5. Statement in communications and publications

Rotarian Action Groups' communications (electronic and print), publications, and websites must prominently display the statement "This Rotarian 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 Rotarian Action Group.

"The Rotarian 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 Rotarian Action Group operates in accordance with Rotary International policy, but is not an agency of, or controlled by, Rotary International." (*January 2012 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 191*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; Amended by November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 75; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137; September 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 88; January 2012 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 191

#### 42.020.7. Promotion of Rotarian Action Groups

Rotarian Action Groups shall work through the existing structure of clubs, districts, and multidistricts to support their service projects. Rotarian 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 and club presidents are encouraged to facilitate collaboration opportunities between clubs and Rotarian Action Groups on projects and activities pertaining to the groups' respective areas of specialty.

Governors shall be trained in the purpose, operation, composition, and targeted expertise of Rotarian Action Groups. This should include how to use Rotarian Action Groups to assist clubs and districts in supporting RI strategic plan priorities. (*September 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 88*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; Amended by January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137; September 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 88

#### 42.020.8. Independent Review of Financial Statements

Rotarian 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
- 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 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; Amended by November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 75; November 2007 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 69; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

#### 42.020.9. Services

Services include use of the Rotary Marks; listing of up to three officers in the *Official Directory*, 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 with the provisions that no requests for financial support be allowed and no sales of products or merchandise be allowed from these areas. (*January 2012 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 201*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; Amended by January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137; September 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 88; January 2012 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 201

#### 42.020.10. Suspension and Termination of Recognition

The general secretary may suspend services provided to a Rotarian Action Group, with or without the consent of the group's officers or members, for failure to function in accordance with RI policy.

The Board may terminate a group's recognition by RI, with or without the consent of the group's officers or members, for failure to function in accordance with RI policy. 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 Rotarian Action Group when a group has not communicated with the general secretary for a one-year period, as required by RI policy, or in cases where the group has decided to voluntarily disband.

Rotary International may notify district governors of terminations or suspensions as appropriate. (*January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; November 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 78; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

#### 42.020.11. Rotarian Action Group Dues and Fundraising

Rotarian Action Group dues must be of a reasonable amount and each group shall disclose how dues are used in their governing documents, and on their membership application materials. Rotarian Action Groups shall prepare and circulate a statement of income and expenses annually to their members as provided in 42.020.8.

Rotarian Action Groups may have paid staff. Groups may pay staff salaries only through membership dues or through project administrative fees paid as part of a grant.

Rotarian 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 for a specific project
- The Rotary Foundation
- a separate implementing organization working with Rotary clubs on a project (provided there is no conflict of interest between the Rotarian Action Group, its officers and/or directors, and the entity receiving the funds)

Rotarian Action Groups may solicit and hold donations for the groups listed above in an amount not to exceed US\$25,000. (*September 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 88*)

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; Amended by January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137; September 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 88

#### 42.020.12. Rotarian Action Groups and Other Organizations

##### 1. RI/TRF No Contact List

Rotarian Action Groups may not contact any organizations on the “no contact list,” as defined in 35.010.3. without the express written consent of the general secretary.

##### 2. Grant-seeking policy

Rotarian 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.

##### 3. Cooperative relationship policy

Rotarian 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 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137)*

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; *Amended by* November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 75; February 2007 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 159; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

#### 42.020.13. Incorporation of Rotarian Action Groups

The advisability of incorporation is a matter the members of a Rotarian 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 Rotarian 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)*

Source: June 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 302; *Amended by* November 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 75; January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

#### 42.020.14. Establishment of Charitable Entities and Organizations

Rotarian Action Groups may not establish their own foundations, trusts, or other similar charitable entities. Rotarian Action Groups may not establish other organizations, for example an implementing organization, to circumvent any of the policies listed above. *(January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137)*

Source: January 2011 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137

#### 42.020.15. Youth Protection

Rotarian Action Groups must protect the safety and wellbeing of all youth participating in their activities and comply with Rotary International’s youth protection policies. *(May 2014 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 143)*

Source: May 2014 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 143

#### **42.030. Incorporation Guidelines For Global Networking Groups**

The following recommended 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. Only Rotarians, spouses of Rotarians, and Rotaractors may be members of the incorporated entity
7. 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
8. The board of directors and officers of the Global Networking Group corporation shall be limited to Rotarians, spouses of Rotarians or Rotaractors who are members of the Global Networking Group
9. 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
10. There shall be at least three officers of the Global Networking Group, one of whom shall be the chair (president or other administrative head). The chair must be an active Rotarian. The current chair shall be the highest officer of the incorporated Global Networking Group and shall serve as chair of the board of directors. The Global Networking Group may elect such other officers as required by local law and as provided for in its corporate documents
11. The chair shall report annually to the members on the status of the Global Networking Group incorporation

12. The Global Networking Group is not an activity or agency of RI. (*February 2006 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 137*)

Source: November 2005 Mtg., Bd. Dec. 76

### **Cross References**

31.090.2. *General Secretary Authority to Incorporate Global Networking Groups*

