

## **THE STATUTE OF THE REGIONAL YOUTH COOPERATION OFFICE**

### **GENERAL PROVISIONS**

#### **Article 1.**

- i) Regional Youth Cooperation Office shall be established with a legal status of an international organisation.
- ii) The abbreviation for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office is 'RYCO'
- iii) The logo of RYCO is XXXXXXXX

#### **Article 2.**

The legal structure of RYCO shall be established in Tirana, Albania in accordance with applicable laws.

#### **Article 3.**

The RYCO Secretariat has its Head Office in Tirana, Albania (*address*). This RYCO signatory where the Secretariat Head Office is located is the host.

RYCO Secretariat shall have Local Branches in each of the RYCO signatories. The Local Branch in the RYCO signatory where the Secretariat Head Office is located shall be physically administratively and financially integrated into the RYCO Secretariat Head Office.

#### **Article 4.**

- i) RYCO shall have a legal personality and legal capacity necessary to carry out its functions and fulfill its mandate. These include concluding contracts, acquiring and disposing of movable and immovable property, managing all its assets, and instigate legal proceedings in accordance with the legislation of the host RYCO signatory.
- ii) The host RYCO signatory shall, without delay, facilitate the provision of all necessary and relevant documents for the purposes of regulating the legal status needed for the establishment of RYCO.
- iii) The host RYCO signatory government shall provide the RYCO Secretariat Head Office, free of charge and without effect on the RYCO budget and contributions, the premises, utility services, communications and logistic assistance, as deemed necessary for the effective and efficient performance of the duties of RYCO, and in accordance with provisions of this Agreement.
- iv) Costs related to the premises, and utility services of RYCO Local Branches, located in each member of RYCO that does not host the Secretariat, shall be covered in full by the host government, and have no effect on the RYCO budget and contributions.
- v) The RYCO Secretariat and Local Branches shall not be located in the building(s) with other public administration bodies of the RYCO signatory where they are stationed.

### **MEMBERSHIP**

#### **Article 5.**

RYCO signatories are Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Kosovo\*<sup>1</sup>, Macedonia, Montenegro and Serbia.

Article 6.

RYCO does not exclude membership of other participants, and especially membership of Croatia and Slovenia, bearing in mind that they duly, and without reservations accept, respect and comply with all provisions as set out in this Agreement, all other documents annexed to the RYCO Agreement, and documents that have subsequently to the signature of this Agreement been adopted by RYCO. To become valid, membership shall be approved by all members of the Governing Board prior to the commencement of any activities financed or co-financed by RYCO.

Article 7.

RYCO is open to collaboration on projects and/or programmes with other interested participants. This collaboration shall be based on a Special Agreement stipulating the scope and aims of the collaboration and shall be approved by all members of the Governing Board prior to the commencement of any activities.

#### MANDATE OF RYCO

Article 8.

Within its geographical area of the RYCO signatories, the mandate of RYCO is to support youth projects that aim at, and contribute to:

1. The promotion of diversity and democratic values
2. Enhancing sustainable regional cooperation amongst youth, and establishing new relations amongst young people in the Western Balkans region
3. Fostering reconciliation and constructive approaches to remembrance
4. Intercultural learning
5. Increasing regional mobility
6. Promoting the European spirit of cooperation, understanding, and tolerance
7. Active citizenship and participation in decision-making processes by young people
8. Social inclusion and promotion of employability of young people

In case of membership being expanded to include new RYCO signatories, or collaboration being established with other participants, the mandate of RYCO shall remain as defined under this article.

Article 9.

RYCO shall support financially, logistically and pedagogically youth exchange programmes and other activities involving young people from RYCO signatories and partners, which shall be in-line with and contribute to the fulfillment of the RYCO mission, vision and mandate.

Article 10.

Eligible organisations and persons from the RYCO signatories can apply for support in order to organise exchanges activities, which shall be in-line with and contribute to the fulfillment of the RYCO mission, vision and mandate.

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<sup>1</sup>This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and the ICJ Opinion on the Kosovo Declaration of Independence

Article 11.

When approving project proposals, emphasis shall be placed on ensuring that RYCO financed projects take into consideration the quality of proposals, respective contributions of the RYCO signatories to the RYCO Budget, and priorities of RYCO as described in the Operational Plan of RYCO.

Article 12.

Each RYCO signatory shall encourage implementation of projects with all other RYCO signatories.

Article 13.

Additional and more specific regulations defining activities and eligibility of the applicants shall be outlined in the RYCO Guidelines for Applicants which shall be developed by the Secretariat and approved by the Governing Board prior to the commencement of RYCO activities.

## STRUCTURE OF RYCO

Article 14.

RYCO structures shall be composed of:

- i) A Governing Board
- ii) A Secretariat
- iii) An Advisory Board
- iv) Working Groups

### *The Governing Board*

Article 15.

The Governing Board is the highest authority of RYCO. The Governing Board is composed of:

- i) Government representative of the RYCO signatory who is in direct charge of youth policy per RYCO signatory
- ii) One youth representative per RYCO signatory

Each RYCO signatory has two Governing Board members as described above.

Article 16.

The Government representative serves a term in line with his or her mandate in the government of the RYCO signatory they represent.

Article 17.

The youth representative shall represent the youth in his or her respective RYCO signatory. The representative of civil society shall be no younger than 18, and no older than 30 years of age at the start of her/her mandate.

The youth representative shall serve a mandate of 3 years, with no possibility of extension. Each signatory will select a youth representative using its own mechanisms in a transparent, inclusive and democratic manner, and in close cooperation with civil society dealing with youth.

Article 18.

All decisions of the Governing Board are taken by consensus.

Article 19.

The scope of work of the Governing Board includes:

- i) Adopting a RYCO financial plan for the upcoming 3 year period,
- ii) Adopting a 3 year RYCO strategic plan, and annual operational plans,
- iii) Approving the annual programme report of RYCO,
- iv) Approving the annual financial report of RYCO,
- v) Ensuring political support for strategic, operational and financial plans within their respective RYCO signatories,
- vi) Mandating the Advisory Board in cooperation with the Secretary General to establish working groups on a particular youth related issue, within the scope of the RYCO mandate,
- vii) Choosing, contracting, and dismissing the Secretary General of the Secretariat based on merit and competences of candidates,
- viii) Concluding agreements with new participants for RYCO membership,
- ix) Concluding and terminating agreements on collaboration with participants and organisations outside the RYCO signatories, and
- x) Establishing a Selection committee, of which the Secretary general shall be a member, tasked with the selection process for the Secretariat and Local Branch staff

Article 20.

Meetings of the Governing Board will take place at least once a year. The host of the meeting(s) will rotate annually to ensure proportional inclusion of all RYCO signatories.

The costs of attendance for the Governing Board members will be included in the RYCO Secretariat budget.

*The Chair and co-chair*

Article 21.

The Chair and Co-Chair shall be part of the Governing Board.

Article 22.

The Chair is the government representative of a RYCO signatory.

The Co-chair is the youth representative of the same RYCO signatory.

Article 23.

The Chair and Co-chair rotate their posts each year in alphabetical order.

Article 24.

The scope of work of the Chair and the co-chair of the Governing Board are:

- i) To chair the meetings of the Governing Board at least one per year,
- ii) Supporting the Secretary General in representing RYCO,
- iii) Supporting the Secretary General in fundraising efforts outside RYCO signatory governments,

*Secretariat*

Article 25.

The RYCO Secretariat is made up the Head Office and Local Branches.

Head Office is located in Tirana, Albania and is made up the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General, administrative staff, support staff and programme staff.

The Head Office has Local Branches in each signatory other than the RYCO signatory where the Local Branch forms part of the Secretariat Head Office.

Article 26.

The Selection Committee set up by the Governing Board shall elaborate the selection criteria for the Secretariat staff and select candidates.

Candidates for Secretariat staff shall be identified through an open call. Candidates shall be evaluated and employed based on merit, and should reflect the diversity of the RYCO signatories.

Article 27.

All international staff of the Secretariat shall enjoy privileges and immunities in-line with those enjoyed by international staff of other international organisations in the RYCO signatory where the Secretariat Head Office or Local Branches are located and as stipulated in the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations of 1961.

Article 28.

Local Branch staff shall be employed based on merit, in accordance with the applicable legislation in the respective RYCO signatory, and in line with the selection process for the Secretariat staff.

Article 29.

Local staff of the RYCO Head Office and Local Branches shall be employed under terms in accordance with the applicable legislation in the host signatory.

Article 30.

Provisions shall be made to enable engagement of interns in the RYCO structures.

Article 31.

The Secretary General candidates are selected through an open call and based on merit. The Secretary General is appointed on a 4-year mandate by consensus of the Governing Board and without possibility of extension.

The nationality of the Secretary General shall rotate in a manner inclusive to all RYCO signatories.

The first Secretary General cannot be from the RYCO signatory hosting the RYCO Head Office.

Article 32.

The Deputy Secretary General candidates are selected through an open call and based on merit. The Deputy Secretary General is appointed on a 4-year mandate by consensus of the

Governing Board and without possibility of extension. The Deputy Secretary General shall not be of the same nationality as the Secretary General.

Article 33.

The Governing Board shall ensure that an adequate hand-over period between the incoming and outgoing Secretary Generals and Deputy Secretary Generals will be provided.

Article 34.

The RYCO Head Office is in charge of:

- i) Drafting and planning the RYCO Strategic Plan and Operational Plans, in consultation with the Advisory Board,
- ii) Implementing the RYCO Strategic Plan and Operational Plans,
- iii) All operational and administrative issues of RYCO,
- iv) Proposing the three-year RYCO Budget,
- v) All day-to-day financial affairs of the RYCO in-line with the RYCO Financial Regulations, including proposing budget reallocations that fall within the 5% contingency costs,
- vi) All programme affairs including programming, formulating and publishing calls for proposals, selection of proposals, tendering, assistance in writing applications, assistance in implementation, reviewing project reports, conducting on-the-spot checks of RYCO financed projects, and reporting,
- vii) Communication with RYCO donors, other than RYCO member governments, and ensuring additional financial support for RYCO in cooperation with the Governing Board Chair and Co-chair,
- viii) Organising and implementing promotional, visibility and dissemination activities for RYCO,
- ix) Organising the selection process for Head Office staff and Local Branches staff in-line with the selection criteria and under the supervision of the Selection Committee set-up by the Governing Board,
- x) Ensuring that the RYCO Financial Regulations and Rules of Procedures are complied with,
- xi) Coordinating the work between RYCO Head Office and Local Branches,
- xii) Publishing calls and appointing the Proposal Evaluation Committee,
- xiii) Developing, implementing and monitoring the impact of quality control measures such as capacity buildings, trainings, research, monitoring and evaluation.
- xiv) Organising RYCO Governing Board meetings in coordination with the Governing Board Chair and Co-Chair.

Article 35.

The roles of the Secretary General are to:

- i) Represent RYCO
- ii) Oversee and coordinate the work of the Head Office and Local Branches of the RYCO Secretariat,
- iii) Compile and submit RYCO Financial and Programme reports to the Governing Board set out in the Rules of Procedures
- iv) Conclude and terminate contracts with staff of the Head Office and Local Branches,

- v) Conclude financial support for RYCO from non-RYCO member government sources,
- vi) Conclude and terminate contracts with beneficiaries of RYCO projects, and
- vii) Conclude and terminate contracts with suppliers.

**Article 36.**

The roles of the Deputy Secretary General are to:

- i) Represent RYCO in agreement and coordination with the Secretary General
- ii) Oversee and coordinate the work of the Head Office and Local Branches of the RYCO Secretariat in coordination with the Secretary General
- iii) Ensure compliance with the Rules of Procedures and Financial Regulations by all staff within the scope of the RYCO Head Office and Local Branches
- iv) Coordinate the work of the Advisory Board

**Article 37.**

The Local Branches are in charge of:

- i) Representing RYCO at the level of the RYCO signatory where they are located in coordination with the Secretariat Head Office,
- ii) Implementing the strategic plan and operational plans for the RYCO signatory, in coordination with the Secretariat Head Office,
- iii) Provide assistance in project application, implementation and reporting for beneficiaries in the RYCO signatory where it is located,
- iv) Conduct follow up activities and on-the-spot checks towards beneficiaries in coordination with the Secretariat Head Office,
- v) Coordinate promotion, visibility and dissemination activities for the RYCO signatory where it is located in coordination with the Secretariat Head Office, and
- viii) Produce and submit programme, operational and financial reports to the Secretary General as set out in the Rules of Procedures

*Advisory Board*

**Article 38.**

The Advisory Board is formed of experts on the thematic issues of RYCO, including representatives of the donor community, civil society, international organisations and other relevant institutions.

**Article 39.**

The members of the Advisory Board are recommended by the Secretary General and the Governing Board.

The Advisory Board members are formally appointed by the Governing Board.

**Article 40.**

The Advisory Board members are appointed on a 2-year term, with possibility of extension.

The Advisory Board is composed of up to 18 members. For each RYCO signatory, 2 members are recommended by the Governing Board, while 1 is recommended by the Secretary General.

In case of RYCO membership expansion, each new RYCO signatory will get three more seats on the Advisory Board, following the logic illustrated in this article.

Article 41.

The Advisory Board can, on its own initiative and/or on mandate of the Governing Board and/or the Secretary General conduct research and give recommendations on certain issues within the scope of RYCO activities and mandate.

The Advisory Board can form Working Groups composed of its members and external experts.

The Advisory Board reports to the Governing Board and the Secretary General.

## FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 42.

Governments of RYCO signatories shall ensure long-term financial commitments for the sustainability of RYCO structures, and accomplishment of RYCO mandate as set out in Article 8 of this Statute.

Article 43.

The RYCO Budget will be composed of RYCO signatory contributions and contributions from other donors as defined in Article 48.

Article 44.

Financial Regulations shall be in place upon the start of operations of RYCO Secretariat to govern all financial aspects of RYCO not mentioned in the articles of this Statute.

Article 45.

Contributions of each RYCO signatory to the RYCO Budget shall be expressed as a percentage. The formula for calculating percentages of respective contributions of RYCO signatories and provisions indicating the principles of RYCO Budget allocation shall be indicated in the Financial Regulations.

Article 46.

The budget of RYCO is planned on a three-year basis.

The budget for the upcoming three-year period shall be finalised 6 months before the expiry of the current budget, and using the latest available economic and population indicators required for the calculation of each RYCO signatory contribution.

### Article 47.

The percentages of contributions per RYCO member are as follows:

- Albania:
- Bosnia and Herzegovina:
- Kosovo\*:
- Macedonia:
- Montenegro:
- Serbia:

Article 48.

Sources from which RYCO can receive funding, other than RYCO member government sources are:

- i) International organisations
- ii) National and international foundations
- iii) National bi-lateral donors, such as development cooperation funds
- iv) Corporate donations
- v) Individual donors

Article 49.

RYCO Secretariat costs are composed of Operational costs and Activity costs.

Operational costs are:

- i. Staff costs
- ii. Vehicle costs (including fuel, registration, insurance, repairs etc.)
- iii. Equipment costs (computers, photocopiers, telephones, fax, scanner, stationary, paper etc.)
- iv. Communication costs
- v. Cleaning costs
- vi. Field visit costs
- vii. Travel costs for meetings, conferences etc.
- viii. Staff training and team-building costs
- ix. Governing Board meetings costs

Activity costs are:

- i. Costs of projects activities
- ii. Project proposal evaluation costs
- iii. Dissemination costs
- iv. Visibility costs
- v. Training of trainers costs

Article 50.

Non-RYCO Secretariat costs are:

- i. Space rent for the Secretariat Head Office and Local Branches
- ii. Utility bills (electricity, gas, water, rubbish collection, council tax (if applicable))
- iii. Building maintenance and renovation (not caused by damage or negligence of RYCO staff)

Article 51.

For all tendering procedures of the RYCO Secretariat the guidelines outlined in the latest available European Commission Procedures and Practical Guide (PRAG) shall be applicable. The Secretariat will be encouraged to develop its own tendering procedures.

Article 52.

All equipment purchased through the RYCO budget, such as vehicles, IT equipment etc. remain the property of the RYCO Secretariat until the Secretariat disposes of them in a manner prescribed in the Financial Regulations of RYCO.

Article 53.

RYCO supported projects shall require beneficiary co-financing depending on the capacity of the applicant and type of project.

- For individual exchanges RYCO will cover up to 100% of project costs.
- For group exchanges RYCO will cover up to 75% of the costs for beneficiaries with an annual budget of more than 300,000 EUR.
- For beneficiaries with an annual budget between 50,000 EUR and 300,000 EUR RYCO will cover up to 85% of the project costs.
- For beneficiaries with an annual budget of less than 50,000 EUR RYCO will cover up to 95% of the project costs.

Article 54.

All RYCO financial affairs, including government contributions are in the EURO currency.