

**STATUTE
OF THE REGIONAL YOUTH COOPERATION OFFICE**

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Article 1

The Regional Youth Cooperation Office shall be an independently functioning institutional mechanism for youth cooperation among Western Balkans participants.

Article 2

1. The organizational structure of RYCO shall be established in Tirana, Albania in accordance with Albanian legislation,
2. The abbreviation for the Regional Youth Cooperation Office is “RYCO”,
3. RYCO shall have its own logo.

Article 3

1. The Secretariat of RYCO has its Head Office in Tirana, Albania,
2. The Secretariat may propose to the Governing Board to establish Local Branches as appropriate in each Contracting Party,
3. The Local Branch in the Host Contracting Party shall be an integral part of the Secretariat Head Office.

Article 4

1. 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 Contracting Party,

2. The Host Contracting Party 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,
3. The Host Contracting Party Government shall provide the Secretariat Head Office, free of charge and without effect on the RYCO budget and contributions, the premises and utility services as deemed necessary for the effective and efficient performance of the duties of RYCO,
4. Costs related to the premises and utility services of Local Branches, located in each Contracting Party other than the Host Contracting Party, shall be covered in full by the host government, and have no effect on the RYCO budget and contributions,
5. The Secretariat, including Local Branches, shall not be located in the building(s) with other public administration bodies of the Contracting Party where they are stationed.

MEMBERSHIP

Article 5

1. RYCO founding members are the Signatories to the Agreement on the Establishment of the Regional Youth Cooperation Office,
2. Other parties may become members of RYCO in accordance with article 6 of the Agreement.

Article 6

RYCO is open to collaboration on projects and/or programs with other interested participants. This collaboration shall be based on a Special Agreement stipulating the scope and aims of the collaboration. The

collaboration shall be carried out in accordance with the Rules of Procedure of RYCO.

MANDATE OF RYCO

Article 7

1. The mandate of RYCO is to support youth projects that aim at, and contribute to:

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

2. The mandate of RYCO as defined under this article shall apply to any new RYCO Contracting Party and collaboration being established with other participants.

Article 8

RYCO shall provide full support to the youth exchange programmes and other activities involving young people from the Contracting Parties and partners, which shall be in-line with and contribute to the fulfillment of the RYCO mission, vision and mandate.

Article 9

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

Article 10

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 Contracting Parties to the RYCO Budget as defined in Article 44, and priorities of RYCO as described in its Operational Plan.

Article 11

Each Contracting Party shall provide full support to the implementation of projects with all other Contracting Parties.

Article 12

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.

STRUCTURE OF RYCO

Article 13

RYCO structures shall be composed of:

1. A Governing Board

2. A Secretariat
3. An Advisory Board
4. Working Groups

THE GOVERNING BOARD

Article 14

1. The Governing Board is the highest decision-making authority of RYCO.
2. The Governing Board is composed of two representatives from each Contracting Party as described below:
 - One Government representative in direct charge of youth policy,
 - One youth representative.

Article 15

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

Article 16

1. The youth representative shall be no younger than 18, and no older than 30 years of age at the start of her/his mandate,
2. The youth representative shall serve a mandate of 3 years, with no possibility of extension,
3. Each Contracting Party 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 17

Decisions of the Governing Board are taken by consensus.

Article 18

The Governing Board shall:

1. Adopt the Rules of Procedure and other secondary regulation required for the functioning of RYCO,
2. Adopt a 3 year Strategic Plan, and annual operational plans of RYCO,
3. Adopt the Annual RYCO Budget and its Financial Plan for the upcoming 3 year period,
4. Approve the Annual Program Report,
5. Approve the Annual Financial Report,
6. Ensure political support for strategic, operational and financial plans of RYCO from the Contracting Parties,
7. Mandate 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,
8. Appoint the Secretary General of the Secretariat based on merit and competences of candidates, and dismiss the Secretary General,
9. Conclude and terminate agreements on collaboration with participants and organisations outside the RYCO Contracting Parties,
10. Establish a Selection Committee, of which the Secretary General shall be a member, tasked with the selection process for the staff of the Secretariat and Local Branches,
11. Appoint external financial auditors for RYCO pursuant to this Statute,

12. Execute other tasks as defined in this Statute.

Article 19

1. The Board meets once a year unless otherwise decided,
2. The meeting of the Board takes place at the Contracting Party chairing it and is presided over by the Chair,
3. The Chair is composed of a government representative and a youth representative from the same Contracting Party,
4. The youth representative will assist and, when needed, replace the government representative in presiding over the meeting,
5. The Chair rotates each year in alphabetical order of the names of the Contracting Parties,
6. The costs of attendance for the Governing Board members will be included in the RYCO Secretariat Budget.

Article 20

The Chair shall:

1. Preside over the meetings of the Governing Board,
2. Support the Secretary General in fulfilling their mandate, in representing RYCO, including in fundraising efforts outside RYCO Contracting Parties,

SECRETARIAT

Article 21

1. The Secretariat is made up of the Head Office and Local Branches that may be established in accordance with article 3 of the Statute,
2. The Head Office is located in Tirana, Albania and is made up of the Secretary General, Deputy Secretary General as well as administrative, support and program staff,
3. The Secretariat will function in accordance with the Rules of Procedure.

Article 22

1. A Selection Committee, set up by the Board shall elaborate the selection criteria for the Secretariat staff and select the candidates,
2. The candidates for the Secretariat staff shall be identified through an open call. The candidates shall be evaluated and employed based on merit, and should reflect the diversity of the RYCO Contracting Parties.

Article 23

1. Local staff of the RYCO Head Office and Local Branches shall be employed under the terms in accordance with the applicable legislation in each Contracting Party,
2. Provisions shall be made to enable engagement of interns in the RYCO structures.

Article 24

1. Candidates for the position of the Secretary General are selected through an open call and based on merit,
2. The Secretary General is appointed on a 4-year mandate by consensus of the Governing Board, without possibility of extension,
3. The Secretary General is accountable to the Governing Board,
4. The nationality of the Secretary General shall rotate in a manner inclusive to all RYCO Contracting Parties,
5. The first Secretary General cannot be from the Contracting Party hosting the RYCO Head Office,

Article 25

1. The candidates for the position of the Deputy Secretary General are selected through an open call and based on merit,
2. The Deputy Secretary General is appointed on a 4-year mandate by consensus of the Governing Board and without possibility of extension,
3. The Deputy Secretary General is accountable to the Secretary General and the Governing Board,
4. The Deputy Secretary General shall not be of the same nationality as the Secretary General.

Article 26

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 27

The RYCO Head Office is in charge of:

1. Drafting the Strategic Plan and Operational Plans, in consultation with the Advisory Board,
2. Implementing the Strategic Plan and Operational Plans as approved by the Governing Board,
3. Proposing the annual RYCO Budget and its financial plan for the upcoming 3 year period,
4. All day-to-day financial issues in-line with the Financial Regulations, including proposing budget reallocations that fall within the 5% Contingency Costs,
5. All program issues 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,
6. Communication with donors, other than Contracting Parties, and ensuring additional financial support for RYCO in cooperation with the Chair of the Governing Board,
7. Organising and implementing promotional, visibility and dissemination activities for RYCO,
8. Organising the selection process for the staff of the Head Office and Local Branches in-line with the selection criteria and under the supervision of the Selection Committee set-up by the Governing Board,
9. Ensuring that the Financial Regulations and Rules of Procedures are complied with,
10. Coordinating the work between the Head Office and the Local Branches,

11. Publishing calls and appointing the Proposal Evaluation Committee,
12. Developing, implementing and monitoring the impact of quality control measures such as capacity buildings, trainings, research, monitoring and evaluation,
13. Preparing the meetings of the Governing Board in coordination with the Chair,
14. All other operational and administrative issues.

Article 28

The Secretary General shall:

1. Represent RYCO and its interests,
2. Conduct, oversee and coordinate the work of the Secretariat,
3. Compile and submit Financial and Program reports to the Governing Board, as set out in the Rules of Procedure,
4. Conclude and terminate contracts with staff of the Head Office and Local Branches, in accordance with the Rules of Procedure,
5. Conclude international agreements on behalf of RYCO, upon authorization by the Governing Board,
6. Conclude and terminate contracts with the Project Implementing Parties,
7. Conclude and terminate contracts with suppliers,
8. Perform other tasks in accordance with the Statute and the Rules of Procedure.

Article 29

The Deputy Secretary General shall assist the Secretary General in fulfilling their mandate, and will be specifically responsible to:

1. Oversee and coordinate the work of the Secretariat in coordination with the Secretary General.
2. Ensure compliance with the Rules of Procedure and Financial Regulations by all staff within the Secretariat,
3. Coordinate the work of the Advisory Board.

Article 30

The Local Branches are in charge of:

1. Representing RYCO at the level of the Contracting Party where they are located in coordination with the Head Office,
2. Implementing the Strategic Plan and Operational Plans for the Contracting Party, in coordination with the Head Office,
3. Providing assistance in project application, implementation and reporting for Project Implementing Parties in the Contracting Party where it is located.
4. Conducting follow up activities and on-the-spot checks towards Project Implementing Parties in coordination with the Head Office.
5. Coordinating promotion, visibility and dissemination activities for the Contracting Party where it is located in coordination with the Head Office,
6. Producing and submitting program, operational and financial reports to the Secretary General as set out in the Rules of Procedure.

ADVISORY BOARD

Article 31

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 32

1. The members of the Advisory Board are recommended by the Governing Board and by the Secretary General.
2. The Advisory Board members are formally appointed by the Governing Board.

Article 33

1. The Advisory Board members are appointed on a 2-year term, with possibility of extension.
2. Each Contracting Party has three members in the Advisory Board. For each Contracting Party, two members are recommended by the Governing Board, while one is recommended by the Secretary General.

Article 34

1. The Advisory Board may, on its own initiative and/or on mandate from the Governing Board and/or the Secretary General, conduct research and assessment, and provide recommendations on issues within the scope of RYCO activities and mandate,
2. The Advisory Board may form Working Groups composed of its members and external experts, upon recommendation by the Governing

Board,

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

FINANCIAL PROVISIONS

Article 35

The total annual budget of RYCO for the first 3-year budgetary period shall be 2,000,000.00 EUR per year.

Article 36

Governments of Contracting Parties shall ensure long-term financial commitments for the sustainability of RYCO structures, and accomplishment of RYCO mandate as set out in Article 7 of this Statute. As part of this, the sum of contributions of all RYCO Contracting Parties shall be no lower than 50% + 1 EUR of the RYCO Budget for any given year.

Article 37

1. The RYCO Budget will be composed of contributions from RYCO Contracting Parties and contributions from other donors as defined in Article 45,
2. Contributions from other donors exceeding the total annual budget of RYCO will be included in a Special Project Co-financing Fund in line with RYCO mission.

Article 38

Funds available through the Special Project Co-financing Fund shall be used exclusively for RYCO activity costs as defined in Article 46 of this Statute for either financing or co-financing RYCO activities.

Article 39

The Operational costs of the RYCO Secretariat, as defined in Article 46 of this Statute shall not exceed 15% of the total RYCO Budget.

Article 40

Financial Regulations shall be part of the Rules and Procedure and shall cover all financial aspects of RYCO, including those not specifically mentioned in this Statute.

Article 41

Contributions of each RYCO Contracting Party to the RYCO Budget shall be expressed as a percentage as defined in Article 44 of this Statute.

Article 42

1. The RYCO Budget is planned on a three-year basis and approved annually,
2. 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 Contracting Party's contribution.

Article 43

The Contracting Parties shall agree to any increase in the Contracting Party contributions to the RYCO Budget unanimously.

Article 44

1. The percentages of contributions of the Contracting Parties to the RYCO budget, in conformity with Article 37 of this Statute, are as follows:

- Albania: 17.3%
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: 15.4%
- Kosovo*: 10.2%
- Macedonia: 13.8%
- Montenegro: 4.4%
- Serbia: 38.9%

Article 45

RYCO may receive funding other than from the RYCO Contracting Parties in line with RYCO mission from:

1. International organisations,
2. National and international foundations,
3. National bi-lateral donors, such as development cooperation funds,
4. Corporate donations,
5. Individual donors.

*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 46

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

Operational costs are:

1. Staff costs
2. Vehicle costs (including fuel, registration, insurance, repairs etc.),
3. Equipment costs (computers, photocopiers, telephones, faxes, scanners, stationary, etc.),
4. Communication costs,
5. Cleaning costs,
6. Field visit costs,
7. Travel costs for meetings, conferences etc,
8. Staff training and team-building costs,
9. Governing Board meetings costs.

Activity costs are:

1. Costs of project activities,
2. Project proposal evaluation costs,
3. Dissemination costs,
4. Visibility costs,
5. Training of trainers costs.

Article 47

Non-RYCO Secretariat costs are:

1. Space rent for the Secretariat Head Office and Local Branches,
2. Utility bills (electricity, gas, water, rubbish collection),
3. Building maintenance and renovation (not caused by damage or negligence of RYCO staff).

Article 48

1. All tendering procedures of the Secretariat will be based on the guidelines outlined in the latest available European Commission Procedures and Practical Guide (PRAG),
2. The Secretariat will be encouraged to develop its own tendering procedures.

Article 49

All equipment purchased through the RYCO Budget, such as vehicles, IT equipment etc., are the property of the RYCO Secretariat in accordance with the provisions of the Financial Regulations.

Article 50

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

1. For individual exchanges RYCO will cover up to 100% of total project costs.

2. For group exchanges RYCO will cover up to 75% of the total costs for Project Implementing Parties, with an annual budget of more than 300,000 EUR.
3. For Project Implementing Parties with an annual budget between 50,000 EUR and 300,000 EUR RYCO will cover up to 85% of the total project costs.
4. For Project Implementing Parties with an annual budget of less than 50,000 EUR RYCO will cover up to 95% of the total project costs.

Article 51

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