

# 6. Working group management

The managerial working groups shall appoint five or more members of a new substantive working group, on the understanding that they will elect their own officers. Each working group shall have a chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer, and three different persons shall perform these tasks.

A working group may prefer to elect a secretary who will be responsible for maintaining records, submitting reports, drafting correspondence, and preparing other written material. If it does not, the chairman shall appoint one or more members or associates who will carry out these tasks.

Any member of a working group may be nominated and elected as one of its officers, and each member shall have one vote. All members and associates shall have the right to nominate candidates and sign nominating petitions, pursuant to rules and requirements that working group 1 shall establish.

Each working group shall establish systematic procedures for seeking the views of associates by requesting their written recommendations during each electoral cycle.

## a. Delegating responsibility

The chairman shall operate in close cooperation with the vice-chairman, in part by deciding to assign specific tasks to individual members and associates. If the vice-chairman agrees, the chairman may appoint a coordinator who will be responsible for performing certain functions on an ongoing basis and/or for supervising the efforts of others. If the vice-chairman does not agree, the chairman may not proceed to make the appointment but would be wise to seek the advice, insight, or assistance of the managerial working groups. (Although this step is highly recommended, it is not formally required.)

The work of a substantive working group embraces the functional roles that are described below. It is quite possible for one person to assume a number of these roles at once, and that will of course be necessary when a working group has relatively few members. If the chairman does not appoint a coordinator to perform a given function, the corresponding responsibilities remain with (or revert to) the chair.

- *Information coordinator and deputy.*
- *Networking coordinator and deputy.*
- *Dialogue coordinator and deputy.*
- *Fund-raising coordinator and possible deputy.*

- *A website manager or “webmaster.”*
- *Meetings coordinator and deputy.* Since these functions may not justify permanent appointments, the chairman may prefer to designate individuals who will serve on an ad hoc basis, in order to carry out specific tasks.
- *Publications coordinator and deputy.* As in the case of meetings, the chairman may prefer to make temporary appointments.
- *Ethics adviser.* The chairman may wish to appoint a member of the working group who will be available to advise members and associates on ethical questions that may arise. Any such ethics adviser should operate in close association with working group 12.
- *Training coordinator and possible deputy.*
- *Membership coordinator and possible deputy.* Unless the working group is very large, the chairman will probably prefer to retain these responsibilities or share them with the vice-chairman.

### b. The trial period

The trial period shall last from one to three years. After one year or at any time thereafter, the managerial working groups may announce that a new substantive working group is fully operational. If they do not, the working group’s interim status shall automatically elapse at the end of three years.

During the trial period, a substantive working group shall submit a unified written report to the managerial working groups every three months, and the managerial working groups shall conduct a joint inspection and counseling visit every ten months. The managerial working groups shall have discretionary authority to specify the format and content of information that a substantive working group must include in its reports, but shall give timely notice of any new requirements. The managerial working groups shall likewise have discretionary authority to decide how they will conduct a joint inspection and counseling visit, but shall explain their plans and intentions in ways that give a working group appropriate time to prepare.

The managerial working groups, acting jointly, shall have discretionary authority to intervene in the affairs of a substantive working group during the trial period, but should do so only when serious problems have arisen. If the managerial working groups decide to intervene, they shall first give written notice of their concern and shall offer those involved an opportunity to comment.

The managerial working groups should use a light hand in most cases, employing gentle and considerate methods that will overcome existing difficulties. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the managerial working groups are responsible for the well-being of the regional association as a whole, and that a grave situation may compel them to adopt strenuous measures. For example, they might decide to remove one or more officers, make those individuals ineligible to serve as officers for some stated period, appoint interim successors, and instruct the working group to hold new elections.

### c. The leadership transition

Within the first three months after a substantive working group becomes fully operational, it may conduct a vote of confidence in the existing officers, provided that the chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer are all willing to continue without any shift or substitution. If the working group has elected a secretary and if the secretary wishes to continue, the question of renewing the secretary's mandate would also be part of the vote of confidence. On the other hand, the unwillingness of an elected secretary to continue in that role would not prevent a working group from holding a vote of confidence that would apply only to the chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer.

If a vote of confidence is conducted and receives the support of a two-thirds majority, the officers who were willing to continue shall be reelected just as if the working group had held a regular election. If any condition required for conducting a vote of confidence is not fulfilled, or if a vote of confidence is held but does not receive the support of a two-thirds majority, the working group shall nominate and elect officers in the regular way. In that event, any current officer who wishes to be a candidate for any office shall be subject to the same requirements that apply to all other members of the working group.

Three years shall be the standard period of service for a working group's officers, but the chairman, vice-chairman, and treasurer shall serve overlapping terms — so that one of them is elected each year. To start this overlapping cycle, the vote of confidence or first election after a working group becomes fully operational shall be an exception: The treasurer shall be elected for one year; the vice-chairman, for two years; the chairman, for three years.

### d. Standard operating patterns

After a substantive working group becomes fully operational, it shall submit separate written reports to working group 1 and working group 12 every six months. Working group 1 shall inspect such a working group every 18 months, and working group 12 shall conduct counseling visits at the same interval — but in a separate cycle and at different times. (This 18-month interval shall likewise apply to the inspections of working group 12 that working group 1 conducts, and to the counseling visits to working group 1 that working group 12 carries out.)

The managerial working groups shall have discretionary authority to specify the format and content of reports, as well as the methods and approaches they employ during inspections and counseling visits. They shall give timely notice, just as they did during the trial period.

### e. Working group budgets

Each working group shall prepare and adopt its annual budget in ways that are systematic and transparent. The budget process shall include the following steps:

1. The treasurer consults the chairman, vice-chairman, the fund-raising coordinator, the other coordinators, and any other member or associate who will be responsible for expending funds, in part by asking them to estimate the amounts that they will need for their respective tasks.
2. The treasurer prepares a draft of the working group's budget and adapts it as the chairman may direct. The treasurer then circulates the chairman's budget proposal to all members and associates of the working group, while offering them the opportunity to comment.
3. After the chairman and vice-chairman have consulted any individual members or associates whose views they wish to understand, the chairman instructs the treasurer to make appropriate adjustments.
4. Members of the working group vote to adopt the chairman's budget proposal, or perhaps to modify it and adopt the text as revised.

### f. Assessments and fund transfers

Since the regional association has expenses of a general nature, working group 1 shall specify the amounts that the treasurer of each other working group must remit to the treasurer of working group 1 from time to time. At its discretion, working group 1 may prefer to express this as a percentage of contributions received. Further, working group 1 may tailor its assessment methods to the circumstances of each individual working group and need not use a single approach on a uniform basis.

In issuing its assessments, working group 1 shall take appropriate account of the financial circumstances of the other working groups and the needs of the association as a whole.

### g. Possible methods for rotating officers and coordinators

The functions of a working group's officers are very closely associated with the work of its coordinators. Further, a spirit of teamwork and cooperation seems more likely to foster imaginative and innovative service than a command-driven and entirely hierarchical approach.

After a substantive working group becomes fully operational, it may wish to explore these challenges and opportunities by preparing a specific plan for rotating some or all of its coordinators and officers. For example, a working group might draft a plan that featured the following two sequences, on the understanding that they would operate independently:

- JUNIOR SEQUENCE:
- (1) Networking coordinator
  - (2) Fund-raising deputy
  - (3) Dialogue deputy
  - (4) Information coordinator

- SENIOR SEQUENCE:
- (1) Fund-raising coordinator
  - (2) Dialogue coordinator
  - (3) Treasurer
  - (4) Vice-chairman
  - (5) Chairman

To continue the example, let us suppose that the working group intended all rotations to occur at the same time and at regular intervals (perhaps every two years), but did not want the person who occupies the final step in the junior sequence (information coordinator) to rotate automatically to the first step in the senior sequence (fund-raising coordinator). In the view of this working group, the disconnect between the junior and senior sequences would serve two purposes:

- a. It would provide a graceful exit point for someone who performed well at junior levels but who might not have the energy or ability to assume leadership roles.
- b. It would permit the working group to elect an energetic and highly talented person to senior responsibilities, even though he or she had not progressed through the junior sequence.

If this plan were adopted and applied, the working group's periodic elections would mainly consist of electing members to the first step in each sequence. On the other hand, the working group would also have to elect someone to any function for which there was no automatic successor. (For example, that would be necessary if someone resigned during a term of service or decided to stand aside before reaching the final step.) In regard to functional roles that are not included in either sequence (e.g., information deputy), the chairman of the working group would retain the authority to make appointments.

A working group should tailor its own plan to the practical circumstances it faces. One working group might prefer a rotation that would operate only at the junior level, whereas another might design a rotational plan that consisted solely of a senior sequence.

In any case, a working group that has prepared a specific plan for rotating some or all of its coordinators and officers shall submit that plan to working group 1. Working group 1 may approve it, insist on certain changes, or decline to approve and state its reasons. If working group 1 were to approve, the plan shall enter into effect in accordance with its provisions and any transitional measures that working group 1 might specify.