

## APPENDIX N

### E-CLUB QUICK REFERENCE GUIDE AND GUIDE TO ORGANIZING ROTARY E-CLUBS (Decision 95)

#### E-Club Quick Reference Guide

Rotary e-clubs are Rotary clubs that meet electronically. A 2010 Council on Legislation enactment recognized Rotary e-clubs as part of Rotary International, following a six-year pilot project. As of 1 July 2010, RI has 14 e-clubs, all of them chartered during the pilot.

#### **What is the difference between Rotary clubs and Rotary e-clubs?**

Rotary e-clubs follow the same policies as all Rotary clubs. The key difference is that an e-club conducts its weekly meeting on the club's website. Rather than being physically present at an appointed day and time, members may attend meetings at any time and any day of the week.

As all Rotary clubs do, Rotary e-clubs meet weekly, perform service projects in local and international communities, support The Rotary Foundation, and enjoy fellowship among members. And the keys to their effectiveness are also the same: service-minded members, opportunities for fellowship, and strong leadership.

During the 2004-10 pilot, e-clubs performed 355 community service projects, 106 international service projects, 55 vocational service projects, and 70 youth service projects. E-clubs gave more than US\$150,000 to The Rotary Foundation, including more than \$21,500 to Rotary's US\$200 Million Challenge.

#### **How do e-clubs work?**

E-club meetings are hosted on a unique website. The official meeting time is considered to be when the webmaster or club secretary posts material for weekly discussion, but members may access the site at their convenience at any point during the week. E-club members discuss the item and any other club business through a chatroom feature or other means. To respect the privacy of e-club members, some meeting content or member data is protected from public view.

Although all Rotary e-clubs meet weekly and conduct business online, some e-clubs do meet in person at various times throughout the year at service projects, quarterly or semiannual dinners, or the RI Convention.

Such meetings can enhance fellowship among e-club members; however, they're strictly optional.

#### **Who participates in e-clubs?**

For business, professional, and community leaders who are unable to attend a weekly meeting in person (due to physical disabilities, location constraints, or busy schedules), the e-club option offers the opportunity to meet, conduct service projects, and participate in Rotary fellowship. From time to time, Rotarians who miss their regular Rotary club meeting may make up a meeting by attending an e-club meeting online, a valuable service for all members. As of August 2010, 360 Rotarians located in 30 countries are e-club members. Of these, 146 had previously been members of Rotary clubs, including four past district governors.

Membership in an e-club requires a basic Internet skills set, including the ability to navigate websites with ease. Members should also have a working knowledge of the principles of protecting privacy online, so that no club member compromises another's sensitive personal information.

In addition, it is critical that at least one of the founding members of the club be highly proficient in the design and maintenance of the club's website. The member should be experienced in building a website that meets all of the technological requirements listed below.

#### **What are the policies for e-clubs?**

The RI Bylaws allow for two e-clubs per district. For this reason, it's important to check with your district governor early on if you're interested in starting an e-club. Rotary e-clubs are considered by the RI Board to be worldwide. While each e-club is assigned to a district, members can come from any country or geographical area where Rotary maintains a presence. For more on policies regarding e-clubs, refer to the Rotary Code of Policies and the Report of Action of the 2010 Council on Legislation.

#### **What are the technical requirements?**

Because the meeting venue is on a website, e-clubs must have:

- A dedicated website

- Online meeting software to host a meeting (see information on software available through Rotary's partnership with Citrix Online)
- Private sections of the website that protect members' online personal data and only members can access
- Online financial transaction systems for dues payments from members, contributions, and remittances

E-clubs are responsible for all costs associated with maintaining a URL and hosting their website on the Internet.

### **How do I join an existing e-club?**

As with all Rotary clubs, membership is by invitation.

### **How do we charter an e-club?**

Applying for membership in RI as a Rotary e-club is essentially the same process as applying as a Rotary club. Contact your district governor first. The governor is responsible for organizing and establishing new clubs and will work with the district extension committee to that end. The governor will also need to initiate a New Club Survey and appoint a special representative and sponsor club to assist in planning, as outlined in the RI publication *Organizing New Clubs: A Guide for District Governors and Special Representatives*.

Remember that a successful Rotary club is not formed by any individual but rather by a dedicated team consisting of the district governor, special representative, sponsor club, and charter members who share a common vision for Rotary in their community.

### **Resources**

Your RI Club and District Support (CDS) representative  
*Organizing New Clubs: A Guide for District Governors and Special Representatives* (808)

Current Rotary e-clubs

## **Guide to Organizing Rotary E-Clubs: District Governors and Special Representatives Addendum**

### **Overview**

A 2010 Council on Legislation enactment recognized Rotary e-clubs as part of Rotary International, following a six-year pilot project.

While the vast majority of responsibilities and procedures are identical to those of setting up Rotary clubs *Organizing New Clubs: A Guide for District Governors and Special Representatives*, there are some

special considerations for e-clubs that district governors and special representatives should review.

District governors and special representatives are encouraged to use this addendum along with *Rotary E-Clubs: What You Need to Know* as a starting point in understanding their unique role in organizing Rotary clubs. Questions or comments may be directed to Club and District Support representatives. Visit [www.rotary.org/cds](http://www.rotary.org/cds) for contact information.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the District Governor**

As with all Rotary clubs, the organization of new clubs is ultimately the responsibility of the district governor (RI Bylaws 15.090). With e-clubs in particular, the governor leads a team of individuals who should all be familiar with the special technological and skill requirements needed to organize an e-club.

During the preliminary stages, the most important special consideration for district governors is to verify and track that there are no more than two Rotary e-clubs per district.

It is also important that the governor understand the unique requirements of e-clubs in order to appropriately delegate duties to the special representative, following the general guidelines described in the main section of *Organizing New Clubs*. The district governor is also encouraged to review the special requirements of e-clubs by reading and discussing *Rotary E-Clubs: What You Need to Know* with the special representative, district extension committee, sponsor club, and charter members early on in the e-club planning stage to ensure that the technical and skill requirements of Rotary e-clubs and their members are fully understood by the entire organizing team.

### **Appointing the district extension committee**

The governor oversees the appointment of a district extension committee to organize new e-clubs and oversees the development of that committee's new club survey. This committee should possess a strong understanding of the technological and other considerations for e-clubs highlighted in *Rotary E-Clubs: What You Need to Know* as part of their overall responsibilities. At this stage, the governor is encouraged to discuss the following with the committee:

- Would a Rotary e-club be a welcome addition to the district?
- Is there enough interest in the e-club to support a vibrant and active club?
- Would the formation of the e-club impact another existing club in any way?

- What type of Rotary e-club does the district want to form? Will the club meet exclusively online, or will some club meetings be held in person? If so, where and when?

### **Selecting a special representative**

Because the special representative will be the primary point person for recruiting and working with charter members, it is critical that the special representative understand the basics of Rotary e-clubs in order to communicate technical and other requirements to the sponsor club and potential members. It is recommended that the special representative come from a sponsor Rotary club. As with other Rotary clubs, Rotary e-clubs need a strong support system from other clubs in the district to be successful, especially during formation.

### **Governor's role in recruitment**

Recruitment for e-clubs will be distinct from recruiting for other Rotary clubs in many ways. The governor should work with the special representative (see below) on recruitment.

Once members are recruited, the e-club should meet once weekly. It is critical that the district governor monitor the e-club's progress along with the special representative in order to be able to grant provisional club status as outlined in *Organizing New Clubs*. Governors should attend online and in-person meetings of the club to help monitor progress. It is also the governor's responsibility to work with the special representative to ensure that the Rotary e-club name, club bylaws and committee structure, and charter members meet the expectations outlined in *Organizing New Clubs*.

### **Roles and Responsibilities of the Special Representative**

The special representative appointed by the district governor should be well-informed about e-clubs and the technological and skill requirements needed to run them as outlined in *Rotary E-Clubs: What You Need to Know*. While the district governor oversees the general organization process, the special representative is more involved in details, particularly member recruitment and the day-to-day operations of the Rotary e-club.

### **Member recruitment**

During the member recruitment stage, the special representative works closely with the district governor to find members with strong skill sets related to establishing and maintaining an interactive club website. Just as with any Rotary club, e-club members who already have Rotary experience may be able to

contribute significantly to helping the club establish a strong foundation. During the pilot project, RI observed that e-clubs with a larger percentage of previous or current Rotarians were successful.

The representative should seek members who meet criteria such as:

- Rotarians who have served as Webmaster or otherwise contributed to Rotary club websites
- Rotarians who have previously made up a meeting at an e-club site

In addition to Rotarians, new members without previous Rotary experience may be interested in joining. The representative can focus on recruiting potential members such as:

- Professionals who have expressed an interest in Rotary but travel frequently
- Young professionals who are interested in Rotary's principles but are not able or willing to meet in person once weekly for whatever reason

The special representative should also ensure that at least one but preferably more members can operate all aspects of the Web site, including the ability to build or maintain a site that protects member data and allows for online financial transactions. Refer to *Rotary E-Clubs: What You Need to Know* for further details about technical requirements.

### **Special considerations for e-clubs during member recruitment**

While the requirements for membership in an e-club are like those for any other Rotary club, the special representative will most likely not have an opportunity to interview all prospective members face-to-face to evaluate their qualifications for membership and may need to work with the district governor to evaluate the prospective member's qualifications via remote means.

Whenever possible, face-to-face meetings with the prospective members prior to admission are strongly encouraged. The club will also want to obtain the actual, physical handwritten signature of the prospective member on the membership application form, along with verification of his/her home mailing address. This will help the club avoid individuals applying for membership under false pretenses.

Although an e-club's locality is considered worldwide, most of the initial members of the club will most likely come from the district in which the club is founded. As the club grows, members will increasingly come from a wider area. While members can come from any country

where Rotary currently exists, the Board has stated that members cannot be based in any country where Rotary does not have a current presence.

During the e-club pilot project, the RI Board required the following procedures for confirming qualifications for e-club membership:

- a. where a prospective member of an e-club was previously a Rotarian, the e-club shall request confirmation through a vote taken at a regular meeting of the prospective member's previous club, that the applicant was a Rotarian in good standing on termination of his/her membership in that club;
- b. where the prospective member of an e-club was not previously a Rotarian, the e-club shall request confirmation from two Rotarians (names to be provided by the prospective member), in the applicant's community, that the applicant is a person of good standing.

Additionally, at the 2010 Council On Legislation, the Standard Rotary Club Constitution was amended to require transferring or former Rotarians to provide their new club with a written statement from the member's prior club, confirming their membership in their prior club, including a statement that their debts to the club have been paid.

### **Converting an existing Rotary club into a Rotary e-club**

If an existing Rotary club expresses an interest in converting itself into an e-club, the district governor would check that the e-club complies with all requirements including the maximum of two clubs per district. If approved, the club would only need to modify its name and locality (see below). Specific forms for petitioning the RI board for approval of the changes can be found at [www.Rotary.org](http://www.Rotary.org).

Rotary's constitutional provisions require that any changes to a club's name and/or locality must be submitted to the board of directors of RI for its approval. See the Standard Rotary Club Constitution, Article 19, section 2 for details.

### **Help the charter club members with operational duties**

The special representative is largely responsible for helping e-club members with operational duties, such as establishing the locality and name of the e-club, its meeting location, and time. Special representatives will work with the club to determine that the technical requirements are met, i.e., that the e-club website is fully functional and includes password protected areas

and that members know how to access and use the Web site.

### **Rotary E-Club names and URLs**

For e-club names, the special representative should communicate to charter members RI's recommendation that the host district be included in the name and URL of the e-club site. For example, the "Rotary E-Club of District 3310, Singapore" uses the recommended format in the club name. The URL for this club is [www.rotaryeclub3310.org](http://www.rotaryeclub3310.org).

For e-clubs, special representatives should ensure that the club name and locality fit the following format on the New Club Application Form (found in *Organizing New Clubs*):

Club name: "The Rotary E-Club of \_\_\_\_\_"

Club locality: The locality of this e-club is (worldwide) and can be found on the Worldwide Web at:

[www.\\_\\_\\_\\_\\_](http://www._____)

### **Weekly meeting time**

While club members can meet online 24 hours a day, the RI Board has determined that club meeting times are to be determined as the time when the weekly discussion materials are posted live on the Rotary e-club site. The special representative should work with the charter members to determine the posting time and include this on the New Club Application Form.

### **Language**

While not required in the application documents, at the time of its organization a Rotary e-club usually decides on a single language in which it will operate and use in its website.

### **Currency**

As described in *Rotary E-Clubs: What You Need to Know*, Rotary E-clubs need to establish a secure system for processing online financial transactions. PayPal is one of many companies that offer these services. The e-club should operate in the currency of its home district, even though it may have members from many countries around the world. Check with an attorney or tax consultant for any national and/or local laws you may need to observe based on the district's country of origin.

### **Electing provisional club officers and calling first assembly**

RI recommends that the special representative work with the e-club to ensure its board be comprised of as many current or former Rotarians as possible. The club officers should possess the necessary Internet skills and experience with websites in order to organize an effective Rotary e-club. Committees related to the

technical aspects of the club's website may be necessary.

The special representative should work with the governor and charter club members to determine who has administrative rights. For example will the club secretary and club president administer data? Who will check and process incoming e-mail from the associated e-mail account that will be posted on the e-club site? Does the club treasurer understand how to process online financial transactions?

### **Deciding the Club Committee structure**

As a special representative, encourage the sponsoring club committees to meet with the e-club both in person and online to test the effectiveness of both participation and the club structure. It is recommended that committee meetings be hosted on an area of the website that is password protected and not accessible to the general public.

The special representative should work with charter club committee to ensure that club bylaws and constitution should reflect the particular structure of the E-club's committee.

### **Using the Club Leadership Plan**

When the special representative reviews the roles and responsibilities related to the Club Leadership Plan, it is recommended that special representative work with the district governor to ensure that the e-club will translate the execution of the plan to an online community. The special representative can help the e-club adapt the Club Leadership Plan to provide continuity in leadership.

### **Working with the provisional club**

Once the club is ready to meet and has fulfilled all of the necessary requirements as outlined in this document and *Organizing New Clubs*, the district governor is ready to grant the e-club provisional status. At that point, Rotary club members from other clubs will be able to make-up meetings at the e-club site. The Rotary e-club charter members are encouraged to prepare in advance for these visits, by developing content and Rotary e-club programs for visiting Rotarians. Part of the club communication plan should include developing a news release about the e-club. Refer to the revised *Organizing New Clubs* for a sample e-club news release.

### **Supporting new Rotary e-clubs**

The special representative will still play an active role in the early stages of the e-clubs formation, until all club officers have a full understanding of their roles and how

the e-club functions independently on a weekly basis. As with other Rotary clubs, Rotary e-club members will be able to participate in President-elect Training Seminars (PETS) and district assemblies as other members would. Unlike with the e-club attendance, which is online, attendance at these meetings will be required. RI encourages the special representative to review his or her role in supporting new Rotary clubs to ensure that the E-Club Rotarians will be able to be a fully functioning member of Rotary International.

### **Special considerations about service projects**

Service Above Self is the foundation of all Rotary clubs, including Rotary e-clubs. How will the club plan programs and service projects? E-club members will be responsible for organizing their their own service projects or joining with Rotary clubs in their local area to do service. The special representative can work with e-clubs to determine how to best apply the skills, talents, and interests of the club to community service projects. Consider questions like:

- Will service projects be based in the home district or international?
- How will members organize and plan service projects through a club website format?
- What types of service projects are e-club members capable of performing together in person?

### **Other considerations for running a club**

Special representatives can work with Rotary e-clubs during the formation stage to discuss questions such as

- How will club members get information about The Rotary Foundation?
- How will new members get education and training they need on Rotary's policies and traditions?
- How will the Rotary e-club interact and cooperate with other Rotary clubs on service projects or fundraisers?

### **Special considerations about youth programs and sponsorship**

While e-clubs are considered to be like any other Rotary club, there are certain special considerations related to New Generations programs (Interact, Rotaract, RYLA, Youth Exchange) that all governors and special representatives should consider. Unlike Rotary clubs that are bound to a particular community, e-clubs are based on the Internet, and therefore serve no particular geographic region. Club members can be from a variety of countries or geographical regions.

What happens when an e-club wants to sponsor a Youth Exchange Student, Interact club, Rotaract club, or conduct a RYLA program?

RI encourages special representatives to work with district governors and e-club charter members to make sure e-clubs meet the following conditions:

- All youth protection policies and guidelines must be followed;
- Any on-line activities involving minors must be password protected and available only to vetted club members, carefully monitored, and provided due consideration;
- Sponsors of Interact and Rotaract clubs must provide adequate in-person support to ensure the Interact club or Rotaract club is sustainable;
- For RYLA, the level and nature of involvement by Rotarians in the e-club must be determined by the district RYLA committee;
- Youth Exchange activities must be operated within the district boundaries, and the level and nature of involvement by Rotarians in the e-club must be determined by the district Youth Exchange committee.

For practical reasons and to meet the basic requirements of these programs, Rotary International urges e-clubs to partner with Rotary clubs within the same district in which the e-club is based. Being in close physical proximity to a designated e-club representative will help Rotary e-club and the Rotary club work together to find qualified individuals, do the necessary assessments and interviews, and meet in person to maintain regular contact and provide leadership to and mentor youth.

Successful e-club sponsorship of New Generations programs is dependent on the ingenuity and creativity of e-club members and their dedication to Rotary's core principles and youth protection. Rotary International can provide guidance and support related to youth program sponsorship as needed.