

Bylaws

Youth Engaged in Wetlands

Current at July 15, 2020

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Preliminary

Article 1 – Status of Youth Engaged in Wetlands

1.1 Status – Youth Engaged in Wetlands (YEW), hereby known as YEW, is an independent non-profit association governed by the present Bylaws, and the laws of any country where members reside, or where activities are undertaken.

YEW is neutral regarding politics and religion, and respects the rights of its members to engage in cultural activities as they see fit.

YEW shall be of unlimited duration and may adapt the status of the network in future, as deemed necessary.

Mission Statement and Objectives

Article 2 – Mission Statement

2.1 Mission of YEW – YEW will provide a global platform for youth to enable and empower them to help protect and promote wetlands around the world.

Article 3 – Scoping Document and Objectives

3.1 Scoping document – A scoping document, *inter alia* Strategic Plan, for YEW is established collaboratively for a period of three years (the period between two Ramsar Conference of the Parties). This Scoping Document guides the activities of the Core Team for the said period by developing a set of goals, objectives and outputs. Taking an adaptive approach, these objectives and outputs are revised on an annual basis and adapted according to the priorities and needs identified, as necessary.

3.2 Objectives – According to the 2019-2021 YEW Scoping Document, YEW will pursue its mission based on the following four key objectives:

- **Implementation and coordination:** Ensure the ongoing and efficient facilitation and implementation, management and coordination of the objectives of YEW;
- **Knowledge and capacity building:** Increase understanding of the challenges and opportunities for youth engagement in the Ramsar Convention and the conservation of wetlands;
- **Participation and intergenerational cooperation:** Participation of youth in decision-making and intergenerational cooperation for better representation of youth at different levels of the Ramsar Convention; and
- **Communication and outreach:** Build a network with and for youth; connecting with youth organisations and young people around the world to communicate the mission of the Ramsar Convention and create greater ownership of this mission among young people.

Structure and Composition of YEW

Article 4 – Composition of YEW

4.1 Composition – YEW is a youth-led international network, with members based in universities, governments, non-governmental organisations and the general public in various countries. Membership includes a set of Core Team members who handle the ongoing work and functions of YEW, as well as a set of other individuals and organisations who form a part of the broader YEW network.

There is no formal address, although the network may seek hosting within a larger organisation that is aligned with its' goals. Individual projects undertaken by members of YEW may have fixed addresses, or be conducted in partnership with external organisations, for the purpose of that project. YEW will seek to maintain relationships with these organisations and others, through formal and informal arrangements.

4.2 Definition of Youth – Youth is defined by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) as a period of transition between the dependence of childhood to the independence of adulthood. This transition phase means that the identification of young people must remain flexible in order to account for the great diversity of young people across the world and different circumstances which may exist. With that in mind, YEW defines youth for practical and legal matters to include any one between the age of 18 years old and 35 years old. By focusing on this age category, YEW aims to engage with people emerging from full-time education and becoming early-career young professionals, who are playing, or are interested in playing, an active role in subjects of relevance to wetlands.

Article 5 – Organisational Structure

5.1 Network Structure – Youth Engaged in Wetlands (YEW) has established an organisational structure with clear lines of authority and accountability for specific roles required to carry out the functions of the Core Team and achieve of the team's goals (as identified in the YEW Scoping Document 2019). At the date of signing, YEW is made up of a Core Team composed of the Network Lead, a Secretary, Thematic Teams (each composed of two members), and a Regional Team. Beyond the Core Team, is a broader network of members, partner organisations, and other individuals who are aligned with YEW's values and interests. YEW will maintain an up-to-date structure for the network on the official website.

5.2 Thematic Teams – The Thematic Teams are:

1. Finance and Fundraising team;
2. Communications and Outreach team;
3. Knowledge and Capacity Building team; and
4. Conservation Policy team.

5.3 Regional Team – The Regional Team is composed of the Regional Teams' Coordinator and two Regional Representatives for the each of the five regions, which are:

- a. Africa;
- b. Americas;
- c. Asia;
- d. Europe; and
- e. Oceania.

The set of regions is based on the regional grouping structure of the Secretariat of the Ramsar Convention.

5.4 Board of Advisors – Advisor members are external to the Core Team; advisor position’s duties involve bringing guidance on proposals and implementation of YEW strategies and activities, and participating in the annual meeting discussions (either in person or virtually). Advisor members should have at least 10 years of experience in wetland issues and be committed to actively advise the Core Team during at least 1-year term (renewable under mutual agreement of both parties). Advisor members can join YEW by invitation or by selection procedures established by the Core Team.

5.5 Evolution of the Core Team Structure – Each team can have a Lead and a Support Lead meaning that, at the date of signing, there are potentially a total of 22 Core Team positions. This number may be subject to review in the future based on questions of efficiency. In future, the Core Team may dissolve or create other teams, as they see fit.

Resources

Article 6 – Resources

6.1 Current resources – YEW functions mainly as a volunteer-led professional network, with each team member giving their time and skills to develop content, run/organise events, and to support the network, according to the responsibilities described by each team member’s Terms of Reference, the team action plan, and the general direction provided by the YEW Network Lead and other members of the Core Team. In addition, YEW receives the following from time to time:

- In-kind support from various organisations;
- Grants, crowdfunding and other funding; and
- Professional advice, through a Board of Advisors.

6.2 Financial year – The financial year shall begin on first January and end on 31 December of each year. Financial reports can be based on donor(s) requirements.

6.3 Future resource development – In the future, the Core Team may implement other forms of funding, including (but not limited to):

- membership fees; and
- corporate partnerships.

Funds shall be used in accordance with an approved YEW financial plan, developed by the Finance and Fundraising team in consultation with the rest of the Core Team.

Core Team Functions and Coordination

Article 7 – Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 Terms of Reference – The roles and responsibilities of Core Team member is defined according to the Terms of Reference (ToR) developed by the Core Team members “in office” and based on the initial ToR defined in August 2019. Roles and responsibilities can be revised on an annual basis as updated by the Core Team and approved according to the Internal Consultation Procedures.

7.2 Network Lead role – The Core Team is presided over by the Network Lead, who is tasked with setting the direction of YEW, with solving disputes and conflicts, and engaging with other organisations. The Network Lead provides oversight of the organization and administration of the Network and presides over the appointment of new Core Team members. The Network Lead is also responsible for preparing the annual activity report, the annual action plans, and for signing off on any agreements or decisions of the network.

7.3 Executive Council role – The Executive Council is comprised of the Network Lead, the Thematic Team Leads and the Regional Coordinator. The Executive Council votes on formal decisions for which no consensus is reached by the Core Team. A tie in votes means that no decision is moved and that an alternative set of options should be found. The Executive Council gives formal approval to new agreements, contracts and other matters requiring such approval.

7.4 Secretary role – The office of secretary for YEW is occupied by the Network Support Lead. The Secretary provides support to the organisation and administration of the network, as well as the organisation and correct lodgement of reports, records and other information.

7.5 Treasure role – The Lead of the Finance and Fundraising team is, by virtue of their position, the Treasurer of YEW, and will provide a yearly report of the network’s financial activities, provides oversight of other agreements that involve the payment, or receipt of funds and will organise auditing when necessary.

7.6 Core Team role – The Core Team is authorized to carry out any and all acts that further the purposes of YEW, based on the lines of authority defined in the organisational structure.

The Core Team is composed of:

- The Network Lead and Support Lead (Secretary);
- Lead and Support Lead of each Thematic Team;
- The Regional Coordinator; and
- The Lead and Support lead for each Region.

The Core Team has the power to manage YEW’s day-to-day affairs. The Core Team’s responsibilities include, but are not limited to: `

- Approving the admission and expulsion of members (to the Core Team and to the broader membership);

- Noting the contents of the reports and financial statements for the year and voting on their adoption;
- Approving the annual budget;
- Supervising the activity of other teams, which it may dismiss, stating the grounds thereof;
- Approving any new projects, reports, agreements and events (or other similar matters);
- Deciding on any modification of statutes;
- Deciding on the dissolution of YEW;
- Where appropriate, introducing membership fees or alter the financial, administrative or other arrangements of YEW, as is necessary to achieve the YEW Mission Statement.

7.7 Thematic and Regional Team plans – The Leads of each Thematic and Regional Team are members of the Core Team and will decide the specific activities and goals of each of their teams. This may be presented in the form of a team plan, based on the approved Scoping Document and annual action plans developed by the Core Team as a whole and in consultation with the Network Lead.

The teams will present their plans for approval by the Core Team. Additional activities may be added to the plans in response to current events or opportunities.

7.8 Finance and Fundraising Team specific responsibilities – The Finance and Fundraising Team, along with the Network Lead, have responsibility for the financial assets of YEW, and must ensure that YEW's resources are not used for the personal benefit of any one YEW member or officer.

7.9 Dual responsibilities – Core Team members may hold dual roles within YEW. For example, a Thematic Lead can also be a Regional Representative. In addition, some members take on the additional role of translators. The uptake of dual responsibilities will be dependent on the time available to the volunteer and their capacity to fulfil the responsibilities of multiple roles.

Article 8 – Selection process, Appointment, and Terms of Service

8.1 Overview – Thematic Team Leads and Regional Representatives are recruited by a selection committee in a merit-based process.

8.2 Selection committee for Core Team members, except Network Lead – The selection committee will be composed of three volunteer Core Team members, including the Network Lead, and a relevant Thematic Team or Regional Team member. The proposed selection will be presented to the rest of the Core Team for approval.

8.3 Criteria for selection – The general criteria for selection of the Core Team members is an alignment with the YEW mission and objectives, and an age-based criterion. Team members must be between 18 and 35 years old. The Regional Representative positions must also be from the region they are representing or have been living there for a period of more than five years, with evidence of engagement with local groups, researchers, NGOs or government.

8.4 Election of Network Lead – The Network Lead may step down, with a notice period of three months. The Core Team will then vote for a new Network Lead from among the Core Team members, with the candidate receiving the most votes becoming the new Network Lead. The Network Lead should be chosen based on their ability to further YEW's progress towards its objectives; to maintain a positive culture within the Core Team, to maintain a vibrant network, and the quality of their engagement with wetland-related research, projects, policy, or other relevant work.

8.5 Terms of service – The duration of each position is two years, renewable once. The Core Team members can also decide to resign at any time, although they are encouraged to notify the Network Lead in advance (four weeks) for any handover necessary. As a position is vacated (due to reaching the end of the agreed position duration or resignation of the Core Team member), the position will be advertised online and through social media.

The replacement of Core Team members will be staggered, where possible, to ensure continuity and retain institutional knowledge. In this light, no more than half the team members may be replaced in any given year, unless this is unavoidable. All efforts shall be made to ensure that at least half of the Core Team members have two or more years of experience in YEW roles, at any given time.

8.6 Removal of Core Team members – As a result of misconduct or an unjustified period of inactivity above three months, Core Team members may be asked to leave YEW. Any Core Team member removal may be approved by a vote of at least a two-thirds majority of the Core Team members.

8.7 Compensation – The Core Team members work on a volunteer basis and as such can only be reimbursed for their actual expenses and travel costs related to approved meetings and events. All such reimbursements should be run past the Core Team for comment and given formal approval by the Executive Council. For activities beyond the usual function, Core Team members may be granted compensation on a case by case basis.

Article 9 – Meetings and Coordination

9.1 General communication – A virtual meeting for all Core Team members is organised by the Network Lead (substituted by the Secretary, or another member of the Executive Council if necessary) at least once every three months. The minutes of every call are taken and shared to all Core Team members.

9.2 Annual Core Team meeting – The Core Team shall hold a Core Team meeting once a year based on the availability of funds, with additional members welcome to attend as appropriate. A Core Team meeting shall be considered valid regardless of the number of members present, considering that necessary measures will be taken to include members unable to participate in person through virtual measures as far as possible.

9.3 Purpose of the annual meetings – The Core Team meetings will include the preparation and approval of an action plan for the year ahead, strategizing over priority

activities, and knowledge sharing between the various thematic teams and external organisations.

9.4 Agenda of annual meetings – The agenda of the annual Core Team meeting must include:

- Approval of the minutes of the previous Core Team meeting;
- Approval of the annual Activity Report;
- Acceptance of the report of the Treasurer;
- Approval of the action plan for the next year;
- Approval of the activities and membership of each thematic and regional team;
- Approval of the annual budget; and
- Approval of any other reports or other relevant items.

9.5 Outputs from annual meetings – A document summarising the results of the annual meeting must be prepared and distributed to the network by the Network Lead and the Communications and Outreach Team, within two months from the last day of the annual meeting, and including:

- The members present at the meeting;
- The decisions made at the meeting;
- The activities undertaken at the meeting; and
- The priorities, strategies and action plan emerging from the meeting.

Article 10 – Decision-making Responsibilities within YEW

10.1 YEW decisions – The Core Team makes decisions regarding new projects, strategies, communications partnerships, resolutions, and other activities conducted by YEW. All decisions are to be made by Core Team consensus, apart from certain matters to be decided by a vote of the members. All decisions are to be based on evidence, and Core Team members are to discuss issues respectfully and in good faith.

The guiding principle is to arrive at decisions reflecting the views of all Core Team members who desire input to the decision and incorporate feedback and suggestions. Members should be given a reasonable amount of time to respond, and all Core Team members should make their best efforts to engage with other points of view.

Certain matters should be decided by vote are:

- The election of a new Network Lead;
- Alteration of the Bylaws; and
- Other decisions where no agreement is reached, and a vote is proposed and agreed on by the members present. This sent to the Executive Council for approval.

In the case of a tie between Core Team members, no decision is made, and the Core Team is required to renegotiate and identify possible steps to find a compromise or alternative solution.

10.2 Internal consultation procedures – Members of the Core Team must respect the Internal Consultation Procedures around

proposals, documents and communications which are submitted publicly, as part of an input into an official process, or that are otherwise created and used with the YEW name and brand, or in a way that impacts YEW and its members. The Consultation Procedures are to be lodged on the YEW Website.

10.3 Amendments and dissolution – Amendment of the present Bylaws, or dissolution of YEW must be approved by at least two-third majority of the Core Team members voting.

10.4 Environmental justice, equality, diversity, and inclusion – All decisions made by YEW, as well as all projects and communications conducted for YEW must be developed and implemented in alignment with YEW's E-JEDI Strategy and Action Plan.

Article 11 – Representation and use of the YEW Logo

11.1 Representation – Core Team members can speak for the group or the team concerned, but always and only by express agreement with the Network Lead and in consultation with his/her Thematic/Regional Lead. Upon approval of the Network Lead, team members may represent YEW. The Thematic and Regional Teams cannot act independently from the YEW Core Team.

11.2 Use of the YEW Logo – The use of the YEW logo must comply with the Internal Consultation Procedure. Some communication and outreach activities for social media using the YEW logo are exempt from these Procedures, through exemption criteria, which may be set by the Communications and Outreach Lead, with the approval of the Core Team.

Membership

Article 12 – YEW Membership

12.1 Overview – YEW is non-discriminatory organisation and is open to members from any national, cultural, educational or professional background. Members should be engaged in, passionate about, or working with wetlands of some kind, and should join the network with a view towards developing connections with other young people who are working with wetlands.

12.2 Membership application – Any physical person or legal entity may become a member if they have demonstrated their dedication to wetland conservation and apply to be a member using the appropriate channels as found on the YEW website and described in the Membership Plan. Membership must be renewed every two years. There are no membership dues or fees at the time of creation of the network, but these may be instituted later as determined by the Core Team.

12.3 Cessation of membership and appeals – Membership ceases:

- When a member reaches 35 years of age, or on death;
- By written resignation, thereby notifying the Core Team; or

- By exclusion ordered by the Core Team, for just cause.

The appealing member has the right to apply for review within 30 days of exclusion, and to have their case reassessed by Core Team members who were not involved in the original dispute, by lodging a statement and documents which must be considered. Any exclusions or reinstatements should be accompanied by a statement detailing the reasons for the decision.

12.4 Membership rules and processes – More specific rules, processes and guidance around membership, also known as the Membership Plan, may be developed by the Regional Team Coordinator, following consultation with and approval by the Core Team.

Miscellaneous

Article 13 – Dissolution

13.1 Dissolution and transfer of assets – Should YEW be dissolved, the available assets should be transferred to a non-profit organisation pursuing public interest goals similar to those of YEW and benefiting from tax exemption. Under no circumstances should the assets be returned to the founders or members. Nor should founders, officers and members use a portion or the entirety of the assets for their own benefit.

The present Bylaws have been approved by the Core Team of Youth Engaged in Wetlands on 07/22/2020.



Network Lead
Elise ALLELY-FERME



Witness
Dylan Jones