

Governance Protocol 2023-2025



Rural Water Supply Network

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Governance Protocol 2023-2025	1
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	2
1 INTRODUCTION.....	3
1.1 About RWSN.....	3
1.2 About this document.....	4
1.3 Acknowledgements.....	4
2 NETWORK STRUCTURE.....	5
3 MEMBERSHIP.....	7
3.1 Individual Members.....	7
3.2 Young Water Professionals (YWPs).....	9
3.3 Member Organisations: Bronze.....	10
3.4 Member Organisations: Silver.....	11
3.5 Member Organisation: Gold.....	14
4 NETWORK MANAGEMENT: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES.....	15
4.1 General Assembly.....	15
4.2 RWSN Chair & Deputy Chair.....	15
4.3 Executive Committee (Exec).....	17
4.4 RWSN Secretariat.....	20
4.5 Theme Leaders.....	22
4.6 RWSN Regional Hubs.....	25
5 RWSN ACTIVITIES.....	27
5.1 Backbone Services (Semi-restricted Funding).....	28
5.2 Project Services (Restricted Funding).....	28
5.3 Planning.....	28
6 PROCESSES.....	29
6.1 RWSN Strategy Review.....	29
6.2 RWSN Governance Review.....	30
6.3 Data protection and privacy.....	30
6.4 Branding, Intellectual Property and Copyright.....	31
6.5 Conflict Resolution.....	33
7 DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY.....	34
ANNEXES.....	34
KAMPALA COMMITMENTS – UPDATED 2018.....	34

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 About RWSN

The **Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN)** is a global network of individuals and organisations committed to a common **Vision**:

RWSN’s vision is of a world in which all rural people have access to sustainable and reliable water supplies which can be effectively managed to provide sufficient, affordable and safe water within a reasonable distance of the home.

Values:

- People are at the heart of solving rural water supply challenges.
- Openness and respect allows for free exchange of experience and knowledge and disagreement is handled in a reasoned and respectful way.
- Improved collaboration and learning are core to eliminating poverty and achieving the Vision; and
- We should always lead by example with professionalism, a commitment to high quality work, integrity and a focus on water user needs.

And Mission:

RWSN is a global network of rural water supply professionals and organisations committed to improving their knowledge, competence and professionalism, to fulfil RWSN’s vision of sustainable rural water services for all. Both individuals and organisations participate in the network.

The way that the Vision and Mission are to be fulfilled is articulated in the **RWSN Strategy**. The current Strategy covers the period 2018 – 2023¹ and a new strategy will be developed through a consultative process during 2023 for the period 2024-2030.

¹ <https://www.rural-water-supply.net/en/resources/details/798>

1.2 About this document

This document sets out RWSN’s governance, roles, responsibilities, and basic rules to ensure that the partnership works smoothly.

RWSN is not a registered legal entity and therefore relies on goodwill, trust and collaboration in accordance with the Values stated above.

It is an evolution of the governance document for the period 2019-2021. It was developed through consultation and discussion during 2021 and 2022.

This document is valid for the period 1 January 2023 – 31 December 2025, but may be amended by agreement of the RWSN Executive Committee.

This document will be provide in French, Spanish and any other languages as needed, but in the event of any contested issues, the English version has primacy.

Substantive changes to previous document are highlighted.

1.3 Acknowledgements

Many thanks to the Governance Steering Group: Dr Tommy Ka Kit Ngai & Louisa Gosling (WaterAid), Dr John Butterworth (IRC), Bertha Camacho (Skat Foundation), Andrew Armstrong (Water Mission/Global Water Center); the RWSN Secretariat: Dr Aline Okello, Meleesa Naughton, and Sean Furey.

Further guidance and feedback was provide by other RWSN Executive Steering Committee Members and Theme Leaders: Jorge Alvarez (UNICEF), Amita Bhakta (Independent), Mtchera Chirwa (AfDB), Fredrick Tumusiime (AfDB), Dr Kerstin Danert (Ask for Water GmbH), Awa Diagne (World Bank), Dr Michael Fisher (UNC), Dr Barbara van Koppen (IWMI), Dr Daniel Maselli (SDC), Temple Oraeki (Water Youth Network), Sandra van Soelen (Simavi), Julia Boulenouar (Aguaconsult), Ellen Greggio, Eric Harvey (WaterAid), Matthias Saladin, Cesarina Quintana (Skat Foundation), Euphresia Luseka (Ind.)

This revision was also informed by short consultancy inputs, which can be found on the RWSN website²:

- Rural Water Supply Network (RWSN) Governance, Roles and Responsibilities (May 2022) – Barbara Schreiner and Tasneem Balasinorwala
- Setting up regional hubs: Imperatives, advantages, and challenges Case studies from SuSanA and other networks - Nitya Jacob

Cover photo: Microsoft Office stock image

² <https://rural-water-supply.net/en/resources/details/1078>

2 NETWORK STRUCTURE

RWSN is not a formal organisation, and the only legally enforceable agreements are between the Secretariat host organisation and funders (for Backbone functions or RWSN Projects). The only hierarchy is that Network Management elements below are accountable to the Executive Committee, which is in turn accountable to the Network Membership through the General Assembly.

Table 1: Elements of the RWSN Network

	Element	Description
Network Membership	Individual Members	Individuals who sign up to RWSN. Membership is not time limited. Individuals can leave and join as they wish. Financial and in-kind contributions are encouraged by not mandatory.
	Young Water Professionals (YWPs)	Individual members below the age of 35. YWPs are eligible for opportunities that arise for supporting early career professional development and networking.
	Member Organisations	Organisations that can demonstrate activity in rural water supply. Membership is renewed annually. Three levels are: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Bronze: No financial contribution and basic benefits. 2. Silver: Annual financial contribution based on type and size and more benefits 3. Gold: Organisations that make a substantial annual financial contribution to the Backbone functions of the network but are not actively involved in the Network Management (below). The tariffs and benefits will be agreed by the Executive Committee and Secretariat and regularly reviewed.
Network Management	Executive Committee (Exec)	The "Owner" of RWSN as a network and brand. Members of the Exec are expected to have high-level buy-in and provide regular financial and in-kind support to the Backbone functions or key thematic priorities.
	General Assembly (GA)	The General Assembly is not a committee but an annual online or hybrid meeting at which all and any registered RWSN members can provide inputs and feedback on how the network is run and volunteer ideas and contributions for the coming year, a beyond
	Secretariat	The organisation that runs the day-to-day running of the network, including Backbone functions and RWSN Projects.
	Theme Leaders	Individuals and/or that provide in-kind expertise, leadership and support to networking activities around a particular

	Element	Description
		thematic area of rural water supply that has been identified as a priority in the RWSN Strategy.
	Regional Coordinators	Individuals and/or organisations that provide in-kind expertise, leadership and support to networking activities around rural water supply in a particular geographic area .
	RWSN Projects	Projects in which there is a contractual relationship with the Secretariat organisation to make use the RWSN services for mutual benefit.

Table 2: Changes from 2019-2021 edition

Executive Steering Committee (ExecSC) simplified to **Executive Committee (Exec)**. Major changes not made because the current committee functions well and needs to be a partnership of strong organisations and individuals who are actively committed to the success of the network.

General Assembly (GA) created to increase transparency around priorities and how the network is run and encourage more diverse voices, particularly from young professionals and those in the Global South. It is not proposed to have the General Assembly as a committee with formal membership but the organisation of the meetings will be such to ensure broad participation and diverse perspectives.

Member Organisation: introduced annual renewals and a tiered structure to incentivise regular financial contributions to backbone services.

Regional Coordinators have been created. These can be in-kind contributions from host organisations in the respective region or organisations or individuals sub-contracted to the global Secretariat host organisation (depending on the funding availability and donor conditions). As this regionalisation of RWSN is new the governance of this element is likely to need an updated based on experience.

3 MEMBERSHIP

3.1 Individual Members

Individual members of RWSN are practitioners and professionals that are actively engaged in improving rural water supplies, or have a strong interest in the subject. Anyone can join and there is no membership fee. Members are from different stakeholder groups including national and local governments, the private sector, donors, research and training institutions, as well as water users.

Membership Criteria	None.
Joining Process	Online registration: https://dgroups.org/rwsn
Term	Unlimited.
Benefits of membership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Receive the RWSN quarterly newsletter, and stay up-to-date on the latest research and development in rural water. b) Take part in online discussions, share your work, and ask questions to other rural water experts in RWSN specialist online communities. c) Individual members may attend the General Assembly event. d) Additional benefits for members that make financial contributions may be developed, with the agreement of the Executive Committee.
Terms and Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Members are invited to make a one-off or regular financial donation via the RWSN website. b) People who make personal donations (of any amount) may choose to (a) have their names included in the RWSN public financial report or (b) remain anonymous. c) Use of real names is mandatory. Any member found to be using a false name will be taken out of the RWSN member lists and their RWSN Dgroups account will be deleted (this will not affect the membership of non-RWSN Dgroups communities).

d) Members should keep their Dgroups profiles up to date, the minimum information should be name, email address, organisation (if employed), country of work and residence. Providing information of gender and age is encouraged to support monitoring and outreach to women and young people but is not obligatory and not supported by the current member database (Dgroups.org).

e) RWSN members encouraged to contribute to online discussions and participate in webinars and face-to-face events.

f) The document “Netiquette - Tips for a good e-mail communication” (available in English, French and Spanish) sets out expectations for ways of behaving when communicating online. Breaches of decent and respectful conduct in any online platforms moderated by RWSN may give grounds for expulsion from RWSN.

g) Disputes may be presented in writing to the Executive Committee for resolution.

h) Any financial contributions given are non-refundable.

Leaving

A member may leave RWSN at any time by sending an e-mail to leave.RWSN@dgroups.org, unsubscribing from the RWSN member platform or by contacting the Secretariat. Any financial contributions given are non-refundable.

Addition of member benefits, minor updates, reformatting and clarifications.

3.2 Young Water Professionals (YWPs)

Membership Criteria	The Young Water Professionals community is open to any individual who is 35 years or younger at the time of joining ³ .
Joining Process	Anyone interested in joining should sign up to the RWSN Young Water Professionals sub-community on Dgroups: https://dgroups.org/rwsn/rwsn_yrwp/
Term	Unlimited up to the age of 35.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) As per Individual Members above plus: b) Young Professionals will have the opportunity to be engaged in RWSN activities. These opportunities are presented in the separate Young Water Professional Strategy.
Terms and Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) As per Individual Members above plus: b) The supervision of Young Water Professionals will be led by the Secretariat, with advisory support from the Theme Leaders and Regional Coordinators, as appropriate (e.g. training and mentoring). c) Where volunteering and mentoring opportunities are developed for Young Water Professionals, there will be clear Terms of Reference and signed agreements that provide clear expectations, boundaries and protection for all parties.
Leaving	<p>The young water professional will have to send an e-mail to leave.rwsn_yrwp@dgroups.org or by contacting the Secretariat and asking to be removed from the Young Water Professional Dgroups community. After that the Young Water Professional remains as a normal individual member.</p> <p>A Young member may leave the network at any time by sending an e-mail to leave.RWSN@dgroups.org or by contacting the Secretariat and asking to be removed.</p>

Minor updates, reformatting and clarifications.

³ Registered young professionals may remain in the RWSN Young Rural Water Professionals community beyond the age of 35 but will likely find it less relevant and unable to apply for under 35 only opportunities.

3.3 Member Organisations: Bronze

**Membership
Criteria**

- a) Organisations can apply to join RWSN if: They can demonstrate support to the aims of RWSN by signing the updated Kampala Commitment 2011 – updated 2018 (Annex 2).
 - b) They have a website.
 - c) They are willing to link the website of the organisation to the "RWSN Member Organisation" and *vice-versa*.
 - d) Can demonstrate that they have at least three people working full time for the organisation (e.g. via organisational organigram and on website).
 - e) They function as a registered entity for at least 2 years.
 - f) They can appoint one or more focal persons to leave the liaison between the organisation and RWSN.
-

Joining Process

- a) Organisations can join via the RWSN website or by contacting the RWSN Secretariat.
 - b) Applications will be assessed according to the criteria above by the Secretariat and successful applicants.
-

Term

- a) Membership is renewable annually and based on the calendar year.
 - b) Member Organisations who do not have any active focal points (email addresses not working, no response to general enquiries) will be removed from the Member Organisations list by 31 March.
-

Benefits

- a) Increased visibility through the logo and organisation page on the Member Organisation page of the RWSN website.
 - b) Opportunities to Collaborate with RWSN and other RWSN Member Organisations through joint activities, or to get a larger platform at Water and WASH events.
 - c) Network with other RWSN Member Organisations through face-to-face and online events.
-

**Terms and
Conditions**

- a) Use of registered names is mandatory. Any member found to be using a false name will be taken out of the RWSN member lists and their RWSN Dgroups account will be deleted (this will not affect the membership of non-RWSN Dgroups communities).
- b) Member Organisations should keep their profiles and focal point contacts up to date.

- c) RWSN member organisation staff encouraged to contribute to online discussions and participate in webinars and face-to-face events.
- d) The document "Netiquette - Tips for a good e-mail communication" sets out expectations for ways of behaving when communicating online. Breaches of decent and respectful conduct in any online platforms moderated by RWSN may give grounds for expulsion from RWSN.
- e) Disputes may be presented in writing to the Executive Committee for resolution.

Leaving

- a) Member Organisations can leave at any time by writing to the Secretariat.
- b) Member Organisations who do not have any active focal points (email addresses not working, no response to general enquiries) will be removed from the Member Organisations list by 31 March.

Membership now annual and a clearer distinction made for Member Organisations that make a regular financial contribution.

3.4 Member Organisations: Silver

**Membership
Criteria**

- a) Organisations can apply to join RWSN if: They can demonstrate support to the aims of RWSN by signing the updated Kampala Commitment 2011 – updated 2018 (Annex 2).
- b) They have a website.
- c) They are willing to link the website of the organisation to the "RWSN Member Organisation" and *vice-versa*.
- d) Can demonstrate that they have at least three people working full time for the organisation (e.g. via organisational organigram and on website).
- e) They function as a registered entity for at least 2 years.
- f) They can appoint one or more focal persons to leave the liaison between the organisation and RWSN.

Joining Process

- a) Organisations can join via the RWSN website or by contacting the RWSN Secretariat.

- b) Applications will be assessed according to the criteria above by the Secretariat and successful applicants.
- c) Member organisations will be encouraged to make a financial contribution related to their size and type: Small (3-10 staff), Medium (11-100 staff), Large (100+ staff), Network or Association (an organisation of organisations). Annual contributions run January to December so a first

contribution pro rata (by months) to the end of the year is accepted⁴

Term

- a) Membership is renewable annually and based on the calendar year.
- b) Member Organisations who do not have any active focal points (email addresses not working, no response to general enquiries) will be removed from the Member Organisations list by 31 March.

Benefits

- a) Increased visibility through the logo and organisation page on the Member Organisation page of the RWSN website.
- b) Preferential posting of items in the RWSN quarterly newsletter, reaching thousands of rural water professionals in several languages.
- c) Opportunities to Collaborate with RWSN and other RWSN Member Organisations through joint activities, or to get a larger platform at Water and WASH events.
- d) Network with other RWSN Member Organisations through face-to-face and online events.
- e) Preferential visibility and access to exclusive events and resources as agreed by the Exec and Secretariat.

Terms and Conditions

- a) Organisations that make financial contributions (of any amount) may choose to (a) have their names included in the RWSN public financial report or (b) remain anonymous.
- b) Use of registered names is mandatory. Any member found to be using a false name will be taken out of the RWSN member lists and their RWSN Dgroups account will be deleted (this will not affect the membership of non-RWSN Dgroups communities).

⁴ E.g. a large organisation joining in July would only have to pay \$500 for the first 6 months, and then \$1,000/year thereafter.

- c) Member Organisations should keep their profiles and focal point contacts up to date.
 - d) RWSN member organisation staff encouraged to contribute to online discussions and participate in webinars and faceto-face events.
 - e) The document “Netiquette - Tips for a good e-mail communication” sets out expectations for ways of behaving when communicating online. Breaches of decent and respectful conduct in any online platforms moderated by RWSN may give grounds for expulsion from RWSN.
 - f) Disputes may be presented in writing to the Executive Committee for resolution.
 - g) Any financial contributions given are non-refundable.
-

Leaving

- a) Member Organisations can leave at any time by writing to the Secretariat.
 - b) Member Organisations who do not have any active focal points (email addresses not working, no response to general enquiries) will be removed from the Member Organisations list by 31 March.
-

Membership now annual and a clearer distinction made for Member Organisations that make a regular financial contribution.

3.5 Member Organisation: Gold

Membership Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Payment above suggested contribution for Gold (threshold to be agreed by Exec and Secretariat) to the Secretariat Host organisation for Backbone functions. b) The Exec should be satisfied that there are no ethical concerns about the donor or the source of the funds.
Joining Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) An organisation or individual can apply at any time. b) Before payment is sent there should be simple signed agreement to ensure clear terms and conditions of the donation, to avoid potential conflicts. c) The Exec will be informed and given 2 weeks to object. No response will taken as 'No objection'.
Term	Annual renewal; Unlimited; Minimum period 1 year.
Benefits	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The organisation is entitled to up to 2 bespoke bi-lateral online briefing meetings per year on rural water supply topics of their choice by the Secretariat. b) The organisation is entitled to benefits of the Silver tier (see above). c) The organisation should choose whether they wish to be anonymous or be to be visible.
Terms and Conditions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> d) The financial contribution is given on the understanding that the Secretariat can use it flexibly for RWSN networking activities. e) The organisation can ask for detailed financial breakdown of how their contribution used by the RWSN Secretariat. f) Visibility and benefits outlined above will be initiated once payment is received by the Secretariat. g) Financial contributions are non-refundable.
Leaving	The organisation can leave at any time by informing the Secretariat in writing. Any financial contributions given are non-refundable.

Added to encourage unrestricted/semi-restricted funding for Backbone services by organisations that do not have the desire or capacity to actively engage in the Network Management. The initial threshold could be USD 20,000/year, but this should be agreed and reviewed periodically.

4 NETWORK MANAGEMENT: ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 General Assembly

- a) The RWSN General Assembly is an annual online event to bring together all members and network management to review the past year, track progress of the strategy and set priorities and themes for the coming year. It is an opportunity to present the achievements and lessons learned from the network and invite feedback.
- b) It should be held in November, or early December, each year, to inform planning and confirm management roles (Chair, Exec Members, Theme Leaders, Regional Coordinators, Secretariat) for the coming year, to publicly thank and acknowledge financial and in-kind contributions, particularly of those who are stepping back from their particular role.
- c) The General Assembly provides advice and feedback but does not make decisions.
- d) The General Assembly can be expanded into a larger online or hybrid RWSN Forum global conference with sessions, presentations, networking, and short training events so that network process and accountability is balanced with thematic content and learning.

4.1.1 General Assembly Meeting Frequency and indicative time commitment

- a) Half-day once per year, but consider full 1-2 days for inclusion of sessions on sharing of thematic content.
- b) All grades of active members and management can participate.
- c) Meetings will be recorded and shared online afterwards.
- d) Simultaneous translation between English, French and Spanish will be provided where possible.

This is a new structure to be piloted in 2023. Its purpose to create opportunities for greater member engagement and transparency in how the network is run. It may provide the foundation to re-start regular RWSN Forum conferences. It was decided not to create the General Assembly as an additional committee because the extra administration for voting and management is deemed not to generate sufficient added value for the network.

4.2 RWSN Chair & Deputy Chair

4.2.1 The RWSN Chair

The Exec nominates a Chair for a three-year term, which can be extended once.

Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) A senior figure in international development with a deep understanding of rural water supply issues in low and middle income countries. b) Excellent communication, chairing and leadership skills. c) Does not have to be an employee of an Executive Committee organisation
Joining Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Open call for nominations 3-6 months ahead of General Assembly before the end of the current Chair’s term. b) Candidates should submit a statement of motivation outlining why they want to become RWSN Chair, what they would bring to the role at least two written endorsements. c) The Exec will discuss and elect a nominee in a regular or special Exec meeting. Candidates may be asked to give a presentation. Only Exec members (excluding the Chair and Secretariat) are entitled to vote. In the event of the tie, the current Chair will have the deciding vote. d) The chosen Chair will be announced publicly, and a handover ceremony done at the following General Assembly.
Term	3 years, renewable once.
Expectations of contributions and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Chair acts as an ambassador for RWSN. b) Chairs the Exec meetings. c) Chairs General Assembly meetings. d) Attends Theme Leader Meetings. e) Chairs <i>ad hoc</i> Task Teams, e.g., Governance, Fundraising. f) Mentors the Secretariat. g) Facilitates mutual accountability between the Exec, Secretariat, Theme Leaders. h) Time requirement 10-12 days per year minimum. i) The position is unpaid.
Leaving	The Chair can step down at any time but should inform the Secretariat and Exec in writing.
4.2.2 The RWSN Deputy-Chair	
Criteria	a) An employee of an Executive Committee organisation

Joining Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) The Exec will discuss and elect a nominee in a regular or special Exec meeting. Only Exec members (excluding the Chair and Secretariat) are entitled to vote. In the event of the tie, the current Chair will have the deciding vote. b) The chosen Chair will be announced publicly, and a handover ceremony done at the following General Assembly.
Term	3 years, renewable once.
Expectations of contributions and activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> b) The Deputy Chair acts as an ambassador for RWSN. c) Chairs the Exec meetings in the absence of the Chair. d) Chairs General Assembly meetings, in the absence of the Chair. e) Chairs <i>ad hoc</i> Task Teams, e.g., Governance, Fundraising, in the absence of the Chair. f) The position is unpaid.
Leaving	The Deputy Chair can step down at any time but should inform the Secretariat and Exec in writing.

4.3 Executive Committee (Exec)

4.3.1 Description and Purpose

The Executive Committee is the 'owner' of RWSN and thus focuses on the operational processes and decisions needed to keep the network properly resourced and working.

4.3.2 Decision-making powers

- g) Approve changes to the **RWSN Strategy** (as a conclusion to the process set out in Section 6.1).
- h) Approve changes to this **RWSN Governance Protocol** (as a conclusion to the process outlined in Section 0).
- i) Approve (Re)appointment of the Secretariat every 3 years & election of RWSN Chair every 3 years; or reject and advertise for replacements.
- j) Review and approve applications for new or renewed Theme Leaders and Regional Coordinators.

- k) Review and approve applications for new or renewed Exec members, based on the criteria of (i) interest and relevance to rural water sector (ii) commitment (in kind (time) and financial) to RWSN (iii) inclusion and diversity (representation of Global South).
- l) Final decision on Chair and Deputy Chair nomination.
- m) Approval of sub-contracting by the Secretariat to Theme Leaders and Regional Coordinators (to ensure transparency and avoid conflicts of interest).
- n) Resolve conflicts between parties or how the “RWSN” name and brand is used.

4.3.3 Collective Responsibility/Advisory role

- a) Review/Approval annual work plans.
- b) Collaborate to raise funding and in-kind resources to support the Strategy.
- c) Monitor mutual accountability regarding commitments to the network and actual financial and in-kind contributions.
- d) Acting as a focal point and ambassador for RWSN and rural water within their own organisations.
- e) Identify potential new Exec members.
- f) Establish Task Teams of Exec members, with Theme Leaders, Regional Coordinators and Secretariat to establish specific tasks, such as governance review, strategy review and fundraising.

4.3.4 Exec Members/Membership

Membership Criteria

- a) Membership is open to organisations that are significant global actors in supporting rural water supply and that have demonstrated their commitment to RWSN activities.
- b) The respective senior management of that organisation must sign the “Statement of Common Intent” for the strategy period in question and be prepared to undertake, directly, or through delegation, the Roles and Responsibilities outlined above. It is not a legally binding document but forms the basis of mutual accountability and sets clear expectations.
- c) Exec members can hold any membership grade or management role (e.g., Theme Leader, Regional Coordinator, Secretariat).

- d) Each Exec member organisation would assign one staff member as a representative to join the Exec meetings and other related activities. It is recommended that the nominated person should be in a sufficiently senior management position related to rural water supply and/or networking & knowledge management in their respective organisation and be able to represent their organisation the topic, act as focal point for their organisation and requisition staff and resources to support the network.
- e) Each Exec member organisation should have a second representative who can attend or respond if the main representative is unavailable.
- f) At least one, if not both, representatives should be based in or a citizen of a low- or middle-income country.
- g) At least 50% of Exec member representatives should be women.
- h) The Exec should have no more than 12 member organisations, to so that ownership and commitment is not diluted.

Joining Process

- a) A mandated senior representative from the organisation should apply in writing to Exec.
- b) The Exec will consider the application at the earliest opportunity based on the criteria below.
- c) An accepted application will be followed up with induction by the Secretariat and a public announcement.

Term

Minimum of 3 years.

Expectations of contributions and activities

- a) Exec members (individuals) should commit at least 5 days per year for meetings and *ad hoc* engagement.
- b) Exec members (organisations) should provide funding of at least USD 10,000 for a minimum of 3 years, for Backbone network services.
- c) For specific high priority activities, Exec members will be invited to form Task Teams that meet at a higher frequency but limited period to achieve as specific outcome, such as revising the Strategy, Governance, for fundraising or organising an event. Theme Leaders and Regional

Coordinators will be invited to join and support such Task Teams.

Leaving

- a) Exec Members (Organisations/Individuals) may step down can step down at any time but should inform the Secretariat and Exec in writing.
 - b) Individual committee members should ensure that a replacement from their organisation is nominated willing and able to take up their position.
 - c) Organisation members should ensure that any financial commitments for that calendar year are honoured before leaving.
 - d) If the Exec organisation does not meet the obligations that it has signed up to in the statement of common intent then they may be asked to review their position on and either meet or renegotiate their commitments or resign.
-

4.3.5 Exec Meeting Frequency and indicative time commitment

- e) Half day (4-5 hours) every 6 months, online, in person or hybrid.
- f) Secretariat staff, Theme Leaders and Regional Coordinators are permitted to attend and to provide inputs as requested, but decision points are for Exec members only.
- g) Detailed minutes are taken by the Secretariat.

Codifies and clarifies current practices

4.4 RWSN Secretariat

The RWSN Secretariat is the coordinator, facilitator, communicator, curator of information and network manager. The Secretariat has the lead responsibility to ensure that the network delivers high quality services to members and projects. The Secretariat may fundraise and also make a contribution to the network. The main activities of the secretariat include but are not limited to those outlined in Section 5.

4.4.1 Host Requirements

The Secretariat Host organisation should:

- a) Be a registered non-profit organisation and comply with acknowledged standards of financial management, fundraising and ethical behaviour⁵.
- b) Should be willing and able to take the initiative on fundraising.
- c) Have sufficiently skilled and flexible staff capacity and expertise in networking, knowledge management, knowledge brokering, event management and communications in multiple languages.

4.4.2 Financial Management

- a) The Secretariat should have the capacity to use all reasonable means to track financial flows and activities from multiple income and expenditure streams and modalities, including donations, grants, projects and mandates.
- b) A financial summary should be provide in the Annual Report, which should also include, where possible, monetised in-kind contributions from Exec members, Theme Leaders and Regional Coordinators.
- c) The Secretariat host organisation should have their accounts, including RWSN, audited annual in accordance with national standards and norms.
- d) The Secretariat will comply with contractual budgeting, payment and reporting requirements of project funders.

4.4.3 Sub-contracting

- a) The Secretariat can sub-contract work or services in compliance with the host organisation rules and government regulations of the host organisation's headquarters country.

4.4.4 Renewal

- a) The position of Secretariat Host is reviewed every 3 years by the Exec to ensure that the performance is meeting expectations and that the host has the necessary resources and capacities to continue to fulfil the role.
- b) The Exec can decide to change the Secretariat host organisation, however, existing contractual arrangements held by the host organisation must be honoured, therefore a transition process must be agreed by all parties.

Codifies current practices

⁵ Skat Foundation was registered as charitable non-profit in 2002 in Canton St. Gallen, Switzerland, and since 2021 has been certified by ZEWO (<https://zewo.ch/>)

4.5 Theme Leaders

Theme Leaders are champions for a specific thematic area of rural water supply. They bring expertise, personal and organisation networks and in-kind resources to help the network achieve the Strategy goals. Each Theme should aim to have at least two Leaders.

Membership Criteria	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Passion and technical expertise in their chosen theme. Wellb) connected with other experts in their field.c) Theme Leaders can be individuals, but the support of an organisation is preferable.d) Active support from their employers, or in the case of independent consultants a willingness to commit time to the next in exchange for visibility on their chosen theme.
Joining Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none">a) Through an Open Call for Theme Leaders; disseminated by the RWSN Secretariat;b) Contact the Secretariat with an expression of interest;c) Be approached to consider becoming a Theme Leader.<ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Theme Leaders should identify champions (individuals and/or organisations) in their community and approach them as part of the open call for new Theme Leaders.d) Expressing interest at General Assembly Meeting.
Term	Theme Leaders will be appointed/ re-appointed for 3 years. No limit on the number of terms that can be served.

Expectations of contributions and activities

A Theme Leader is expected to:

- e) Prepare a work plan with the Secretariat by February each year for Exec approval that specifies:
 - a. Specific priorities, within their Theme.
 - b. Ideas and wishes for RWSN webinars, e-discussions and publications.
 - c. Conferences at which they would like RWSN apply to co-convene side event, presentation or exhibition stand.
 - d. A budget of in-kind contributions, including staff time, travel, materials and other expenses, such as conference session fees.
 - f) It is the responsibility of the organisations that employ or contract the Theme Leaders to ensure that these individuals have:
 - a. RWSN activities explicitly included in their job descriptions and annual performance plans (where they exist)
 - b. It is expected that each Theme c Leader dedicates to his/her Theme at least 8 hours/month.
 - g) Help to identify speakers and panellists for webinars, online events and conferences.
-
- h) Identify partners and resources for Theme-related activities, such as training courses, advocacy, publications and research.
 - i) Be responsible for the delivery and reporting of the activities carried out by their designated Theme (as defined in the RWSN Strategy).
 - j) Attend quarterly online Theme Leader Meetings and the General Assembly.
 - k) Contribute updates and material for RWSN newsletters and network updates.
 - l) Theme Leaders may be invited to attend Executive Committee meetings to give an update or provide other inputs, otherwise they may attend as observers only.
 - m) Contribute to RWSN reporting, including in-kind reporting so that that the Theme Leader individual and organisation can be receive proportionate acknowledgement for their contributions to the network.

- n) The RWSN Secretariat may agree a contract with the Theme Leader up to a value of CHF/USD 5,000 for specific tasks defined in a Terms of Reference. Above this threshold requires approval of the Executive Steering Committee to ensure no conflicts of interest⁶. Theme Leaders will be expected to report back on these activities on top of Theme activity reporting.

Leaving

- a. A Theme Leader can leave at any time in writing to the RWSN Chair.
 - b. Where a Theme Leader is not meeting the commitments stated in their annual work plan and not regularly attending meetings they may be asked by the Exec to step down or change representative from that organisation.
 - c. Ideally, Theme Leaders for the same Theme should not step down at the same time, to ensure continuity.
-

4.5.1 Theme/Region Meeting Frequency and indicative time commitment

- a) Three online Theme Leader meetings of 2 hours + General Assembly (4 meetings in total)
- b) Chaired by the RWSN Chair, with Secretariat support. Action points only recorded.
- c) Exec members are welcome to attend.
- d) Members can join online meetings as observers⁷.

Added a provision to allow some financial compensation for Theme Leaders who are independent consultants or working for small organisations in the Global South.

⁶ An exception is for Themes where the Secretariat organisation is a Theme Leader. In this case they may use their own funds to sub-contract Theme Leading activities without restriction, however, if financial contributions to RWSN from other parties are to be used then the Exec approval process holds and the Secretariat should not prioritise their own themes over those led by others..

⁷ Using the “Webinar” settings in Zoom, meeting participants can be assigned co-hosts or speakers and observing members as participants, so able to post questions or comments but not able to turn on their microphones or cameras.

4.6 RWSN Regional Hubs

4.6.1 Roles and Responsibilities of Regional Hubs

- a) An RWSN Hub is an association of RWSN members in a group of countries in a specified geographical region. The name of any Hub must adequately reflect the countries/region it represents.
- b) Hubs are formed to enable members to increase their capacity to reach RWSN's common objectives in terms of knowledge exchange and capacity development to improve access to water in rural areas.
- c) Any Regional Hub must strive to match the minimum requirements listed below.
- d) The RWSN Secretariat will, where possible, support Hubs in reaching the minimum requirements, and will provide the Exec with an annual update of the Hubs' status in reaching the different requirements. **4.6.2 Process for creating Regional Hubs**

Hubs can be established:

- a) on request from particular region.
- b) as an initiative from secretariat.
- c) Hub proposals must be approved by the Exec.
- d) Key criteria must be followed when establishing new hubs:
 - a. All Hubs must follow this Governance Protocol or have an adapted version approved by the Exec.
 - b. Each Hub should strive to create its own legal entity or adopt hosting arrangements that will enable it to raise its own funds and conduct the activities it needs to.
 - c. Hub should establish a regional Steering Committee or another governance structure based on the principles of transparency, inclusivity and accountability.
 - d. Governance structure must ensure a minimum of 50% representation of women.
 - e. Hub must be able to account fully for all finances managed by it, and be transparent on financial matters.
 - f. Hub must have a designated coordinator and/or focal point.
 - g. Hub should have an internal platform for communication between members, and an online presence.

- e) Minimum requirements should be reviewed within two years, based on experience of establishing and running regional hubs.
- f) If Hub fails to meet these criteria, or behaves not in line with RWSN vision, mission, theory of change and values, Exec may intervene to effect appropriate change in Hub programmes.
- g) If problems continue, Exec has the right to disestablish the Hub and/or to withdraw any rights to using the RWSN name or logo.

4.6.3 Regional Coordinators

RWSN is looking to develop more localised networking and collaboration at the national and regional levels. The advantages that RWSN regional activities can fit better the needs and interests of RWSN members in the region in terms of thematic content, contextual similarities, language, time zones and opportunities to tap into regional events and funding.

The terms for Regional Coordinators are largely the same as Theme Leaders, and Regional Coordinators can also be Theme Leaders. Each Regional Hub can choose to have regional Theme Leaders who work with the Regional Coordinator and their respective global Theme Leader.

A Regional Coordinator should have the support of an organisation, ideally in the region, to act a regional secretariat host.

Regional Hubs and Coordinators have been created. These can be in-kind contributions from host organisations in the respective region or organisations or individuals sub-contracted to the global Secretariat host organisation (depending on the funding availability and donor conditions). As this regionalisation of RWSN is new the governance of this element is likely to need an updated based on experience.

5 RWSN ACTIVITIES

The table below summarises the main categories of activities done by the network. The Secretariat has lead responsibility, but relies on timely and high quality support from Exec Members, Theme Leaders, Regional Coordinators and Project Partners.

Table 3: RWSN Secretariat activity framework (*Minimum Backbone Service)

RWSN Network and Development		
Planning, Management and Reporting*	Management and coordination of Exec, Theme Leaders, Regions, Members and project partners.*	RWSN Governance*
Fundraising, revenue and in-kind support generation, and project acquisition.*	Rural water/WASH sector coordination and collaboration building*	Member and Member Organisation administration and query resolution.*
RWSN Services		
E-discussions and online communities*	News, blogs and social media*	Events, conferences and RWSN Forum
Website and information curation*	RWSN Publications	Lifelong Learning (training, mentoring)
Research and documentation	Other networking and knowledge brokering activities.	

5.1 Backbone Services (Semi-restricted Funding)

- a) "Backbone" Services are core services and functions of the network, identified with a * in Table 3.
- b) The flexibility needed to be responsive to Theme Leaders, members and partners requires flexible financial. The minimum viable budget is USD 150,00/year.
- c) Limited restrictions/conditionalities and itemised activity financial reporting will only be accepted on financial contributions exceeding USD 10,000.

5.2 Project Services (Restricted Funding)

- a) RWSN Projects are those where the Secretariat host organisation is contracted to undertake activities that make use of the network and its capabilities.
- b) Clients should, where possible, accept that 5-10% of any restricted funded project budget, over USD 25,000 should be allocated to Backbone Services, to support the network's financial sustainability.
- c) The Exec should be notified of all new projects and contracts signed with the Secretariat Host on the presumption of no-objection, but conflict-of-interest concerns can be raised and resolved by the Exec as necessary.
- d) Exec, Theme Leader, or Regional Coordinator host organisations can have "RWSN" branded projects where the Secretariat host is not a signatory partner, but the Secretariat and Exec must be informed before any contract signing and the Secretariat provided with regular updates as required.
- e) For multi-year projects, the client Project Manager/Consortium Lead, and/or funder may be invited to join the Exec and will be invited to participate in the General Assembly.
- f) Use and sharing of personal and contact details of members is controlled by "Data protection and privacy" (Section 6.3)

5.3 Planning

An outline annual work plan will be produced between December and February each year. However, the nature of networking means that this plan will constantly adapt and change in light of member interest, Theme Leader and Regional Coordinator priorities and capacities, new and existing RWSN project demands, and the outcome of third-party decisions, such as acceptance of session proposals.

The "RWSN Forum" is a global rural water supply conference that in the past has been organised on average every five years. The timing and format needs careful planning of at least one year.

Codified and clarified existing practices; added a provision for a percentage of restricted project funding to be allocated to Backbone services.

6 PROCESSES

6.1 RWSN Strategy Review

- a) **The RWSN Strategy sets out the network's vision, mission and scope.** It describes how the network works, its objectives, expected outcomes and the monitoring and reporting framework, consultation.
- b) The Strategy is redeveloped every six years, with mid-term review and update in Years 3/4.
- c) The preparation of the Strategy is led by the Executive Committee Chair, and drafted by the Secretariat. Feedback and support will be provided by the Exec members, Theme Leaders, and Regional Coordinators. A special Task Group may be formed to convene those partners with the strongest interest and available time to commit. Subsequently, feedback will be solicited from all members.
- d) The criteria for prioritising activities and thematic foci in the strategy are:
 - **Theory of Change:** Where can RWSN activity add value to the rural water supply sector and profession? Where is the network uniquely placed as a leverage point to convene and build collaborative and systematic learning and action?
 - **Need:** Where is there a need for RWSN to act to sustain and scale-up innovation and proven solutions?
 - **Demand:** Where is RWSN activity being actively requested by members and partners?
 - **Resources:** Which champions (individuals and organisations) can commit to working through RWSN to support the strategy goals? What backbone and project funding is available? What opportunities can be identified to mobilise funds?
- e) The draft final Strategy will be presented to the **General Assembly** meeting and approved by the **Executive Committee** at that meeting or a subsequent meeting.

This section has changed to set out the general approach to revising the RWSN Strategy, rather than describing the situation past and current strategies.

6.2 RWSN Governance Review

The RWSN Governance Protocol sets out RWSN's governance, roles, responsibilities, and basic rules to ensure that the partnership works smoothly.

- a) The Governance Protocol should be revised every three years.
- b) The preparation of the Governance Protocol is led by the Executive Committee Chair and drafted by the Secretariat. Feedback and support will be provided by the Exec members, Theme Leaders, and Regional Coordinators. A special Task Group may be formed to convene those partners with the strongest interest and available time to commit. Subsequently, feedback will be solicited from all members.

6.3 Data protection and privacy

- a) RWSN takes data protection and privacy seriously but also acts to facilitate exchange, networking and partnership building, though online and face-to-face activities. As a network we use many third-party online social media platforms, (including but not restricted to: Dgroups, LinkedIn, Twitter, Wordpress, Vimeo, Facebook, YouTube and ResearchGate). It is the responsibility of RWSN members to take the time to understand how these service providers may be using the data that they provide through them.
- b) The RWSN Secretariat is hosted by Skat Foundation and therefore complies with Swiss data protection and privacy laws. Based on Article 13 of the Swiss Federal Constitution and the provisions of federal data protection legislation, everyone has the right to the protection of their privacy, as well as to protection from misuse of their personal details. The Secretariat complies with these provisions. Personal data is treated as strictly confidential and is neither passed on nor sold to third parties. The Secretariat will take all the appropriate technical and organizational measures to safeguard these data against accidental or unlawful destruction or accidental loss, alteration, unauthorized disclosure or access.
- c) For users of the RWSN website, the current privacy policy here:
 - a. English <http://www.rural-water-supply.net/en/data-privacy-policy>
 - b. Français <http://www.rural-water-supply.net/fr/politique-de-confidentialite>
 - c. For the general use of Dgroups the policy is available here:
<https://dgroups.org/rwsn/terms>. (Translation into French available on request).
- d) Members who no longer wish to be an RWSN member or receive communications from RWSN through Dgroups (this also includes hosted partner communities), should send an email to leave.rwsn@dgroups.org using the email address that was used for

registration. By using RWSN online platforms after 25 May 2018, Members agree to the policies in the privacy policy.

- e) Anyone wishing to know what information is held by the Secretariat about them may do so by contacting the Secretariat by email info@rural-water-supply.net or by post: Skat Foundation, Benevolpark, St.Leonhard-Strasse 45, CH-9000 St. Gallen, Switzerland

Contact details updated

6.4 Branding, Intellectual Property and Copyright

6.4.1 Names & RWSN Logos

- a) The use of "Rural Water Supply Network", "RWSN" and the RWSN globe Logo (Figure 1) is managed by the Secretariat on behalf of the Exec.
- b) In general, the RWSN logo (Figure 1) should only appear on publications, or webinar presentations that have been approved by the RWSN Secretariat. However, there are situations where the RWSN Secretariat or Executive Committee partner has financed an external product, or is participating in a conference or exhibition and would like to use the RWSN logo on the product, programme or other communication materials.
- c) Any organisation that wishes to use the RWSN logo, e.g. on a publication, brochure, or for an event, must seek permission from the appropriate theme leader and secretariat. All requests will be considered carefully by the Secretariat, because agreeing to such a request means that RWSN will be perceived as responsible for the item and its content.
- d) Outputs and events produced as RWSN "Collaborations" should acknowledge RWSN.



Figure 1: RWSN Logo



Figure 2: RWSN Member Organisation logo

- e) Only organisations who are current RWSN Member Organisations are permitted to display the RWSN Member Organisation logo (Figure 2) on their website(s) and materials. If an organisation withdraws its membership, then the RWSN Member

Organisation logo should be removed from their website and any online materials and from future printed materials.

- f) In the event of conflict over use of the name or Logo, the Exec will have the deciding power.

6.4.2 Intellectual Property and Copyrights

- a) Any material published by “RWSN” (Secretariat, Executive Committee, Members, member organisations) is in the public domain, specifically Creative Commons licence: Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International (CC BY-SA 4.0)
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>



- b) In case RWSN publications contain restricted third-party material, intellectual property permission will be sought to clarify the conditions of re-use and sharing.

6.4.3 Referencing and Citations

- a) All RWSN publications rigorously acknowledge sources using an acknowledged citation method, such as the Harvard Referencing system.

6.4.4 Photography & Images

- a) RWSN Secretariat and Theme Leaders will take all reasonable measures to ensure that photographs and images are used with permission of the photographers, and any people appearing in the photos, and provide the respective credits. As a network, RWSN will be dependent on third-parties for images, but the Secretariat will be guided by current good practice, such as WaterAid’s Ethical Image Policy² that includes the following values:

- **Accuracy** – how to ensure our film and photos are truthful
- **Longevity** – how long we should keep and use images for
- **Integrity** – how to produce respectful photographs, avoid stereotyping and ensure privacy
- **Manipulation** – what is and is not allowed in post-production
- **Child protection** – how to ensure that children featured in our photographs are safe from harm
- **Equality and non-discrimination** – ensuring that our photographic practice includes everyone, even the most marginalised

6.4.5 Liability and Permissions

- a) RWSN (Secretariat, Exec / Theme Leaders, Regional Coordinators) will not be held liable for the accuracy of content provided through the network activities. Knowledge sharing is done in good faith to support learning across the global rural water supply and WASH sector.
- b) RWSN retains the right to synthesis and share information shared across the network and generate new insights, for the benefit of Members and non-Members. In relation to Data Protection and Referencing, individuals quoted in such documents (e.g. ediscussion syntheses or briefing notes) will be asked for permission to use their contribution either named or anonymously.

6.5 Conflict Resolution

- a) Any complaints should be taken to the Secretariat Director in the first instance who must respond within 30 days.
- b) If the complaint is not resolved by the Secretariat then it should be submitted in writing to the RWSN Chair and should be considered by Exec and a response given within 90 days.

Process clarified.

7 DIVERSITY AND INTERSECTIONALITY

The role of women is central to rural water supply, as in many low and middle income countries they bear the burden for domestic water supply collection and use but tend to be under-represented in decision-making roles in communities and the organisations that strive to improve service delivery, whether public, private or NGO. It is therefore essential that they have better representation in decision-making and that there are more women water professionals at all levels. It is for RWSN to lead by example:

- a) There should be gender balance across the Executive Committee, Theme Leaders and the Secretariat.
- b) Gender equality and women's rights is part of the Leave No-one Behind that is crosscutting with the other themes.
- c) The RWSN exchange platforms should give voice to women and ensure that their perspective is considered equally valuable as that of men.
- d) The Young Water Professionals will cater for both young women and men but will be mindful of additional barriers that face many professional women in the sector. Thus, RWSN will provide support to women professionals, where possible, to help them overcome those barriers.
- e) RWSN events and training opportunities will strive to ensure gender balance in the process of selecting participants, speakers, trainers and chairs.
- f) Performance indicators on gender will be tracked and reported by the Secretariat in the annual reports, including
 - a. Exec, Theme Leaders, and Secretariat staff.
 - b. Webinars and events: presenters, panellists, moderators, discussants and participants.
 - c. Authorship of blog posts, publications, and other knowledge products.

ANNEXES

KAMPALA COMMITMENTS – UPDATED 2018

The Kampala Rural Water Commitments Background/ Introduction: The 6th International Forum of the Rural Water Supply Network was held in Kampala, 29th November – 2nd December 2011. The Forum was officially opened by Hon Maria Mutagamba, Minister of

Water and Environment, Republic of Uganda. Opening addresses were also delivered by His Excellency the State Minister for Water Resources, Democratic Republic of Ethiopia and the Under Secretary, Ministry of Water Resources and Irrigation, Government of South Sudan. The participants in the forum numbered around 500 from nearly 50 countries, and were drawn from national and local Governments, academia, NGOs and CBOs, the private sector and development partners. The Kampala Rural Water Commitments were endorsed and approved by the delegates to the 6th Global Forum of the Rural Water Supply Network, 1st December 2011.

Those original commitments have been updated to reflect the RWSN strategy (2018-2023) and the Sustainable Development Goals:

The following ten statements summarise our commitment to accelerating progress in inclusive and sustainable rural water supplies wherever those services are absent or underperforming.

Focusing on water users and water resources:

1. We recognise the rights and the natural justice of all citizens to enjoy secure water services, regardless of location, lifestyle, gender, age, disability, ethnicity or income.
2. We will do everything possible to ensure that the services we deliver are equitable and sustainable, providing lasting service with no time limits.
3. We will take full account of all water users' needs for close and unrestricted access, adequate quantity and acceptable quality of water, high levels of reliability, affordability, and a realistic burden of management responsibility.
4. We recognise the multiple uses of water, and the multiple sources from which users take their water for domestic and livelihood purposes.

Focusing on ourselves as rural water professionals:

1. We are committed to high quality of design, implementation (of both software activities and construction) and post-construction activities.
2. We will continue to develop, promote, and adhere to specific standards and codes of good practice in rural water supply, and build close links to other development sectors which affect, or are affected by, this sub-sector.
3. We will continue to enhance our own individual and organisational learning and professional development, with a special emphasis on south-south learning.
4. We will advocate for: Increased and better-targeted finance for capital investments and for post-construction financing through local Governments to address the sustainability of rural water services.
5. We will advocate for: Greater transparency and accountability in regard to progress in rural water provision and service performance.

6. We will advocate for the necessary investment and action to achieve SDG6.1: “By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all”