

# Terms of Reference, Principles and Rules of Operation of the Rwanda Education NGO's Coordination Platform (RENCP)

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## 1. Objectives

The overall objective of the Education Coordination Platform is to ensure that Member Organizations are better informed and coordinated, valuing complementarities and influencing sector policies and strategies by actively organizing open dialogue and shared learning.

By doing so, RENCP member organizations will have opportunities to effectively contribute more to the goals of Rwanda's Education Sector policies. Through the Platform, Education NGOs will be able to effectively contribute to the evidence based policy making process the Sector.

More specifically, RENCP aims at:

- (a) Fostering interaction between Education NGOs with emphasis on **content** and **geographical complementarities**. This is achieved through harmonized contributions to the Education Sector via RENCP, through Working Groups, Joint monitoring and experience sharing, complementarities and joint efforts (including strengthening local organizations role).
- (b) Fostering interaction, **transparency** and **fairness** between Education NGOs, MINEDUC/Donors and Multilateral agencies with emphasis on **information sharing, contribution to policy and strategy formulation and on opportunities**. This is achieved by ensuring that RENCP is a viable NGO contact point to interact with MINEDUC and Donors through a common agenda (one voice) to MINEDUC/ Donors.
- (c) Increasing **visibility** and **accountability** of RENCP in all its dealing with the Government, the Community Partners, the Public and donors. This is accomplished by effectively informing policy on the ground realities and by proposing adjustments as a Common Platform in order to demonstrate performance of NGOs contributions to the Education sector.

## 2. Tasks and Activities

In order to achieve its objectives, RENCP members carry out the following tasks and activities:

- (a) **Tasks and activities aimed at Fostering interaction between Education NGOs with emphasis on content and geographical complementarities:**

- Coordination of regular platform meetings;
- Creation of an appropriate support (Summary profiles, booklet, Platform brochure, Website Development, etc...) presenting member organizations and their activities
- Coordination of member field visits according to themes and member interests;
- Exchange on interesting education related topics and/or research,
- Information sharing on plans and activities/experiences within the platform to ensure improved complementary learning and eventual concerted action;

**(b) Tasks and activities aimed at fostering interaction, transparency and fairness between Education NGOs , MINEDUC/Donors and Multilateral agencies**

- Representation of the platform members in Education Sector Clusters as well as in various task forces and technical Working Groups as seen to be suitable; <sup>1</sup>
- Organization of National forums to discuss emerging issues with all stakeholders in the sector

**(c) Tasks and activities aimed at increasing visibility and accountability**

- Create a resource centre as for example a web site or another simple electronically accessible site for information sharing on issues or experiences considered important by members
- Liaise with MINEDUC and with others actors/stakeholders in the sector;
- Representation of platform members with respect to outstanding topics and corresponding common recommendations seen to be critical

**3. RENCP Internal organization**

RENCP is a voluntary coordination and consultative Platform with no decision making mandate. All major decisions are made by Members through the General Assembly.

**a. Membership**

**(i) Terms and conditions**

RENCP membership is voluntary and is open to all International NGOs active in the Education Sector on condition that (1): the NGO is officially registered at the proper Government bodies; (2): The Organization is willing and able to actively participate in at least one of the RENCP Working Groups.

The Platform is also open to National Umbrella Organizations and Donor Supported Projects.

The RENCP registration is completed upon submission of the RENCP membership application duly filled by the interested Organization. Organizations applications are submitted to the RENCP Chair and Co Chair and are validated at the next General Assembly.

**(ii) Member representatives**

The representative of a Member Organization is the person participating in RENCP activities such as meetings, workshops, field visits, forums, Working Groups, etc....

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<sup>1</sup> This does not preclude Individual Organizations from attendance if they are already members in their own right or should they be individually invited by the Cluster Development Partner. It is simply to ensure that every member of the RENCP will receive effective communication from and representation at the National level.

### (iii) Moral integrity and Discipline

RENCP members are to be truthful in all their activities and seek to uphold the moral and ethical integrity of their organisations and the communities. All RENCP dealings and agenda are to be carried out with respect of people, fairness, impartiality and equity. Transparency and accountability should also characterize any RENCP activity.

**An organization will be excluded from** the Platform under the following situations:

- (i) A lack of involvement in two consecutive General Assemblies without submitting apologies in advance. There is no consensus on this point yet<sup>2</sup>
- (ii) A persistent and noticeable lack of involvement in Working Groups meetings reported by the Chair Organization of the Working Group at the General Assembly;
- (iii) A gross misconduct (Such as betrayal of trust , falsification of information, etc) against RENCP interests

In any case, a motion to dismiss an organization from the RENCP must be brought to the Chair and Co Chair and passed by the General Assembly.

#### ***b. Leadership and Representation***

RENCP leadership is provided through a two years rotational Chair and Co Chair open to any Member Organizations which have the capacity and the willingness to lead the platform. Unless the Co Chair Organization is unwilling or unable to continue in leadership, their Organization will automatically become the Chair Organization at the end of previous Chair mandate. The selection of the RENCP Chair and Co Chair is done on vote by Member Organizations representatives sitting in the General Assembly. An organization is elected upon the vote of two thirds of the Member Organizations in the meeting.

Positions of Chair and Co Chair of the RENCP are to be **facilitators** within the Platform and **representatives** of RENCP interests to outside stakeholders. The RENCP will be represented by the elected Chair and Co Chair Organizations which also play the coordinating role for representation. As appropriate within technical fields, RENCP may be represented by a Chair Organization of a Working Group. The Chair Organization of the Working Group can represent the RENCP Working Group even up to the National Level. They will represent the platform in order to present a common point of view or a common agenda with Education Stakeholders.

The Chair and Co Chair Organizations are responsible for secretarial tasks which would comprise: Management of meetings; Centralised documentation of meeting minutes and every kind of reports/documents produced as well as representative and coordinating tasks as described above; The Chair and Co Chair are responsible for meeting the internal costs related to these responsibilities, such as payment of salaries for responsible staff.

Should one third of the RENCP Membership raise an issue about the inability of the Chair and/or Co Chair to provide proper and smooth leadership in accordance with RENCP objectives and principles, the matter would be put to a vote in a General Assembly. Chair and/or Co Chair Organizations would formally submit their resignation if called for by two thirds of Member Organizations in a General Assembly.

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<sup>2</sup> Discussions on this point are still ongoing

### ***c. The General Assembly***

The General Assembly is the highest decision making body of the RENCP and is the final authority in the management and administration of the affairs of the Platform. The General Assembly is the key forum for exchange and dialogue among delegates from different Member Organizations.

Any matter that is brought forward by one third of the members of the General Assembly must be put on to the agenda by the Chair and Co Chair Organizations. Any decision of the General Assembly will be passed by two thirds of the member organizations present.

The General Assembly has the following exclusive powers, which cannot be delegated:

- To determine and approve amendments to RENCP policies and principles;
- To elect the RENCP Chair and Co Chair Organizations, and to remove them for cause;
- To approve developmental and working plans of the Platform;
- To apply disciplinary measures and sanctions

### ***d. Working Groups***

Active participation in at least one Working Group is a requirement of membership within the RENCP. Working Groups are established according to different educational sub sector demands and areas of operation of the RENCP members. A Working Group may be created during a General Assembly by the expression of interest of at least 3 Member Organizations and validated by the General Assembly. Each Working Group is open to any Member Organization interested in the Working Group activities.

Working Group members organize their own activities (meetings, workshops, field visits, campaigns, etc...) independently but provide updates to each General Assembly as well as posting updates on the RENCP website. The Working Groups are each to identify their Chair organizations. A Chair Organization for each Working Group would be voted on annually by two thirds of all Organizations formally registered to be part of the Working Group. Any time, two third of any Working Group can choose to conduct election for Chairmanship/Leadership of the Group. The outcome of any such matter would be brought to the immediate attention of the Chair and Co Chair Organizations. A Working Group may be dissolved upon the written consent of participating Organizations and would be formally validated at the next General Assembly.

Should it be required, the Chair and Co Chair may communicate about the Working Group dissolution to other stakeholders.

### ***e. Organization of Meetings***

The Chair and Co Chair are by all possible means to organize quarterly meetings of the General Assembly which will feed into the National Policy, dialogue via the Development partner meetings and the cluster meetings. Regular meetings are to be called two weeks in advance of the proposed date.

All Working Groups meetings will also be aligned to engage within the same process. Should there be a need of an extraordinary meeting, this will be called for by the Chair and Co Chair giving as much notice as possible. The Chairperson of a meeting is not necessarily the representative of the Chair/ Co Chair Organization but can also be any other representative of a member organization who has been designated as such in a properly convened meeting.

The Chair and the Co Chair are to Chair General Assemblies whereas Working Group meetings are to be chaired by the Chair Organizations of those Groups.

#### ***f. Financial resources and management***

RENCP operates on a voluntary basis. However, financial participation is open to all member organizations willing to contribute to the execution of specific tasks agreed upon by the Platform. The organization taking the lead on the execution of a specific task will manage and monitor the implementation process and the use of the resources. External financial resources may be sought and administered and transparently accounted for by the Chair and Co Chair for RENCPC activities.

#### **Future Plans for the Platform**

Whereas the Platform exists as a voluntary organisation, future plans will focus on seeking perspectives of the General Assembly (GA) on the establishment of the RENCPC Secretariat. This will encourage sustainability and continued of the value added by the Platform to the education Sector. The GA will establish a taskforce whose responsibility will be to explore the feasibility of establishing a platform more specifically focusing on the pros and cons associated to such secretariat. Education Development Partners as well as member organisations will be urged to support the functioning of the Secretariat in terms of technical and financial support. The establishment of the secretariat will encourage archives/Information management for the activities that the Platform will implement.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> This point has not yet been submitted to RENCPC members for discussions. There is not yet a complete consensus on it.