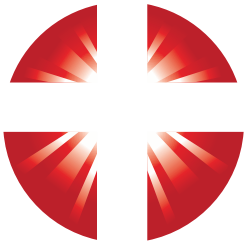

Policies and Protocols in Forming a National Evangelical Alliance

WORLD EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE

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Every Evangelical Alliance is unique and responds to its particular context. Some are large, employ staff, and look like a highly organized institution; others are small and volunteer-based and view themselves more like a relational organism. There are a number of protocols and policies, however, that are common to most. These have been time-tested, and their value proven. The following are a suggestion of policies a newly forming Evangelical Alliance may wish to consider. They help avoid misunderstanding and unnecessary conflict. In the earliest days as a a highly relational organism, an Alliance may not need the structure of a large institution. However, organisms that prevail are also well organized. The following protocols and policies are like a checklist for a newly forming Alliance as it seeks to formalize its operation and systems.

The WEA Alliance Engagement Department is a primary resource to help guide a newly forming Evangelical Alliance, or at any time in its development.

Organization:

Who will be responsible for the drafting of a charter or constitution for your Alliance?

Alliances usually have a formal document that governs their process – in much the same way rules of a sport define the field of play and allowable activity. A constitution defines such matters as: statement of faith, organizational aims and functions, membership, leadership, financial obligations, meeting regularity, etc. Most Alliances utilize legal expertise in drawing up a constitution or charter.

What is required to establish/register your Alliance as a legal entity?

There is no hard and fast rule regarding an Alliance being registered or certified with the government of the nation it is in. However, it is highly recommended. Government recognition adds status to the Evangelical Alliance and may offer charitable status for donations and expenditure. In some Alliances government recognition gives authority for administering and accrediting of civil ceremonies such as weddings and funerals. Specific requirements will differ from country to country.

What name will you give to your Evangelical Alliance?

Evangelical Alliances around the world are known by a variety of names and is a local choice. It is wise to select a name that will communicate well in your context and often Alliances are referred to as an acronym.

How will decision-making occur within your Alliance?

In most Alliances formal decisions are made by voting by members. The objective, however, is not merely political (51% wins!) as in collectively discerning the will of God. Consensus is probably the better objective. There can be others means of decision-making that fit a particular cultural context. An important principle to keep in mind is the doctrine of the priesthood of all believers, and that God can be both represented by, and/or speak through, any believer – irrespective of age, education, ethnicity or gender.

What form(s) of membership will your Alliance have?

Alliances have a variety of membership types and status. This is something to be specified in a constitution. In some Alliances formal membership is for denominations only, others also invite local churches to become members, and in some countries, individuals can be members of the Alliance. Alongside the different types of membership an Alliance's constitution will specifies how representative voting may occur in major decisions.

Governance:

By what means will people be appointed to your governing Board or Council?

An organization's constitution or charter typically defines how Board members are nominated and appointed and who are eligible for election.

How many people will be appointed to your Board?

Most Boards have a defined minimum and maximum number of elected members. Governing Boards that are too large can be difficult to manage and create factions. Healthy Boards are representative of the organization's constituency.

What length of term will Board members serve?

In most Alliances governing Board members serve defined terms (e.g., 2 years) and are eligible for reappointment up to a maximum of "x' years, after which they step aside to allow new people to contribute to the governance of the organization.

What are the responsibilities of a Board member?

Board or Council members are a team and represent the vision and mission of the organization. They speak only as one voice, and once decisions are made (by whatever process) they are the position of all members. Board members oversee, support, pray for and give to the purpose and personnel of an organization.

How will the Chair of your governing Board be appointed?

In most Alliances the Board Chair is elected by Board members. They are not self-appointed and serve at the discretion of the Board. They are usually appointed for a fixed term (1 or 2 years), and able to be renewed.

What are the specific/understood responsibilities of the Chair of the Board?

The Chair typically represents/speaks on behalf of the Board and has close (supervisory/pastoral) relationship with the CEO. However, a Board Chair has no more authority than other Board members. His/her role is to ensure fair process in Board meetings and that all members have opportunity to speak/participate in discussion and decision-making.

What is your Alliance's strategy for inclusion/mentoring of new and younger leaders?

Healthy Alliances have a deliberate strategy to engage new and younger people in Board responsibility as a way of gradual transferring of leadership to the next generation. Older experienced leaders mentor and model leadership to those who will succeed them. Qualifications for younger Board members are no different to those who are older.

What is your Alliance's strategy for gender balance/representation on the Board?

In most Alliances leadership is defined by calling, character and gifting rather than by gender. Healthy Alliances find ways to include women to serve and exercise the gifts God has given them – alongside men – as evidenced in the ministry of Jesus and the teaching of the New Testament.

How does your Alliance define the responsibilities of "governance" and "management"?

Governance defines big-picture matters of vision, outcomes, policy, organizational integrity, and accountability for the CEO. These are Board responsibilities. Management of an organization is usually handled by staff (paid or volunteer) and represents the day-to-day practical outworking of governance policy. Board members do not have automatic right to engage/interfere in management matters that have been delegated by the Board to the CEO to outwork with his/her staff team.

Leadership:

What titles will you give to leaders of your Evangelical Alliance? (e.g., General Secretary, President, Director, Executive Director, CEO, etc.)

The title differs from country to country. In many Alliances the term General Secretary is used, in other countries terms like Director, Executive Director, CEO or President are used. The important consideration is the defining of a job description for the leader of an Alliance.

What term(s) of service will your Alliance appoint a CEO for?

Most Alliances appoint their primary leader for a fixed period (e.g., five years) after which an appointment can be renewed. In some Alliances a leader serves multiple terms because they are perceived to have an ongoing and vital contribution to make. The fixed-term appointment process allows for review and protects an Alliance from being dominated by a leader whose leadership is beyond useful or has become negatively controlling. Leaders serve those they lead and periodic reviews are a healthy safeguard

How might your Alliance conduct performance evaluation of the CEO?

It is better to have thought through, and articulated, the process of review of a senior staff member prior to appointment. Performance evaluation is about helping an individual leader, and the organization as a whole to do/be the best it can be. It is not a mechanism for negative feedback or a means of dismissing a leader. Healthy performance evaluation of a CEO also examines the performance of the governance body and whether they provided the means/resources for the CEO to function.

How are other staff of your Alliance appointed?

In most Alliances the Board appoints the CEO and the CEO appoints other staff. In some Alliances all staff appointments require a Board decision. The important principle is that a definitive process has been defined.

What term(s) of service will your Alliance expect of staff?

The same principles apply as to length of terms for the CEO.

Fiduciary Responsibility:

How will your Alliance manage financial resources?

Most organizations have defined levels of authority for expenditure of financial resources, according to a predetermined budget or with limits – beyond which Board approval is necessary. Policy around receipting of purchases and the types of expenditure an organization deems appropriate are worth defining. Almost all Boards appoint someone to oversee financial accountability and to bring a report to the governing Board.

How often will it be necessary for financial reporting to occur, and by whom

This is usually the responsibility of a Treasurer who presents to the Board a financial position of the organisation and how it is tracking according to a defined budget. Accounting staff may well do the work in preparing financial accounts under the oversight of the Treasurer who reports to the Board. Financial reporting is an important part of healthy Board process and paints a picture of the health of the Alliance. In most Alliances the governance Board receives a financial report whenever it regularly meets.

Who will audit the finances of your Alliance?

Financial integrity is essential and crucial for an Evangelical Alliance. Most Alliances submit their financial records to an independent reviewer or auditor on an annual basis, who checks systems and attests to their authenticity. It is a healthy practice to appoint independent auditors who are not contractually involved in the enterprise of the Alliance. Many external funders and foundations require to see audited accounts before agreeing to fund the work of an Alliance.

Has your Alliance established a bank account and who are its signatories?

The opening of a corporate bank account for an Alliance is usually a Board decision, along with who within the organization has authority to expend money. Currently international law concerning money-laundering often require full disclosure of governance Board members names and contact details in the operating of a corporate bank account.

Has your Alliance established an operating budget – income and expenditure?

Most Alliances establish an annual budget for their income and expenditure. This process can be a mixture of evaluation of previous year's trends, and also spiritual discernment as to what the Holy Spirit is leading the organization to do in the year ahead. An annual budget is a bit like business (strategic) plan, and a means of measuring progress. It is a key function of a governance Board.

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