

INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY FOR REEF STUDIES

General Rules Concerning the Formation of Regional and Topic Chapters.

1. Any group of ISRS members may propose the formation of a Regional or Topic Chapter (or Group) to which may become affiliated ISRS members from (or working in) a particular region of the globe that includes a significant number of countries and members¹, or members working or interested in a particular subject area, the formation of any proposed Regional or Topic Chapter being subject to final approval by ISRS Council.
2. A Regional or Topic Chapter should be managed by a committee of whom at least five should be paid-up members of ISRS from among whom one should be elected as chair, one as secretary and one as treasurer.
3. The Chapter Committee should meet to conduct business either in person or through a conference call at least two times per calendar year. Minutes of the meeting should be recorded by the secretary and forwarded to the Council of ISRS for its information and comment.
4. A Regional or Topic Chapter may organise regional meetings and promote relevant training, public awareness, research or management activities within the region, and may initiate other activities consistent with the aims of the Society, subject to the approval of ISRS Council.
5. A Regional or Topic Chapter may also produce and distribute a regional newsletter or news bulletin, although normally such material should also be made available for publication in Reef Encounter if considered of sufficient interest to the wider membership.
6. Normally ISRS Council shall approve for use by each Regional Chapter a small annual allowance to cover basic operating costs such as office expenses. Provisionally the sum of US \$500 or \$1,000 per annum (according to number of members) is proposed, subject to annual approval by ISRS Council².
7. A Regional Chapter may also apply to ISRS Council for a grant or a loan of a larger sum to support a specific proposal, for example for a pump-priming loan to facilitate the organisation of a regional conference between successive ICRS conferences.³

¹ The term “Regional Chapter” is used to refer to a “region” of the globe, most likely a continent or ocean. The distinction is made between “Regional Chapters” and possible “Local Chapters” which might include members from or interested in only a single city or province or US state.

² This appears to be the arrangement typical of other international biological science associations of which we have enquired. The Society for Conservation Biology (SCB) for example provides each Regional Chapter with an annual allowance of \$3,000, though additional sums may be awarded following submission of proposals to their governing Board. (Note however that in the SCB the regional groups are called Sections, while the term “Chapter” is used for local groups within sections. “Topic” or “Special Interest Groups” are called Working Groups.)

³ As an indication of the size of loan that might be involved, an amount of between US\$ 10,000 and \$20,000 might be required to book conference facilities and pay secretarial staff until registration fees are received as delegates register for the meeting. It should be born in mind that a principal objective of the society for which it holds its funds is to support such initiatives. Each loan or grant would be subject to approval of the ISRS Council. For example, \$40,000 was loaned to the organisers of ICRS13 in Honolulu.

8. Full accounts should be maintained by the chapter treasurer of the use of any funds provided by ISRS Council, and details made available to the ISRS Treasurer when requested.
9. The Committee of a Regional Chapter may also apply independently to other organisations or individuals for grant-aid to support their activities, such as a regional conference or training programme.
10. Members of a Regional Chapter Committee may, if they are also an ISRS member, stand in elections for ISRS council members or officers, and if successful may be delegated by the Committee of the Regional Chapter to speak for it on Council. In the absence of any committee member being elected by the full membership, the chair of a Regional Chapter Committee may attend or participate in ISRS Council Meetings of conference calls in order to speak on behalf of the Regional Committee, but may not under the present constitution act or vote as a member of Council⁴.
11. A group/chapter may not enter into financial commitments on behalf of the Society (other than in relation to the chapter's own funds or operational costs) without the approval of the Council of the Society.
12. A group/chapter may not issue statements to the public or media in the name of the Society, or claim to speak on behalf of the Society, without the approval of the Council, though may issue such statements on its own behalf.
13. Any group/chapter that fails to operate within the Society's rules and constitution shall be disbanded and/or no longer considered part of the Society.

Additional Rules Concerning Regional or Topic Chapters/Groups that Include Non-members of the Society

1. Members of the International Society for Reef Studies (ISRS), referred to below as the Society, may join with other non-ISRS members to set up, or invite non-members of the Society to join, a regional chapter or topic group that, subject to Council approval, may nevertheless be accepted as an integral part of ISRS, and have the legal status of a sub-division of the society, subject to the following conditions:
2. A minimum of 20% of the group/chapter should be paid up ISRS members.
3. Non-ISRS members who join the topic group/chapter shall be considered an "associate member", rather than full member, of the Society.
4. Associate members are not entitled to the cost-bearing benefits of paid-up society members, such as free on-line access to the Society's academic journal Coral Reefs, but are entitled to non-cost bearing benefits (e.g. to receive and contribute to the Society's news journal Reef Encounter).

⁴ The existing ISRS constitution as amended in 2016 only allows for direct election of council members by the full membership. There is at present sympathy for a proposal that one full Council member may be appointed directly by each regional chapter to represent its interests. This will require a change in constitution, itself requiring approval by a two-thirds majority of at least 40% of the members. However officers are currently minded to propose such a change to members early in 2018.

5. Associate members shall complete a membership form comparable to that completed by full members to insure that relevant details of all group/chapter members are known and available.
6. Associate members may include organisations, including both commercial businesses and non-profit organisations, provided they declare any conflicts of interest and abide by the rules and constitution of the Society.
7. A group/chapter including associate members should (like other groups/chapters) be managed by a formally constituted committee, in addition to which the chair and at least 50% of the committee should be paid-up members of the Society.
8. The committee should (like the other sub-committees) meet (physically or on-line) at least twice a year, minutes should be kept of the proceedings, and the minutes forwarded to the council of the Society for comment or approval.
9. The chapter may (like other groups/chapters) apply to the council for an annual budget to cover its basic operational costs (e.g. \$500 or \$1000); further amounts may be requested for specific purposes (e.g. to pump-prime or subsidise a workshop).