

# International Organizational Structure

## OPTION A: GOVERN BY INTERNATIONAL BOARD

### SUMMARY

LifeRing is governed by the LifeRing International Board of Directors. The International Board of Directors is elected by the LifeRing Congress, which meets annually. Delegates to Congress are elected to represent a single meeting for a single year. The LifeRing International Board of Directors issues charters to National Offices around the world. National Offices consist of a National Director appointed annually by the International Board of Directors, and may be further organized by either an informal National Organizing Team or by a National Board of Directors (or similar other non-profit entity) that is legally established in that particular nation. National Offices, as represented by the National Director, are grouped in what is informally referred to as the LifeRing "Global Circle."

### INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

#### LifeRing's International Congress

- establishes the international by-laws, articles of incorporation, mission and vision statements, and core values and beliefs of the organization.
- elects the International Board of Directors.

#### LifeRing's International Board of Directors ("the International Board")

- is the highest governing authority for certain fundamental decisions and for setting strategic direction.
- is elected by a vote of delegates at LifeRing's annual Congress, with rotating three-year terms.
- provides worldwide coordination for LifeRing National Offices and the Global Circle and ensures that the global mission and vision, standards, plans and policies are pursued by those entities.
- approves long-range plans, strategic plans and budgets, and determines international policy.
- appoints LifeRing's International Executive Director, Senior Officers, Initiative Team Leaders, Continental Liaisons, and National Directors
- grants and revokes Charters of Partnership.

#### LifeRing's National Offices

- each represented by a National Director, make as many operational decisions as possible within the constraints of the plans, policies, strategies and standards set by the International Board and their National Charters.
- may be governed by their own National Board of Directors, but a legally-recognized governing board is not required in order to be recognized with a National Charter.
- approve and implement projects and programs within previously approved budgets under the supervision of their National Directors.
- have a voice in the Global Circle, regardless of the size of membership or programs.
- agree to abide by common plans, policies, strategies and standards under the responsibility of their National Charters.
- are held accountable to the International Board of Directors, the Global Circle, and its local meetings, members and participants through an ongoing system of oversight and peer review.

#### LifeRing's Global Circle

- is a loose federation of chartered national nonprofit LifeRing organizations which operate semi-independently within the constraints of their charters.
- is bound together in interdependence through a partnership defined by a common mission and vision statement and shared core values and beliefs.
- shares information, knowledge and experience, proposes strategies for improvement and growth to the International Board of Directors, and participates in international programs and planning processes.

#### LifeRing's Continental Liaisons

- coordinate the strategic operations of the organization between National Offices on a particular continent, and represent LifeRing in international forums.

## **OPTION B: GOVERN BY INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS**

### **SUMMARY**

LifeRing is governed by the LifeRing Congress, which meets annually. Delegates to Congress are elected to represent a single meeting for a single year.

### **INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY**

#### **LifeRing's International Congress**

- is the highest governing authority for certain fundamental decisions and for setting strategic direction.
- establishes the international by-laws, articles of incorporation, mission and vision statements, and core values and beliefs.
- is the highest governing authority for certain fundamental decisions and for setting strategic direction.
- is elected by a vote of delegates at LifeRing's annual Congress, with rotating three-year terms.
- provides worldwide coordination for LifeRing National Offices and the Global Circle and ensures that the global mission and vision, standards, plans and policies are pursued by those entities.
- approves long-range plans, strategic plans and budgets, and determines international policy.
- appoints LifeRing's International Executive Director, Senior Officers, Initiative Team Leaders, Continental Liaisons, and National Directors
- grants and revokes Charters of Partnership.

#### **LifeRing's National Offices**

- each represented by a National Director, make as many operational decisions as possible within the constraints of the plans, policies, strategies and standards set by the International Board and their National Charters.
- may be governed by their own National Board of Directors, but a legally-recognized governing board is not required in order to be recognized with a National Charter.
- approve and implement projects and programs within previously approved budgets under the supervision of their National Directors.
- have a voice in the Global Circle, regardless of the size of membership or programs.
- agree to abide by common plans, policies, strategies and standards under the responsibility of their National Charters.
- are held accountable to the International Board of Directors, the Global Circle, and its local meetings, members and participants through an ongoing system of oversight and peer review.

#### **LifeRing's Global Circle**

- is a loose federation of chartered national nonprofit LifeRing organizations which operate semi-independently within the constraints of their charters.
- is bound together in interdependence through a partnership defined by a common mission and vision statement and shared core values and beliefs.
- shares information, knowledge and experience, proposes strategies for improvement and growth to the International Congress, and participates in international programs and planning processes.

#### **LifeRing's Continental Liaisons**

- coordinate the strategic operations of the organization between National Offices on a particular continent, and represent LifeRing in international forums.

## OPTION C: GOVERN BY GLOBAL FEDERATION

### SUMMARY

LifeRing is governed by numerous national entities around the world, each operating autonomously and without constraint by any international governing body.

### INTERNATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

#### LifeRing's Global Circle

- is a loose federation of national nonprofit LifeRing organizations which are bound together in interdependence through a common origin and history.
- is the highest governing authority for international policy and for certain fundamental decisions affecting international relations.
- establishes the international mission and vision statements, and core values and beliefs.
- shares information, knowledge and experience, implements strategies for international improvement and growth, and participates in international programs and planning processes.
- The Global Circle appoints an International Spokesperson, Initiative Team Leaders, and Continental Representatives.
- provides worldwide coordination for LifeRing National Offices and the Global Circle and ensures that any global mission and vision, standards, plans and policies are pursued by those entities.
- grants and revokes Charters of Partnership.

#### LifeRing's National Offices

- each represented by a National Director, make as many operational decisions as possible within the constraints of the global plans, policies, strategies and standards set by the Global Circle and their National Charters.
- may be governed by their own National Board of Directors, but a legally-recognized governing board is not required in order to be recognized with a National Charter.
- approve and implement projects and programs within previously approved budgets under the supervision of their National Directors.
- have a voice in the Global Circle, regardless of the size of membership or programs.
- agree to abide by common plans, policies, strategies and standards under the responsibility of their National Charters.
- are held accountable to the Global Circle, local meetings, members and participants through an ongoing system of oversight and peer review.

### U.S. RESPONSIBILITY AND AUTHORITY

LifeRing's Congress establishes the by-laws, articles of incorporation, mission and vision statements, and core values and beliefs only for LifeRing United States. The LifeRing Congress elects the United States Board of Directors. Delegates to Congress represent only meetings in the United States.

LifeRing's Board of Directors ("the U.S. Board") ensures that the mission and vision, standards, plans and policies are pursued within the borders of the United States. The Board approves long-range plans, strategic plans and budgets, and determines national policy. U.S. Board members are elected by a vote of delegates at LifeRing's annual Congress, with rotating three-year terms. The Board appoints LifeRing's U.S. Executive Director, Senior Officers, and delegate(s) to the Global Circle.