RACSEL

LATIN AMERICA AND CARIBBEAN DIGITAL HEALTH NETWORK

STRUCTURE AND OPERATION REGULATIONS

Index

1. Competence

The Latin American and Caribbean Digital Health Network, hereinafter RACSEL, is an initiative of the countries of Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC), supported by the Inter-American Development Bank, hereinafter IADB. It is established as a mechanism for systematic horizontal technical cooperation to promote, multiply, strengthen and dynamize exchanges aimed at developing, disseminating, and implementing best practices in digital health to support institutional development processes and their progress in the region.

2. Membership

2.1 Members

The Members are those **States** with the highest technical responsibility or steering role related to the implementation of digital health in each country of Latin America and the Caribbean.

2.1.1 Rights and Obligations of Member States

Those who have the status of Members shall participate with voice and vote and shall have the following rights and obligations:

Rights:

a) To participate in all programs and projects of RACSEL.

b) To participate in the General Assembly meetings.

c) To propose topics of their interest to the General Assembly.

d) To propose projects in accordance with current guidelines that are justified and align with the regional agenda.

e) To hold the Pro Tempore Presidency in accordance with the established selection order (see Chapter 4, clause 2).

Obligations:

a) To follow up and report to the General Assembly on the progress of the projects at country and regional level on those issues that fall within its competence.

b) To follow up on activities agreed by consensus that are deemed necessary to properly achieve the objectives of the network.

c) To disseminate the actions of RACSEL in the countries they represent.

2.1.2 Admission of Members

States wishing to join RACSEL shall submit a written application to the Presidency specifying their interest in becoming a member.

The General Assembly will decide on the new incorporation based on the report from the RACSEL Presidency with the recommendation of acceptance or rejection. The Pro Tempore Presidency will notify the Interested State of the respective resolution.

The incorporation of States into RACSEL is formalized once approved by the Assembly, and the country must notify the authorities who will represent it at the Assembly by proposing a Primary and an Alternate representative.

The rights and obligations of new Member States shall take effect immediately upon their incorporation being approved.

2.2 Associated Countries

Countries from other geographical regions may be accepted as Associated Countries by the RACSEL Assembly.

2.2.1 Rights and Obligations of Associated Countries

Those having the status of Associated Countries shall participate with voice but without vote and shall have the following rights and obligations:

Rights:

a) To participate in RACSEL programs and projects.

b) To participate In the General Assembly meetings.

c) To propose topics of their interest to the General Assembly.

Obligations:

a) To disseminate RACSEL actions in the countries they represent.

2.2.2 Admission of Associated Countries

States from other regions wishing to become part of RACSEL shall submit a written application to the Presidency specifying their interest in becoming a member.

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The incorporation shall be formalized once approved by the Assembly, and the admitted country must notify the authorities who will represent it at the Assembly by proposing a Primary and an Alternate representative.

The rights and obligations shall take effect immediately upon their incorporation being approved.

3. Mission, vision, and objectives of RACSEL

Mission:

To promote collaborative work and cooperation in the field of digital health, so that the good practices and results achieved in one country can be leveraged in others, leading to increased efficiency and effectiveness, thereby improving the quality of health services and social growth and well-being.

Vision:

To be one of the most important global networks of cooperation in electronic and digital health, and a reference in the dissemination, promotion, and adoption of standards, through dialogue, coordination, and exchange of knowledge and experience.

Objectives:

I) To support and collaborate with countries in the management and ongoing exchange of knowledge in digital health transformation, enabling them to:

- Share and disseminate tools, technologies, and experience.
- Develop institutional capacities and transfer knowledge.
- Generate innovations, technical documents, and operational guidelines.
- Promote and define common technical standards and criteria.

II) To contribute to achieving better results in the health sector by promoting:

- Better use of health information, services provided, and resource application.
- The use of digital health both in the management, and in the promotion and prevention of health, as well as in the provision of services.
- The adoption of emerging technologies for the benefit of health systems and their digital transformation.

III) To promote the development of the health and digital health sectors through collaboration with:

- Public sector management.
- Resource mobilization.
- Provision of services.

IV) To enhance the impact of the results obtained on populations by promoting:

- Collaborative work and participation of countries in the selection of topics and content development.
- Appropriation and application of knowledge to solve various problems through intensive use of digital health.

4. Organization and Structure for Decision Making

RACSEL is organized into the following bodies:

1. General Assembly (GA)

2. Pro Tempore Presidency (pTP)
3. Regional Executive Committee (REC)
4. Driving Organizations (DO)
5. Strategic Partners (SP)
6. General Coordination (GC)
7. Regional Technical Coordinator (RTC)

4.1 General Assembly

The General Assembly is the highest decision-making authority of RACSEL and ensures that the goals, objects, and principles of the Network are pursued and that the interests of the network are safeguarded. The General Assembly is responsible for making binding decisions with respect to all matters related to the network. The General Assembly shall meet at least once a year to make decisions regarding the Network's work plan and budget, as well as to elect new authorities.

The General Assembly may be convened extraordinarily by the President of RACSEL or the Regional Executive Committee in their absence, or at the request of its members with a minimum of half plus one of the convening countries. The Assembly may be held virtually for the renewal of authorities and in other situations that may arise and hinder regional mobility.

The Assembly is composed of the primary representative of each Member State, who may delegate their representation to an alternate in case of inability to attend. Each country shall have one vote, and to achieve quorum, half of the member countries plus one must participate. Decisions, unless otherwise specified, shall be made by a simple majority of its present members.

Driving Organizations, Strategic Partners, and Associated Countries may participate in the Assembly with voice but without vote.

Responsibilities of the General Assembly.

The General Assembly shall carry out the following responsibilities:

1. To serve as a dialogue platform among members to analyze progress made in the region and strategic digital health issues for its development.

2. To approve the strategic and the annual work plan of RACSEL, proposed by the Regional Executive Committee, which must include the activities to be carried out, the resources for its implementation and for the sustainability of the network, in accordance with the vision and mission.

3. To elect by vote the President Pro Tempore and the Regional Executive Committee when appropriate.

4. To analyze and approve the annual report presented by the Regional Executive Committee on the execution of the Annual Work Plan during the previous year.

5. To include, by a majority of half plus one of its present members, the Member States requesting formal incorporation to RACSEL, who will act with voice and vote in all instances of the network.

6. To include, by majority of half plus one of its present members, countries from other geographic regions as part of the network, who will act in agreed instances, with voice but without vote.

7. To modify, in whole or in part, the operating protocol of the network by a majority of half plus one of its present members.

4.2 Pro Tempore Presidency

RACSEL will have a President who will assume office for a period of 1 year, renewable for one additional consecutive year.

The President will be elected by the General Assembly. There is no limit to non-consecutive re-elections. All representatives of member countries in the General Assembly are eligible to assume the position of President, for which they must formalize their candidacy with the Coordination. Both positions are honorary.

The candidate receiving the most votes from all member countries present at the General Assembly will be appointed President.

Responsibilities of the Pro Tempore Presidency:

- To officially represent RACSEL.
- To convene, through the General Coordination, meetings of the Regional Executive Committee and the General Assembly, which he will preside.
- To ensure compliance with the activities outlined in the work plan.
- To present an activity report at the end of his term.

4.3 Regional Executive Committee

The Regional Executive Committee (REC) has the overall responsibility for the management and direction of RACSEL. It is responsible for ensuring that decisions made by the General Assembly are executed and that the work plan and allocated budget are implemented.

REC members are individually elected by the General Assembly and therefore do not represent their countries or organizations on this Committee. The mission of each REC member is to contribute their knowledge to RACSEL and to act consistently with the pursuit and protection of our purpose, objectives, and principles.

The REC is composed of the Pro Tempore President, 2 representatives from the General Assembly, 2 digital health experts, 1 representative from the driving organizations, the General Coordination, which will serve as the Secretary and spokesperson for the Committee, and the Regional Technical Coordination. The REC will assume its functions for a period of 2 years, renewable for an equal period at 50% of its composition, staggered, to ensure continuity in the management of the Committee. There is no limit to non-consecutive re-elections, which are honorary.

The REC will convene with a quorum of half plus one of its members.

Members:

- Representatives from the General Assembly: All representatives of member countries in the General Assembly are eligible to serve on the REC, for which they must formalize their candidacy with the Coordination. Participation is individual.

- Digital health experts: Elected by the General Assembly based on their experience and knowledge in the field, and their contribution to regional digital health. Candidacies may be submitted by the General Assembly, the REC, and driving organizations.

- Representative from driving organizations: All promoters of RACSEL are eligible, for which they must formalize their candidacy with the Coordination.

Responsibilities of the Regional Executive Committee:

- To develop the annual work plan, which includes agreements on Implementation strategies and a schedule of actions aligned with network priorities and budget.

- To monitor network management.

- To monitor the activities of the General Coordination.

- To identify opportunities for cooperation and synergies with other networks, institutions, organizations, or countries with similar objectives and priorities.

- To help mobilize national and international resources to fund programs, projects, and activities in thematic areas of interest.

- To contribute to the expansion and strengthening of memberships.

- To promote the integration and participation of RACSEL in other similar initiatives, with representation from LAC.

- To communicate and disseminate the progress made by RACSEL and the projects in which it participates and manages.

4.4 Driving organizations

The driving organization that has contributed to its creation through technical assistance and resource provision is the Inter-American Development Bank (IDB). They participate prominently, with voice but without vote, in the Annual Assembly and in meetings of the Executive Committee.

4.5 Strategic Partners

The participation of organizations as strategic partners of RACSEL is a priority that must be translated into concrete actions.

The different bodies of RACSEL can identify relevant organizations for the missions and projects of the Network and promote the corresponding synergies. These organizations must generate added value with their participation or technical assistance to the Network. They may be national or multilateral development agencies, multilateral banks, non-governmental organizations, companies, or any other entity working in the area of policy and projects on digital transformation in health, ICT, health, human development, among others.

The mechanism to formalize the interaction with RACSEL as a Strategic Partner will be through a Memorandum of Understanding or alternative documents strictly approved by the General Assembly. Strategic partners will have the opportunity to participate with voice but without vote in the General Assembly and, if invited, in Executive Committee meetings.

4.6 Coordination

RACSEL will be managed by a General Coordinator who will be elected by the REC. The Coordinator must have knowledge in the health sector, specifically in digital health, project management, and proven experience of a minimum of 5 years in articulating networks of the public sector, ideally at the international level.

Coordinator Responsibilities:
- To assist the Presidency in planning and executing network activities.
- To coordinate and promote the advancement of activities within the network.
- To assist the Presidency and the Regional Executive Committee in identifying and managing international cooperation resources.
- To support the work of the Regional Executive Committee and the Regional Technical Coordination in the design and implementation of the work plan, its monitoring, and evaluation of activities.
- To serve as Secretary to the Assembly and the Regional Executive Committee.
- To prepare documents and the agenda for the Assembly.
- To promote activities related to the promotion of the network.
- To coordinate work with participating countries and institutions (entities).

- To support the organization and implementation of in-person and remote meetings, events, and participant exchanges.
- To maintain the contact list and focal points of the different network members, milestones, and active projects, as well as the network's institutional memory.
- To represent RACSEL in different areas.
- To provide content and updates on the Network's progress to the communications area.
- To participate in meetings with various stakeholders involved in the Network.
- To collaborate in the implementation of agreements between countries, by monitoring activities and ensuring the achievement of objectives.
- To ensure compliance with deliverables and results of projects executed under RACSEL and contracted consultants.
- To monitor the work of the Regional Technical Coordination.

4.7 Regional Technical Coordination

The portfolio of projects executed within RACSEL aims to create a space for regional cooperation among different stakeholders from government, civil society, private sector, academia, and technical community. Projects may have an Executing Unit responsible for carrying out planned actions and financial management.

The Regional Technical Coordination will lead the projects executed within RACSEL from a technical point of view, and its responsibilities shall be:
- To facilitate collaboration and cooperation among member countries.
- To promote learning from shared experiences.
- To promote consultation and communication between RACSEL and the technical teams of the associate countries and organizations at the operational level.
- To work closely with the General Coordination and the REC.
- To collaborate in identifying specialists to carry out key activities in projects.
- To review and provide opinions on technical inputs and products.
- To ensure compliance with project deliverables.
- To coordinate activities among Executing Units.
- To support the development of technical proposals related to network topics.
- To present periodic reports on project and activity progress to the General Assembly.

– To represent RACSEL in different areas.

Projects to be included within the Network's framework will be analyzed by the Regional Executive Committee, who will inform the Assembly about them and how they will be implemented.

5. Financial Funds

The REC will identify potential competitive funds, projects, public goods, financial assistance, and donors, as well as mechanisms to establish the corresponding relationships, which may be of interest to the General Assembly for its participation and involvement.

The participation or requests for funds will be the responsibility of the executing entity of the projects to be executed within the NETWORK, which must have legal personality and, once approved by the REC, with the endorsement of the General Assembly.

The Executing Unit responsible for the technical and financial execution of projects will sign a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with RACSEL.

6. Commitment to networking, sharing and cooperation

Networking is a valuable support tool for new models of Technical Cooperation management because: (1) it facilitates the participation of a variety of counterparts and partners, (2) it allows for the exchange of scientific and technical information, (3) there is greater assurance of reaching common and/or complementary objectives by interrelating the stakeholders that comprise it, in addition to coordinating efforts and reducing duplication of work, and (4) it facilitates the assessment and integration with other sectors of society. All this results in much greater force in the different planned actions than those developed through a single type of action alone[1].

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[1] Strategic relationship networks of the PAHO/WHO: concepts and lessons learned. Pan American Health Organization. 2011: p. 265

RACSEL is a priority for the countries that comprise it, as it is a digital health initiative that generates capabilities and technological and normative tools to improve citizens' access to health services.

Therefore, RACSEL members commit to supporting and participating in the execution of its activities while respecting basic operating principles:

- *Horizontality.* Countries collaborate with each other as partners. This means that, beyond differences in their relative levels of development, collaboration is established voluntarily and without any party linking its participation to the establishment of conditions.

- *Consensus*. The implementation of cooperation actions must have been subject to consensus by the responsible parties of each country, within common negotiation frameworks, such as joint commissions or their equivalents.

- *Equity*. Cooperation must be exercised in such a way that its benefits (often consisting of mutual strengthening of critical capacities for development) are distributed equitably among all participants. This same criterion must be applied to the distribution of costs, which must be assumed in a shared and proportional manner to the real possibilities of each one.

7. Entry into Force

This Regulation shall enter into force on the day following its signature by all Member States of the American Network of Cooperation on Digital Health.

8. Modifications

This Regulation may be modified by agreement of the General Assembly, at the proposal of any Member State of the Latin America and the Caribbean Network for Cooperation in Digital Health.

The General Assembly will determine the date on which the modifications will enter into force, and they will be applicable equally to all members of the network.