

Guidelines for launching a national or regional GRÓ Alumni Network





GRÓ ALUMNI NETWORKS

The GRÓ Centre for Capacity Development, Sustainability and Societal Change seeks to create opportunities for alumni from the four GRÓ training programmes to work together across the four thematic programme areas. The four Training Programmes are: the GRÓ Fisheries Training Programme (GRÓ FTP), the GRÓ Gender Equality Studies and Training Programme (GRÓ GEST), the GRÓ Geothermal Training Programme (GRÓ GTP) and GRÓ Land Restoration Training Programme (GRÓ LRT). A joint GRÓ alumni network connects alumni of the four programmes and is an addition to the already existing thematic alumni networks of each GRÓ training programme. Alumni from each programme can work together as a branch under the overall GRÓ alumni network.

National and/or regional GRÓ Alumni Networks can be set up by alumni based on their location. Such GRÓ Alumni networks connect alumni based on their shared interest for using and sharing the skills and experience acquired in the GRÓ training programmes and serve as a platform for collaboration, continued learning and development of new competences to advance the development of their countries and regions. GRÓ alumni networks also maintain the link alumni have with Iceland and connect them to Icelandic embassies located in partner countries. As GRÓ works under the auspices of UNESCO, alumni networks also create opportunities for connecting alumni with UNESCO in their home countries and regions, and with the wider UNESCO family.

National and/or regional GRÓ alumni networks are volunteer-led associations that foster networking and create opportunities for alumni to connect, share insights and work together. Membership is open to alumni from all four training programmes and is based on location (a particular country or region). Networks organise events and activities in their countries or regions, offering opportunities for alumni to share their knowledge, and for continued learning and development of new skills as leaders in their fields. GRÓ networks aim to support alumni in assuming leadership and advocacy roles, helping them drive positive change in their communities.

GRÓ alumni networks can apply for financial support from the GRÓ centre, for organising events that have knowledge sharing or knowledge creation (development of new skills) as their main purpose.



GRÓ encourages alumni to consider the following questions when establishing a national/regional GRÓ alumni network:

- **What are the objectives of the network?** What is the mission statement? Why is the network needed? The network should meet members demands, be relevant for their interest so they would want to invest their time in taking part in its activities.
- **Who should be members?** GRÓ can provide information on alumni in the applicable country or region from the four training programmes so information on the establishment of a network can reach everyone. GRÓ alumni networks should be open to alumni from all four training programmes. GRÓ alumni networks can also invite individuals that have completed higher education in Icelandic institutions to attend events.
- **What do the alumni want to do as part of a network?** What are the interests of the alumni? How can members be kept engaged? It is important that the alumni see a benefit for them in joining the network and that it addresses an interest for the alumni for collaboration.
- **What types of activities will the network work on?** Seminars, conferences with a professional focus, joint research, workshops, and training on specific issues? Will the meetings be physical, online or hybrid? What are the members interested in doing together?
- **How will the alumni network be coordinated?** Having a core team of motivated co-ordinators, preferably from each training programme that has been active in the country, is important to sustain the network and keep members interested. Will there be a main co-ordinator or a team of co-ordinators?
- **What will be the involvement of the GRÓ centre and the Icelandic embassy?**
 - o **Process of establishment of network:** To use the GRÓ name and logo, the GRÓ centre and the Icelandic embassy in the country (or accredited to the country) must be included in the process of establishment of an alumni network and give approval for such use.
 - o **Facilitate connections:** Establish a connection between the local alumni. Also, to connect the alumni with UNESCO and UNESCO related entities in the country/region and make the organisation aware of the expertise of the alumni and how they are contributing to the UNSDGs and mandate of UNESCO in the country/region.

- **Supporting the network:** See section on what support alumni networks can expect from GRÓ. All arrangements for financial support shall be decided at the outset of the organisation of events.
- **Communication within the network** How will the network communicate? Via e-mail, social media? GRÓ recommends creating an e-mail account for the coordination group so people don't have to use their personal e-mails. For social media groups using the GRÓ name it is important to adhere to values that underpin the work of GRÓ such as inclusivity, mutual respect and intercultural understanding.
- **What type of association/legal form is appropriate for the network?** In some countries it is required that alumni networks are registered and/or legally established with official bodies. GRÓ does not require such registration. In cases where registration is required it is important that the GRÓ centre is informed about the process and included in decisions such as definition of mandate.

Requirements when starting and operating a GRÓ alumni network

To be able to enjoy support from GRÓ and use the GRÓ name and logo the alumni network must adhere to some basic requirements:

- 1) Democratic values and inclusive practices to ensure equal opportunities and non-discrimination.
- 2) GRÓ alumni networks observe and respect the laws that are applicable in the country/region where they operate. GRÓ alumni networks shall not be engaged in politics nor promote political, religious, private and/or commercial interests. GRÓ alumni networks respect human rights and international frameworks and conventions and work towards the advancement of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.
- 3) The name of the network shall be "GRÓ Alumni Network [Country name/Region]". The GRÓ centre creates a logo for the network that can be used for social media and documents created by the network. The GRÓ Alumni Network can request the use of the embassy logo for events. In such instances it is important to ensure the correct format and visual identity.
- 4) At least 10 alumni must be members of the network. Membership should be voluntary and open to all GRÓ alumni, from the four training programmes.
- 5) There must be a coordinator or a coordinating group for the network. Members should ensure democratic selection of coordinators and decide which legal form and governance structure is appropriate. It is recommended that the



network aims for having representatives in the coordination group from all GRÓ training programmes that have been active in the country/region.

6) The networks are strictly non-profit.

7) There must be an established platform for communication for the network (Facebook, WhatsApp, LinkedIn or similar).

9) A brief annual summary of the network's activities must be submitted to the GRÓ centre during the first quarter of each calendar year, as well as information on membership, leadership changes and updates on contact details.

What support can alumni networks expect from GRÓ?

- Provide information on GRÓ alumni in a particular country/region. Facilitate connection with other alumni.
- Provide connection with the relevant Icelandic embassy.
- Facilitate connecting GRÓ alumni with UNESCO, and the wider UNESCO family, in their country/region.
- Provide information on opportunities available to alumni.
- Facilitate the organisation of GRÓ alumni activities in the country, such as providing meeting venues where possible.
- GRÓ alumni networks can apply to the GRÓ centre for financial support for organising events that have knowledge sharing or knowledge creation (development of new skills) as their main purpose. All GRÓ supported events should be open to all alumni.
- All support prescribed in this section is contingent on adherence to the requirements described in the section above. Any misuse or non-respect of those requirements can result in alumni networks losing their rights of association with GRÓ and as applicable UNESCO or the Icelandic embassy. This includes use of logos, trademarks and other related associations.



Example of a mandate for an alumni group

The overriding objective of the GRÓ Alumni Network [Country/region name] is to create opportunities for alumni from the four GRÓ training programmes to work together across the four thematic areas. The network aims to make it possible for alumni to get to know each other, form new partnerships, share their knowledge and provide opportunities for alumni for continued learning and skills development. The network also aims to maintain a link with Iceland and forge a connection with UNESCO, and the wider UNESCO family.

The Association's core objectives are to:

- A. Celebrate, promote and champion the work of the alumni of the four GRÓ training programmes in [Country/region name].
- B. Foster an engaged and passionate community of GRÓ alumni in [Country/region name].
- C. Provide opportunities for alumni to share their knowledge with other alumni and strengthen their leadership skills and thus contribute to the sustainable development of [Country/region name].
- C. Provide a link between alumni, the Embassy of Iceland accredited to [Country name] and UNESCO, and the wider UNESCO family.
- D. Develop a program of alumni focused activities and events.
- E. Secure the active participation of alumni.
- F. Foster a sense of belonging to the Association.