

So, You Want to start an Eco Club

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It is clear that we all want to grow Rotary in whatever way we can, and the easiest way is to start new clubs. With a new club you just need to identify and accept the goals and traditions that the new group wants and starting a "cause-based" club such as an ECO club gives you a ready-made focus! Below are 8 simple steps that you can follow, which represent a summary of a presentation given by the Innovative Club Advocate team on 19 January 2021. You can see the full presentation as well as important tools to help you at <https://vimeo.com/502691412>.



Step 1 is the most critical, finding the team that will inspire the growth! At the heart is the champion, someone whose "WHY" is at the heart of your club's focus, Environmental Sustainability. No less important is the core group of leaders who share the Champion's vision. Finally, don't forget the Rotary mentor. Step 2 is to recruit members and step 3 is to make sure you have regular meetings, as your consistency is important whatever the frequency.

Step 4 is to find out what the club wants. This is one of the most important steps, and the Rotary mentor can guide the discussion. How often to meet, what types of projects or fundraisers, time of day, traditions like banners and flags, and much more. Are meetings in one community or by Zoom from all over? There's a 3rd option that works well in districts that are spread through rural areas which is a hybrid "pod" club. This is where small communities have groups of a few like-minded members that meet in person and join the larger group by Zoom. When helping a new club determine their culture, I like to tell them about "Chapter 1" clubs (see Beyond Borders, March 2020). This refers to Chapter 1 of our Rotary Manual of Procedure titled "Guiding Principles", and in particular the Core Values that define who we are: Fellowship, Service, Integrity, Leadership, Diversity. As long as we serve with integrity & fellowship, as long as Rotary is FUN then our clubs will succeed!

Our 5th step is to help fund the new club. Traditionally this has been done by a sponsoring club, but it is now more common for Districts to help out. By now you are ready for step 6, the organizational meeting. With the Rotary mentor guiding, choose the first officers of the club and finalize club operational details. The 7th step is the paperwork including a Club Constitution & Bylaws. There is lots of help available for this, whether leaders within your District, Innovative Club Advocates or Zone Coordinators, just reach out.

Our 8th step is to celebrate! All the work is done, the club is chartered and growing, and everybody is keen to get on with the business of Rotary. Don't forget this very important step. Invite family, friends, other Rotarians and leaders. Invite the local press and civic leaders. Celebrate with a social that reflects your club. Remember, fellowship is one of our core values, and you just might find future members at an event like this. To conclude, Just DO IT! Let's grow Rotary in North America, and make sure that it is as awesome as ever for our kids and grandkids!