

Articles of the ICC World Chambers Federation (WCF)

PREAMBLE

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), *the world business organization*, represents enterprises from all sectors in every part of the world.

The World Chambers Federation (WCF) represents ICC's chamber of commerce members worldwide. WCF was first established in 1951 as the International Bureau of Chambers of Commerce (IBCC).

WCF's mission and structure are described in the following articles.

ARTICLE 1 - ORGANIZATION

- 1.1 Within ICC, the World Chambers Federation (WCF) is a non-political, non-governmental body representing the interests of local, regional, national, bilateral and transnational chambers of commerce and industry.
- 1.2 The role of the WCF is:
 - to promote and protect the concept of chambers of commerce as essential intermediaries between business and government, and between business and the general public;
 - to provide assistance in the establishment of chambers of commerce or the strengthening of existing chambers, especially in developing countries and emerging economies;
 - to encourage cooperation between chamber organizations throughout the world, so to extend the range and improve the effectiveness of the services that chambers provide;
 - to provide a forum where chamber leaders can communicate with each other and collaborate on matters of mutual interest, whether in solving problems or realizing opportunities;
 - to facilitate the role of chambers of commerce as local business support agencies;
 - to administer the ATA guarantee chain (according to Article 5);
 - to initiate and/or participate in any appropriate chamber-based international service chains;
 - to encourage chambers of commerce and their members to cooperate in activities of ICC.
- 1.3 The ICC International Secretariat shall provide the secretariat for WCF.

ARTICLE 2 - MEMBERSHIP

- 2.1 Membership of the ICC World Chambers Federation shall be open to all properly constituted chambers of commerce and industry in the world, whether at a transnational, national, bilateral, regional, and local or specialist level.
- 2.2 The process for applying for membership of WCF shall conform to the ICC Constitution.
- 2.3 In countries where an ICC national committee exists, applications for membership of WCF shall be submitted through the ICC national committee. In countries with no ICC national committee, applications shall be made directly to the ICC World Chambers Federation.
- 2.4 In the event that an ICC national committee cannot accept a chamber membership, WCF Secretariat together with ICC International Secretariat, shall work with the national committee concerned to provide an alternative mechanism for the application.
- 2.5 All chamber memberships shall be submitted to the WCF General Council for confirmation.
- 2.6 The status of each chamber member within the WCF shall be that of an individual member and such membership shall not confer any membership rights on any individual organizations that are affiliated to the said group or association.
- 2.7 Where an ICC national committee or ICC WCF Secretariat or the General Council itself, doubt the validity of a chamber membership application, the General Council, in consultation with the national committee where relevant or the ICC WCF Secretariat, shall have the authority to accept or decline the application for WCF membership.

Decisions will be based upon, but not limited to:

- the applicant's compliance with any statutory or legal definition of chambers of commerce in force in the applicant's nation of origin,
 - the applicant's membership of any recognized national network of chambers of commerce in the country in which it is located.
- 2.8 Membership of WCF shall be subject to payment of fees and subscriptions at the time of joining and renewable annually thereafter, in accordance with the practice of national committee or ICC WCF Secretariat. ICC WCF Secretariat may decide to offer potential members different WCF subscription and membership category levels.
 - 2.9 Membership of WCF shall lapse if due fees and subscriptions are not paid, according to the practice of the ICC national committee or ICC.
 - 2.10 If a member changes its status, or fails to comply with these Articles, or in any other way hinders the work of the WCF, the General Council of WCF in consultation with ICC or the relevant ICC national committee, can decide that this organization will no longer be a member of WCF.

ARTICLE 3 - GENERAL MEETING

- 3.1 ICC World Chambers Federation shall hold a general meeting at least every two years to which all members shall be invited. These meetings may coincide with a World Chambers Congress.
- 3.2 A written report from the Chair of WCF shall be presented at each general meeting outlining the activities and achievements of the WCF since the last general meeting.
- 3.3 If any votes are to be taken at a general meeting, each member attending shall be entitled to one vote. The Chair of WCF may also allow voting by proxy or writing. Decisions are taken by a simple majority.

ARTICLE 4 – GOVERNANCE

4.1 WCF General Council

- 4.1.1 The WCF General Council determines the policies and programmes of the ICC World Chambers Federation, within the overall framework of the ICC annual budget process and for approval by the ICC Executive Board (ICC Constitution, article 6)
- 4.1.2 The WCF General Council is convened by the Chair of WCF.
- 4.1.3 The General Council shall consist of chamber delegates from eligible WCF member countries.
- 4.1.4 WCF chamber members shall be invited to vote for candidates to fill 20 places of the General Council. All members of WCF shall be entitled to nominate candidates for election, provided these candidates are willing to serve and able to attend the General Council's meetings. Members shall be elected for a term of three years, twice renewable.
- 4.1.5 If there are more nominations than vacancies, members of WCF will be asked to elect from the eligible candidates by means of a postal or electronic ballot. Each member shall have one vote.
- 4.1.6 Each country will be entitled to nominate one candidate to be voted onto the WCF General Council. Where there is more than one nomination from a country, the WCF members from that country shall elect their representative. The ICC national committee, where existing, shall consult WCF in this election process. Additional General Council members may be co-opted from the countries of those elected candidates.
- 4.1.7 The ex-officio members of the General Council shall be the WCF Chair, Deputy Chair, WCF Honorary Chair, Vice Chairs, the Chair of the World ATA Carnet Council, the Chairs of the WCF working groups, ICC Secretary General and WCF Director.

- 4.1.8 After the elected and ex-officio members have taken their places, the General Council, upon the recommendation of the Chair of WCF, may co-opt further members provided that the total membership shall not exceed 50.

Co-opted members may serve for three years until the next following annual election is complete.

Elected or co-opted members can serve no more than three consecutive terms.

- 4.1.9 Vacancies arising during the term may also be filled by co-option. Co-opted members may serve until the next election.

- 4.1.10 The choice of co-opted members shall be made so as to improve the balance on the General Council between:

- geographic areas of the world,
- large and small chambers,
- public and private law chambers,
- developed and developing countries,
- chamber members and chamber executives.

This balance shall be reviewed every five years, or as and when deemed necessary by the WCF General Council.

- 4.1.11 The General Council shall meet at least once a year.

- 4.1.12 The General Council shall have the power to take decisions for carrying out the objectives of WCF and, in particular, shall

- approve the WCF Annual Programme of Action (within the overall framework of the ICC Programme of Action and annual budget process);
- approve the WCF Annual Report of Activities;
- create and dissolve ad-hoc working groups to deal with specific issues of the WCF programme of action, and can recommend the formation of joint ad-hoc working groups with other ICC bodies;
- be the voting members of the World Chambers Congress selection committee (additional members may be co-opted to the committee by the Chair of WCF, in consultation with the Executive Committee);
- be eligible to serve as a member of the World Chambers Competition jury;
- elect the WCF Chair and Deputy Chair (in accordance with WCF Bylaws Article 4.4.7);

- confirm appointment of WCF Vice Chairs, Chairs of WCF working groups and co-opted members of the WCF General Council;
- approve the proposals of the WCF Executive Committee;
- approve, suspend or terminate memberships to the WCF;
- approve ATA national guaranteeing organizations and record ATA issuing agencies;
- approve the WCF Bylaws and their amendments (in accordance with WCF Bylaws Article 6).

4.1.13 The decisions and recommendations of the General Council shall normally be reached by consensus. In the case of matters requiring specific decisions and where consensus cannot be obtained, decisions shall be made by a simple majority vote. The Chair of WCF may also allow voting by proxy or writing.

4.1.14 The WCF General Council delegates its authority in between meetings to the WCF Executive Committee

4.2 WCF Executive Committee

4.2.1 The WCF Executive Committee of the General Council will be composed of the WCF Chair, WCF Deputy Chair, WCF Honorary Chair, WCF Vice Chairs, Chair of WATAC and Chairs of WCF committees and task forces. The ex-officio members of the Executive Committee shall be the ICC Secretary General and WCF Director.

4.2.2 The Chair of the WCF shall be the Chair of the Executive Committee.

4.2.3 Members of the Executive Committee are appointed for a term of three years.

In case a vacancy is created for whatever reason, the Chair of WCF, in close consultation with the Executive Committee, may appoint a replacement to serve the remainder of the term, until the next election.

4.2.4 The Executive Committee shall take actions and decisions for meeting the objectives of WCF and, in particular, shall:

- prepare the WCF Annual Report and the WCF programme of action (within the overall framework of the ICC Programme of Action and annual budget process), to be submitted to the WCF General Council;
- work with the ICC on the strategic development of the WCF, including budget and other financial matters;

- propose the creation of, monitor and dissolve any committee, working group and task force, define their terms of reference, guide and coordinate their activities as necessary. All such groups will report to the Executive Committee and General Council on their programme of activities;
- submit recommendations to the ICC Chairmanship and ICC Nominations and Human Resources Committee concerning the WCF representation on the ICC Executive Board and its committees as appropriate.

- 4.2.5 The Executive Committee shall meet at least twice yearly, or when necessary on the initiative of the chair or at the written request of at least four of its members.

Between these meetings, the Executive Committee shall delegate its functions to the Chair.

However, in no case will the Chair exercise the functions of Executive Committee for a substantive issue without first polling the members by phone, fax, email, post or other means.

4.3 Transnational Chamber of Commerce Board

A Transnational Chamber of Commerce is a group of chambers, representing chambers within a geographical region, economic grouping, cultural or language basis.

- 4.3.1 ICC's relationships with Transnational Chambers of Commerce will be managed by the WCF.
- 4.3.2 Each year, the Chair of WCF will convene the Transnational Chambers of Commerce (TnCCI) Board. This meeting may be held on the occasion of the WCF General Council, Executive Committee or other major WCF event.
- 4.3.3 The WCF TnCCI Board will be composed of all Transnational Chambers of Commerce and selected national chambers which may not be part of a TnCCI. The members of the TnCCI Board will be confirmed by the Chair of WCF, upon consultation with the members of the Executive Committee.
- 4.3.4 The TnCCI Board will have special consultative status with the WCF Executive Committee, and may be called upon by the Chair of WCF, for special projects concerning the strategic development and implementation of WCF projects and activities.
- 4.3.5 Partnerships and special projects with TnCCI members will be presented to the WCF Executive Committee for development, discussion and necessary approval.
- 4.3.6 TnCIs which have Co-operation Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding with ICC World Chambers Federation shall also be ex-officio members of the General Council.

4.4 WCF Chairmanship

- 4.4.1 The Chair holds the highest office in WCF, and, in this capacity, represents the interests of chambers in ICC's membership, including towards third parties. He presides over the meetings of the WCF Chairmanship, WCF Executive Committee, WCF General Council and other WCF bodies as necessary.
- 4.4.2 The Chair of WCF shall be an ex-officio member of the ICC Executive Board. The Chair of WCF shall consult with the ICC Nominations and Human Resources Committee on the nominations for chamber representatives on the ICC Executive Board (in accordance with ICC Constitution Article 6.2.3.(4)).
- 4.4.3 The term of office for the Chair of WCF will be three years, once renewable.
- 4.4.4 The Chair of WCF will appoint up to six Vice Chairs, taking into consideration geographic balance; public/private chamber status; as well as chamber professionals and volunteer/elected leaders.
- 4.4.5 The Vice Chairs may already be members of the General Council in another capacity, if not, they shall become ex-officio members.
- 4.4.6 Each member has the right to submit a candidate for election as Chair of the WCF. All proposals for Chair shall be submitted to the incumbent Chair of WCF.
- 4.4.7 The Chair of WCF shall submit to the WCF General Council one or more candidates for election as Deputy Chair of the WCF.

This nomination will be done in close consultation with the ICC Chairmanship and WCF Executive Committee.

The Deputy Chair may be an existing Vice-Chair and must be a member of ICC WCF.

The Deputy Chair shall in principle succeed the Chair.

- 4.4.8 The Deputy Chair shall assist the Chair in the discharge of his responsibilities. The Chair may delegate certain of his responsibilities to the Deputy Chair. In the event of the death or resignation of the Chair, or should he become for any other reason unable to discharge the duties of his office, the Deputy Chair shall replace him.
- 4.4.9 Every third year by December 31st at the latest, the WCF General Council shall elect the WCF Chair and Deputy Chair for a period of three years commencing the following January 1st.

The election of the WCF Chair and Deputy Chair shall be submitted by the ICC Executive Board for ratification by the ICC World Council (in accordance with the ICC Constitution, article 6.3.a).

- 4.4.10 For a period of three years following the end of his term of office, the outgoing Chair of WCF shall be Honorary Chair, and continue as an ex-officio member of the WCF Executive Committee and WCF General Council. This mandate may be reduced at the request of the incumbent.
- 4.4.11 The Chair of the WCF shall report regularly to the ICC Executive Board and/or ICC World Council on the programme and activities of WCF.

ARTICLE 5 – ATA Carnet International Guarantee Chain

- 5.1 The ICC WCF International Guarantee Chain for the operation of the ATA and Istanbul Conventions of the World Customs Organization (WCO) is administered by the WCF World ATA Carnet Council (WATAC).

WATAC is responsible for the operation, management and expansion of the Chain, within the framework of present rules, guidelines and procedures. No change to these rules, guidelines and procedures should be made without the agreement of the WCF General Council.

- 5.2 WATAC is composed of one member per national guaranteeing organization affiliated to the Chain. Each national guaranteeing organization must be a member of the ICC World Chambers Federation. National guaranteeing organizations affiliated to the Chain must be approved by the WCF General Council, upon WATAC's recommendation

National guaranteeing organizations shall submit to the WCF General Council the list of the issuing organizations they have selected to issue ATA Carnets on their behalf. These issuing organizations may also be members of the ICC World Chambers Federation.

- 5.3 The Chair of WATAC is designated by the Chair of WCF, in consultation with ATAC, and elected by the World ATA Carnet Council. Voting by proxy will be possible for this election.

The term of office of the chair of WATAC shall be three years, with the possibility of one renewal.

The Chair of WATAC is also the Chair of the ATA Carnet Administrative Committee (ATAC).

- 5.4 WATAC shall meet at least twice a year. Between its meetings, WATAC shall delegate its functions to the ATA Carnet Administrative Committee (ATAC).
- 5.5 ATAC shall be composed of the chair and twelve other members drawn from WATAC. They shall collectively represent at least 50% of the number of ATA Carnets issued per year.

The twelve members shall be selected by WATAC in consultation with the WCF Chair.

The term of office for these twelve members shall be three years with the possibility of renewal by one third each year.

Associate members, observers and experts may be invited by the Chair to join meetings (on a temporary basis), after prior consultation with ATAC members.

ATAC shall meet at least twice yearly, or when necessary on the initiative of the chair or at the written request of at least four of its members.

ATAC must have a quorum of seven members present.

- 5.6 ATAC shall, within the overall framework of the ICC annual budget process, develop an ATA budget proposal which will be based on the annual ATA Carnet programme of action.

The ATAC/WATAC Chair shall present the budget proposal to WATAC for approval, after consultation with the WCF Chair.

The ATA budget shall include a royalty to the ICC equal to 10% of the annual ATA Carnet administrative fees collected.

- 5.7 The decisions and recommendations of WATAC and its working groups shall normally be reached by consensus. In the absence of consensus, the decisions and recommendations shall be taken by a majority vote of the members present and voting.
- 5.8 The decisions and recommendations of ATAC shall normally be reached by consensus. In the absence of consensus, the decisions and recommendations shall be the result of a qualified majority vote of 75% of the members present and voting.
- 5.9 Each year, the Chair of WATAC shall present to the WCF General Council a report on actions and decisions taken regarding the management and development of the ATA Carnet system, and the ATA budget which has been agreed between ICC and WATAC.

ARTICLE 6 - REVISION OF ARTICLES

- 6.1 Any proposal for revising or amending the Articles of WCF must be agreed upon by a two-thirds majority vote by members present at the General Council meeting.
- 6.2 Any revision or amendment so agreed shall be submitted for approval by the ICC Executive Board, for confirmation by the ICC World Council.
