

## **OCIC Membership Policy**

Approved by the Board of Directors September 2013

### **Preamble**

The OCIC Vision, Mission, Mandate, Development Principles and Strategic Directions guide all activities of the Council. Mindfulness of the spirit and letter of these documents is central to the integrity of the Council, as is compliance with the Canadian Council for International Cooperation (CCIC) Code of Ethics.

The Membership Policy will be reviewed annually during the OCIC Board Retreat by the Membership Committee. Any changes to this policy must be approved by the OCIC Board of Directors.

This policy aims to expand on the Council's bylaws with respect to the scope and regulation of each of the types of membership in OCIC. This policy shall serve to inform the decisions of the OCIC Board of Directors and staff.

### **1. Definition**

**Membership** in the Council refers to Organizations or Associates (including Networks or Institutions) that have been fully approved and ratified as described in this Policy and the Council's bylaws, and that are in good standing through having renewed their membership before the annual deadline, as outlined in this Policy.

### **2. Types of Membership**

There are two main types of membership in the Council: Organizational and Associate. Associate membership is divided into two categories, Individual and Network/Institutional. The exact criteria for defining these types of membership and their respective fee structures are outlined in the appropriate membership application packages and are subject to periodic change by the Council's Membership Committee, with approval from the Board of Directors.

### **3. Benefits of Membership**

OCIC was created primarily to serve the needs and interests of its Organizational members and recognizes that there are significant distinctions between types of membership in terms of rights and powers enjoyed within the Council. For example, Individual and Network/Institutional members are non-voting members of the Council, and have limited seats on the Board of Directors.

The specific benefits of each category of membership are determined by OCIC's Membership Committee with the approval of the Board of Directors. These benefits are articulated in writing and shared openly.

Each Networking Group, Committee or other OCIC group shall be free to determine the appropriate limitations on their own membership and participation in their activities given the nature of their work, and keeping with the goal of equitable participation.

While OCIC prioritizes the needs of its Organizational members, the Council strives to provide benefits to its Associate members, and to encourage opportunities for participation.

OCIC shall exercise its discretion in the promotion of its members and their work. Where OCIC considers it appropriate, assistance will be provided to members, including Individual Associate members, to promote non-profit groups, events or other activities that are deemed educational, that seek to engage

the public, or that build capacity. For-profit activities of Individual Associate members will not be promoted by OCIC.

#### **4. Application Process**

All membership applications and related materials are reviewed by the Membership Committee periodically to ensure their usefulness and relevance. As part of each individual review, OCIC will strive to ask questions and seek clarifications to determine that members meet all criteria for membership, including adherence to the OCIC Development Principles.

Once approved by the Board of Directors, OCIC will inform members of their conditional approval as “members to be ratified” and will list such members as “members to be ratified” in all communications and materials such as the website until ratification by the membership at the next Annual General Meeting of the Council.

#### **5. Recommendation Letters**

As per the OCIC bylaws, Organizational membership applications must come with two recommendation letters, one of which must be from an Organizational member of OCIC, in good standing. The other letter may come from a Network/Institutional member or a non-member organization, but not from an individual (including Individual Associate members).

#### **6. Membership Fee Year**

Members approved by the Board of Directors during the final quarter of the membership year will be given free membership for the remainder of the membership year, and billed at the start of the next membership year.

#### **7. Waiving of Membership Fees**

In the case of an Organizational member reporting a financial situation that affects their capacity to pay membership fees, the Council, at the discretion of the Board of Directors, may grant a maximum of one year of continued membership free of charge. The Membership Committee will review all such cases and make recommendations to the Board of Directors. The Committee’s decision to grant one year of free membership shall be based on its combined assessment of:

- a) the genuine need (level of financial difficulty) of the member organization; and
- b) the likelihood of renewing paid membership in OCIC in the future.

Organizational members may not attempt to alternate between paying and not paying fees in various years. Organizational members may not receive a year of free membership during their first year of membership. The option of allowing one year of free membership will not be extended to Associate or Network/Institutional members.

#### **8. Termination of Membership**

It is OCIC’s policy to terminate membership benefits for those who do not pay membership fees. All members shall receive membership renewal packages with due time to respond.

Membership renewal packages shall clearly, prominently and explicitly state a deadline by which time full payment of membership fees is expected.

All members who have not paid their fees in full by the deadline shall be given **one** final notice from OCIC with a final 30-day window in which to pay their fees in full.

If members communicate with OCIC and request an extension or special payment arrangement, this request shall be considered by the Membership Committee on a case-by-case basis. In general, the Council shall avoid granting extensions in the absence of exceptional circumstances.

Immediately upon expiry of the final notice period (30-day window), members shall cease to be considered members. All mention of such members shall be removed from all OCIC communications materials including the website and all other membership benefits shall cease immediately.

### **9. Lapsed Members**

OCIC considers there to be several types of lapsed members which should be dealt with differently so as to reduce administrative burden while still ensuring appropriate review of all members of the Council.

- a) If a former member ceased to be a member during the previous **12 months**, their membership benefits can begin again immediately upon receipt of full payment of their membership fees. No application for membership or review is required.
- b) If a former member ceased to be a member during the previous **12 months**, they may reactive their membership without providing the full application package. In this case a new signed copy of the OCIC Development Principles and any updated and/or relevant information about the former member shall be provided to OCIC for processing of their membership application. Such a member will receive final approval from the Board of Directors and does not need to be re-ratified by the Council's members.
- c) For all former members who ceased to be members **more than 24 months** before their present application for membership, a full application is required the same as if they had never been members of the Council.

### **10. Extension of Membership**

The purpose of the Council's fee-scale structure for Organizational members is to ensure equitable access to membership for a diverse mosaic of member organizations. The extension of the benefits of Organizational membership in OCIC, therefore, should be fairly considered based on fees paid by each member.

Organizational membership benefits shall extend to all those staff and volunteers who work or volunteer from *and only from* the office(s) whose budget was used to calculate membership fees.

For example, if a branch office in one part of the province is approved for membership, these membership benefits do not automatically extend to a separate branch office in another part of the province. If a national office applies for membership and pays fees at a level which accounts for each of its branch offices' budgets for overseas development and/or global education (including administration), then each of these offices shall equally be eligible to receive member benefits.

Individual Associate membership is non-transferable, and in the case where a member will not be able to make use of their benefits they cannot "pass them on" to anyone else.

Network/Institutional membership benefits shall extend to Ontario-based members of the Network/Institution, including active volunteers and Board members.

#### **11. Concerns about Members**

All reasonable due diligence will be carried out during the review of applications for OCIC membership. Once approved, the Council implicitly trusts in the integrity of its members and their self-adherence to the OCIC Development Principles in practice.

Should concerns about any member arise through stories in the media, viewing questionable content in a communications piece created by the member, a complaint being brought from one member against another, or in any other way, the Board of Directors will be informed and the Membership Committee will meet to discuss all concerns about the member. The Committee will then decide, by majority vote, a course of action which may be to determine that:

- a) The concern is unfounded and no further action is necessary; or
- b) The concern should be taken up with the member.

In case (b), the Membership Committee, will create a list from OCIC's Development Principles of possible areas which the member may not be meeting in practice. The OCIC Executive Director or the Chair of the Membership Committee, on behalf of the Council, will ask the member to tell their story and to consider if their practices are counter to those sections listed from the Development Principles.

Should the member contend that they are meeting the Development Principles and wish to remain a member of the Council, the Membership Committee shall then meet to determine, by majority vote, to either:

- a) Accept that the member's actions may or may not appear to be in keeping with the Development Principles but are not so problematic as to require any further action; or
- b) Determine that the member's actions are so problematic, as outlined in OCIC's Bylaws 7f, as to require OCIC to attempt to have the member expelled or suspended from the Council.

In case (b) the Membership Committee shall inform the Board of Directors about the situation and recommend that a motion be passed by the Board to commence with the process of expelling or suspending the member as outlined in OCIC's Bylaws.