

## OCIC MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Approved by the Board of Directors September 2013, January 2018, June 2020

### Preamble

OCIC's work, both internally and as a collective of members, is grounded in our shared vision of global social justice, human dignity and participation for all. Our policies are designed to meet OCIC's internal needs as an organization, however they are guided by ideals about anti-oppression, human rights, international cooperation, and the appropriate meeting of human needs articulated in a multitude of places by multilateral bodies, states, and civil society groups.

All OCIC policies and activities are informed by our Vision, Mission, Mandate, and Strategic Directions. 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 Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness and OCIC's Anti-Oppression Policy and Women's Rights and Gender Equality Policy.

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

The Membership Policy will be reviewed in January 2023 by the Membership and Nominations Committee in accordance with OCIC's policy review schedule. Any changes to this policy must be approved by the OCIC Board of Directors.

### 1. Definitions

In this policy, unless otherwise stated,

**Council** and **OCIC** are used interchangeably to refer to the collective body of members of the Ontario Council for International Cooperation.

**OCIC staff** refers to a person or persons who are employed by OCIC and authorized to represent and act on behalf of the collective membership, and to manage and conduct activities that serve the needs of Council Members.

**Member** is defined as any organization, network, institution or individual that has met the criteria for Council membership as outlined in OCIC's Bylaws and this policy; has been approved by the Board of Directors and ratified by the membership at the Annual General Meeting; and has paid fees in full for the membership year.

**Membership and Nominations Committee** refers to the body comprised of OCIC staff, one or more OCIC Board Directors and volunteers from the Council membership that oversees the application process, reviews new member applications, and conducts other member-relations business as outlined in the Committee Terms of Reference, approved by the OCIC Board of Directors.

## **2. Types of Membership**

Council membership is comprised of regular voting members, also known as Organizational Members, and non-voting members, also known as Associate Members. Associate membership is further divided into two categories: Network/Institutional and Individual Associate. Criteria, benefits and fee structures for each membership type are outlined in detail in the respective Organizational, Network/Institutional, and Individual Associate membership application packages. These are subject to periodic review and may be updated by the Membership and Nominations Committee, with approval from the Board of Directors and ratification by the membership. As per Article 7 (c) in the OCIC Bylaws, any fee structure changes proposed by the Board of Directors are subject to ratification by two-thirds (2/3) of the voting members at the next Annual General Meeting.

## **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. Only Organizational Members in good standing are eligible to vote on Council business motions, ratify new Members of any category and elect OCIC's Board of Directors.

While OCIC prioritizes the needs of its Organizational Members, the Council strives to provide benefits to its Network/Institutional and Individual Associate Members and to encourage opportunities for participation, including serving in a limited number of seats on the Board of Directors.

Members of any type may convene voluntary, member-led Networking or Working Groups, Committees and other collaborative groups based on shared interests under the auspices of the Council and in keeping with the Council's mandate, governing principles and Bylaws. Each Networking or Working Group, Committee or other collaborative 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.

OCIC staff shall exercise 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 aligned with OCIC's mandate and strategic plan, deemed educational, and 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 periodically by the Membership and Nominations Committee to ensure their alignment with OCIC's Bylaws and Strategic Plan and are in compliance with all provincial and federal laws. Application packages for each membership type can be found and submitted on the OCIC website. Once all required forms, fees and supporting documents are submitted to OCIC, the Membership and Nominations Committee determines whether the applicants for Organizational or Network/Institutional membership meet all criteria for membership and should be

recommended for approval by the Board of the Directors, and for ratification by the voting Council members at the next Annual General Meeting. The Board of Directors may request additional information and/or documentation, if needed. Applicants for Individual Associate Membership are approved internally by OCIC staff upon receipt of application forms and fees. Individual Associate Members are ratified as a group by the voting Council members at the next Annual General Meeting.

All approved applicants are informed of their conditional status as a “member to be ratified” and listed as such on the OCIC website and relevant communications and promotional materials. Organizational Members to be ratified cannot exercise voting rights until Council ratification. Membership benefits begin upon approval by the Board of Directors, in the case of Organizational and Network/Institutional Members, and approval by OCIC staff, in the case of Individual Associate Members, as per Item 6 below.

### **5. Recommendation Letters**

Applicants for Organizational and Network/Institutional Membership must submit two letters of recommendation with their application, one of which must be from an Organizational Member in good standing. A second letter may come from a Network/Institutional Member or other legally recognized organizations, but not from an individual (including Individual Associate Members).

### **6. Membership Year and Annual Payment of Fees**

OCIC’s membership year is from April 1 to March 31, inclusive. Membership fees must be paid in full annually, upon receipt of billing notice at the beginning of the membership year to be recognized as a “member in good standing” and to be eligible for OCIC benefits. Before the start of the following membership year, OCIC staff will provide members with membership renewal packages with explicitly stated fee payment deadlines in sufficient time to prevent any disruption of benefits and privileges.

Organizational and Network/Institutional Members to be ratified are eligible for pro-rated fees in the year in which they first applied for Council membership, depending upon when in the OCIC membership year they are approved by the Board of Directors. Individual Associate Members to be ratified are ineligible for pro-rated fees in the year they first apply for Council membership, however, if an Individual Associate Member applies in the final quarter of the membership year, the fee paid at the time of application will cover the next full membership year.

### **7. Extension of Membership**

The purpose of the Council’s fee-scale structure for Organizational and Network/Institutional Members is to ensure equitable access to membership for a diverse mosaic of member organizations. The extension of the benefits of Organizational and Network/Institutional 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 with 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 international cooperation and/or public engagement work (including administration), then each of these offices shall equally be eligible to receive member benefits.

Network/Institutional Membership benefits extend to Ontario-based members of the Network/Institution, including its active volunteers and Board members. Individual Associate membership benefits are non-transferable.

### **8. Suspension of Membership Benefits**

OCIC reserves the right to suspend membership benefits and privileges of any member whose annual membership fee is in arrears. Any member who has not paid in full their annual fee by the renewal deadline, or who has not requested and been granted an accommodation, shall be given **one** final billing notice and thirty (30) days in which to pay in full before membership benefits and privileges are withdrawn. Such members shall lose their status as "member in good standing" and will be removed from the OCIC website and other OCIC communication materials. Such "lapsed members" may have their benefits and privileges reinstated as per Item 9 below.

Under exceptional circumstances, the OCIC Executive Director may approve a deferred payment arrangement, a reduced fee, or waive the annual membership fee for one year without suspension of benefits. The fee will not be waived in the first year of membership and Organizational Members may not alternate between paying and not paying fees in various years. The Board of Directors will be notified in writing of any special fee accommodations granted. The option of allowing one year of free membership and benefits will not be extended to Individual Associate Members.

### **9. Lapsed Members and Reinstatement of Benefits**

A member whose fee is in arrears and ceases to be "in good standing" is considered to be a "lapsed member." OCIC recognizes three conditions of lapsed membership, and OCIC staff manage each differently in order to reduce administrative burden while ensuring appropriate review and equitable treatment of all members.

a) A lapsed member who ceased to be in good standing for no more than twelve (12) months from the last payment notice date, can have all membership benefits reinstated immediately upon receipt of full payment of their annual membership fee. No new application for membership or review by the Membership and Nominations Committee will be required.

b) A lapsed member who ceased to be in good standing between twelve (12) and twenty-four (24) months from the last payment notice date may reactivate their membership and benefits without providing a full application package, but must provide any updated and/or relevant information along with full payment of their membership fees. The Membership and Nominations Committee will review and submit the information for approval by the Board of Directors. Upon Board approval, the member does not need to be ratified again by the Council.

c) A lapsed member who ceased to be in good standing for a period greater than twenty-four (24) months from the last payment notice date must submit a full application and follow the same process for approval by the Board of Directors and ratification by the Council membership as any new applicant.

#### **10. Voluntary Withdrawal of Membership**

As per Article 7 (e) of the OCIC Bylaws, a member of any category may formally withdraw from the Council at any time during the membership year by submitting a written letter of notice to OCIC and the Board of Directors. Upon receipt of such notice, all membership benefits shall cease. OCIC will not refund in total or any part of the fees paid for the year prior to the date of termination of membership.

#### **11. Member Grievances and Revocation of Membership**

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 acknowledgement of OCIC's guiding principles, CCIC's Code of Ethics, the Istanbul Principles for CSO Development Effectiveness, and OCIC's Anti-Oppression Policy in practice.

Should any Council member, OCIC staff or Board Director have reason to believe that the action(s) or conduct of an Organizational, Network/Institutional or Individual Associate Member be a cause for concern as outlined in Article 7 (f) of the OCIC Bylaws and brought to the attention of OCIC staff or any Council member, the Board of Directors will be informed immediately. The OCIC Executive Director, in consultation with the Membership and Nominations Committee, will initiate proceedings to meet with the member in question and review all evidence and circumstances surrounding the grievance in a fair, transparent and expedient manner.

On the basis of findings of the Membership and Nominations Committee and the OCIC Executive Director, a majority of Board Directors may pass a resolution recommending that the regular voting members of the Council expel the member and immediately revoke all membership benefits and privileges at a special meeting convened for hearing the grievance, or at the next Annual General Meeting. As per Article 7 (f) in the OCIC Bylaws, the member in question has the right of appeal at the meeting prior to the Council vote. A two-thirds majority of the regular voting members present at the meeting is required in order to pass the resolution to expel the member.