

OWSD EXECUTIVE BOARD MEMBERS

Updated Terms of Reference, Role Descriptions, Eligibility and Election Procedures (2025)

Approved by Nominations Committee on 15/09/2025

Composition of the Executive Board

The OWSD Executive Board (EB) is composed of:

- President (to be selected on a rotational basis from Vice Presidents)
- Four Regional Vice Presidents
- Four Regional Members

There is one Vice President and one Regional Member from each OWSD region: African, Arab, Asian and Pacific, Latin American and Caribbean.

Ex officio members include:

- Immediate past President (until handover is completed)
- OWSD Secretariat: OWSD Coordinator and Secretariat member.

Additional guests may join for specific sessions as observers or technical advisors.

Each of the Vice Presidents shall be prepared and able to step into the position of President, if required.

If the President or a Vice-President resigns before the end of her term or is otherwise unable to continue, the Executive Board shall elect a Member of the Board as acting President or Vice-President for the remainder of the term of the original President or Vice-President.

If a Regional Member of the Executive Board resigns before the end of her term or is otherwise unable to continue as Member, the Executive Board shall meet to discuss procedures for the election of a replacement Regional Member.

Term in Office

The EB members' term in office will be minimum two years and maximum four years.¹
They can be re-elected to serve a second term.

¹ Members could be asked to vote the length of term on the candidate nomination form; current EB will approve the results before the incoming EB are elected.

Terms in office of EB members will be staggered to ensure institutional continuity (incoming EB will decide on process).

OWSD President in 2025 will exceptionally be selected only from LAC or Arab region. The EB member receiving the most votes from these two regions will be the acting president for one year (November 2025- November 2026).

The newly elected EB will appoint an Advisory Committee (AC) to review all current election procedures and support the OWSD Secretariat in reviewing and developing strategic decision making processes during this crucial transition period for the Organization.

The Advisory Committee (AC) will also review procedures for electing the President from November 2026 in light of fair regional representation.

Governance Framework for OWSD Executive Board

The Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD) has established itself as a leading platform advancing the role of women in science across low- and middle-income countries. To sustain and expand its impact, OWSD requires a governance structure that combines representation with functional leadership.

All OWSD Executive Board members shall be engaged in the following:

Visibility and representation:

- Seek out strategic opportunities through scientific and other professional networks to represent OWSD at networking and women in science and technology events.
- Liaise with regional bodies and partners such as TWAS, UNESCO and donor Regional Offices in coordination and collaboration with the Secretariat.
- Use diverse platforms to raise OWSD's visibility to their national and regional audiences, explaining how OWSD, through its various programmes, is improving and enhancing the role of science in the developing world.

Public relations and outreach:

- Engage stakeholders in OWSD and aim to grow its reach regionally and internationally by using existing and new contacts.
- Advocate for OWSD programmes and activities with different stakeholders and networks, including governmental bodies, international agencies, and others as appropriate.
- Initiate or support fundraising activities, working together with the Secretariat.

Regional coordination:

- Provide members with guidance and support for the organization of activities.
- Explain rules and procedures to new and perspective National Chapters.
- Expand the reach of OWSD regionally.

National Chapters (NCs) and Membership:

- Liaise with OWSD members willing to establish National Chapters (NCs) in their countries and the institutions interested in hosting them.
- Participate in approval procedures of NC applications for their region.
- Be acquainted with and ensure the NC terms of service are respected by liaising with National Chapter Chairs.
- Attend launches and events organised by NC if possible when invited at own expense.
- Support NCs to connect with each other and other local bodies.
- Provide members with guidance and support for organising activities.
- Liaise with NC Chairs to compile the Annual Report to the EB on NC activities in the region.
- Formalise and implement structured feedback loops with National Chapters.

Strategic vision and planning:

- Attend annual board meetings. NB: More than two consecutive absences may result in the appointment being re-assigned.
- Provide input during Annual Board meetings towards OWSD strategic plans, including the mission, purpose (objectives) and vision statements
- Provide feedback on programmes' development and implementation.

General Assembly:

- Identify potential location and sponsorship.
- Approve dates, venue and programme for the General Assembly, to be held every four years (when possible), in collaboration with the OWSD Secretariat.

Support the OWSD Secretariat and when possible:

- Attend official meetings and events, where possible at their own expenses.
- Act as reviewers of applicants to OWSD programmes in appropriate disciplines.
- Attend OWSD workshops on invitation as trainer or mentor.

President

Core Role: Global leadership, strategy, and representation.

Responsibilities:

- Provide overall vision and strategic alignment with OWSD's mission and global science policy.
- Represent OWSD in global forums.
- Lead on fundraising and partnership development.
- Ensure governance, financial sustainability, and ethical compliance.
- Mentor Vice Presidents and Regional Members to ensure leadership continuity.

In addition to these roles, the OWSD President shall:

- Keep in regular contact with the OWSD Coordinator. Through the Coordinator, the President receives updates on the work being done at the OWSD Secretariat and responds to enquiries or requests for support concerning OWSD programmes and the National Chapters.
- Sign off on selected official communications as requested by the OWSD Secretariat.

The OWSD President

- Is the default Chair of the OWSD executive board, which (when funds allow) meets in person once a year (with additional online meetings as required). She is therefore responsible for developing the board meeting Agenda with the OWSD Secretariat, reviewing all documentation and chairing sessions of the meeting.
- Is an (online) Observer of the TWAS Steering Committee, which meets in person and online once a year in Trieste, Italy.
- May participate (online) as Observer in the OWSD annual review with donors, which meets in person once a year in Trieste, Italy (at the same time as the TWAS Steering Committee).
- Shall be responsible for ensuring ethical integrity in her own actions and assist the Vice-Presidents and Regional Members in ensuring the same integrity applies to the actions of the Executive Board.

Regional Vice Presidents

Core Role: Regional leadership and coordination.

Responsibilities:

- Translate OWSD's global strategy into region-specific initiatives
- Strengthen national chapters and ensure sustainability.
- Oversee OWSD programmes in the region.
- Mobilise resources and partnerships with science councils, universities, and private sector.
- Represent OWSD in regional science-policy dialogues.
- Champion diversity and inclusivity.

Regional Members

Core Role: Broaden representation and ensure diverse perspectives in governance.

Responsibilities:

- Provide monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) inputs.
- Support communications and outreach.
- Ensure adherence to OWSD values and ethics.
- Contribute to mentoring and capacity-building.
- Lead or contribute to thematic portfolios (e.g. climate change, digital inclusion, entrepreneurship).

The incoming Executive Board members may assign and agree to take on specific functional portfolios, e.g. fundraising, partnerships, MEL, Inclusivity, Communications.

Eligibility Criteria

In order to become a candidate for the role of Executive Board Member, the applicant:

- Must be an OWSD Full Member.
- Must be currently living and working in a developing country in the region she seeks to represent. However, a 'diaspora' candidate from a developing country but currently living in a high-income country may be considered eligible to represent her home country and region by the Nominations

Committee. In this case she must demonstrate her continued engagement with the region as well as ability to represent and be in regular contact with National Chapters. Additionally, diaspora EB members should ideally demonstrate links to potential funders and decision makers in the country where they live.

- Must hold a PhD in Natural or Social Sciences.
 - Must have no conflicts of interest and be available to serve.
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Required skills of Vice Presidents and Regional Members

Academic/ scientific excellence

- Achieved excellence in her scientific field at least at regional level
- Achieved high level of recognition within her place of work

Knowledge of and commitment to OWSD

- Proactive, innovative, enthusiastic and committed to the vision of OWSD.
- Awareness of cultural, social and geographical differences and challenges in the region.
- Awareness of the challenges faced by women and girls in science at least at a regional level.

Leadership

- Demonstrated leadership skills in academic and non-academic environments with experience in leading teams.
- Experience as a committee or board member.
- Experience as a mentor for girls and women in science in her discipline and/ or country.

Outreach, interpersonal skills and public standing

- Experience of public speaking, fluency in spoken English.
 - Public relations and diplomacy skills.
 - Ability to connect with representatives from a variety of academic and research institutions/ organisations.
 - Ability to fundraise and connect with private sector, public institutions and local decision makers.
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2025 Election Procedures and Timeline

The Vice Presidents and Regional Members will be elected by OWSD Full Members prior to the OWSD General Assembly.

Application

In order to submit their application for the role of Vice President and/ or Regional Member candidates must:

- Complete an online application form in English.
- Provide a short CV in English (max. 3 pages).

- Record short video in English (max. 3 minutes) introducing themselves and their preparation for the specific role, outlining vision, motivation, and contribution.

Shortlisting and selection of candidates

The OWSD Secretariat will perform a first screening of all applications to ensure they correspond to the above eligibility criteria.

The Nominations Committee will then select and present to the Secretariat the candidates who demonstrate they have the required experience and skills to fulfill the described roles and duties. If a candidate has put forward her candidacy for both roles of Vice President or Regional Member, the Nominations Committee can decide if they deem a candidate fit for only one of the two roles.

Publications and voting for candidates

The shortlist of candidates (with CVs and videos) will be posted on OWSD website for members to consult.

OWSD full members will have one week to vote for the Vice President and Regional Member representing their region.

Results

The highest voted candidate for the role of Vice President for the region will be elected Vice President. The highest voted candidate for the role of Regional Member for the region will be elected Regional Member.

If the most voted candidates decide to renounce their appointment, the second most voted candidates become automatically Vice President and Regional Member.

OWSD President in 2025 will exceptionally be selected only from the LAC or Arab regions. The EB member receiving the most votes from these two regions will (as well as EB member for the region) be the acting president for one year (November 2025- November 2026).

Final results will be announced at OWSD's 7th General Assembly in Colombia and published on OWSD website.

Timeline

- **15 Sep** – Members are sent details of upcoming elections
 - **22 Sept:** Call published on website
 - **22 Sept – 7 Oct:** Application submission
 - **8 - 15 Oct:** OWSD Screening and Nominations Committee shortlisting
 - **16 Oct:** Publication of shortlisted candidates
 - **16–23 Oct:** Voting for Vice Presidents and Regional Members
 - **24 Oct:** Most voted candidates are informed and accept roles by 27th Oct
 - **3 Nov:** Presentation of new Executive Board
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