

## ADVICE FOR SETTING UP AND RUNNING A NATIONAL CHAPTER

Before reading this document, please ensure that you consult the National Chapter guidelines, which are attached to the application form at [www.owsd.net/national-chapters](http://www.owsd.net/national-chapters).

Some of the National Chapter guidelines might seem difficult to put into practice when you are trying to start a National Chapter from scratch. For this reason, OWSD has put together this advice document to help individuals and groups to start up a National Chapter in their region.

### First Steps

#### 1. **Ensuring a National Chapter is not already in progress in your country**

When you are first considering establishing a National Chapter, it is important to contact [owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net) to ensure that there is not already a group or individual working towards establishing a National Chapter in your country. If progress has already been made towards a National Chapter in your country, the OWSD Secretariat will put you in touch with the establishing group so that you can take part. If not, the OWSD Secretariat will give you tailored advice towards establishing the chapter. The OWSD Secretariat can also contact the other OWSD members in your country to request their support in establishing the chapter: in this way, you can form a diverse group from different regions and different institutions to represent the whole country.

#### 2. **Membership**

One of the first stipulations for establishing a National Chapter is that there must be 20 OWSD members in or from that country. When you contact [owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net) to inform the OWSD Secretariat of your intention to establish a National Chapter, they will provide you with the number of OWSD members in and from your country. If the number is less than 20, you should firstly work on recruiting new members locally. The OWSD Secretariat can help by sending an email to the existing members to request their help in recruiting more members.

When an OWSD member registers online at [www.owsd.net/membership/membership](http://www.owsd.net/membership/membership), they are requested to enter both their **country of nationality** and also their **country of residence**. For many members, this is the same place; however, for others, this might mean that they are part of two different National Chapters.

This also means that the membership of the National Chapter will be composed of:

- OWSD members from your country, who still live in your country;
- OWSD members from a different country, who now live in your country;
- OWSD members from your country, who now live in a different country.

All members of the National Chapter must be registered at [www.owsd.net/membership/membership](http://www.owsd.net/membership/membership). The only exception to this is if the National Chapter wishes to have “junior” or “student” participants, who do not already have a degree. If National Chapter wishes to establish programmes for young people, please firstly inform [owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net) and the OWSD Secretariat can give advice on how to move forward.

### Finances

#### 3. **How can OWSD National Chapters obtain funds for activities?**

Unfortunately, OWSD does not have regular funding dedicated to National Chapters, and the guidelines state that the National Chapter must not charge membership fees to its members. So how can National Chapters fund their activities? Here are a few suggestions inspired by our current National Chapters:

- While National Chapters cannot charge membership fees, they can request voluntary or optional contributions from members which are linked to specific activities. For example, a workshop might have a suggested contribution cost, aimed at covering the price of catering and a professional trainer. Alternatively, the National Chapter executive committee might send an e-mail request to members for contributions towards a prize for high-school students, or similar.

- National Chapters are encouraged to host fundraising events of all kinds. Different countries will have different conventions when it comes to fundraising, but get creative!
- National Chapters can also charge mandatory tickets for events from non-members: for examples, if you hold a conference, you can charge higher rates for non-members. Remember to request the latest list of members in and from your country from the OWSD Secretariat, at [owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net).
- Finally, National Chapters can apply for local and international funding from other organizations. Some (but not all) National Chapters are supported by their host institution, by a private company, by the National Academy or by another women in science initiative. This funding could be ad-hoc, linked to a specific activity or series of activities, or it could be long-term. Some host institutions or other organizations with similar aims can also provide in-kind costs such as administrative support, free venue hire, or free office space.

#### 4. **How can National Chapters manage their funds?**

It is very important that the National Chapter does not have its own bank account. This is because OWSD does not have the resources to be responsible for the ethical and legal management of National Chapter funds.

Therefore, the best way to manage National Chapter funds is within the bank account of the hosting institution of the National Chapter. The hosting institution should be able to ensure that the funds are managed responsibly, and according to the local rules and regulations.

#### 5. **How do you find a Host Institution?**

The Host Institution of the National Chapter does not necessarily need to physically host the National Chapter, though they should be prepared to be listed as the chapter's postal address.

In addition, a host institution should *ideally*:

- Host and manage the funds of the National Chapter (in an ethical, legal, and responsible manner);
- Provide event space cost-free where available;
- Provide printing and photocopying;
- Provide support regarding any local legal or bureaucratic regulations, where possible.

The host institution might also:

- Provide some staff support (e.g. part of an administrator's time);
- Provide office space;
- Provide equipment such as computers;
- Publicize the National Chapter and its events on public and internal platforms;
- Provide other services in-kind (depending on what is available to the host), such as transportation, design services, training, etc.

Therefore when choosing a host institution, it is important to understand in advance which of these services they will be able to fulfil. You should also try to understand as well as you can what the bureaucratic procedures might be at different possible hosts: at least, it is important to find out if the internal regulations will allow you to collect and spend money in the way that you have planned.

Different countries will offer different possibilities, but some of our existing National Chapters are hosted by:

- The National Academy of Sciences
- A University
- A public research institute
- A private research institute
- An NGO
- A Government Ministry
- A Charity
- A Women's Organization

It is often a good idea to approach and compare a few different hosts to be sure that you find the best fit. You can try to make the most of the networks and contacts of the committee and members to establish links with host institutes; for example, some National Chapters are hosted at the workplace of a committee member.

### The Executive Committee

#### 6. *Who should be on the National Chapter Executive Committee?*

National Chapter Executive Committees should be elected for up to two terms (or two periods) of 4 years maximum. Therefore, the longest time that one person can serve on the Executive Committee of a National Chapter is 8 years (even if they change position).

While in the first instance, the committee may be made up of the individuals who established the chapter, an election should be planned in no less than four years after the establishment date.

#### 7. *How should the Executive Committee be elected?*

An election should take place at least once every four years for every position on the committee. The committee must be made up only of OWSD members. Each person can only be re-elected once. The details of how to nominate a candidate for elections can be decided by each chapter, but we recommend that members should be allowed to self-nominate, and that all nominations should be seconded by another member. All members of the National Chapter (see point 2) should be made aware of the opportunity to run for election.

The voting must be open to all members of the National Chapter. In practice, this means that at the very least, all members of the National Chapter must be aware of the election, and be invited to vote. In the past, voting has usually been in person, but where possible OWSD would prefer if voting is accessible also to members who are living in a different country or even a different city. For example, two members who are not standing for election could volunteer to 'count' votes coming in by e-mail.

Please note that OWSD plans to invest in a modern digital platform for National Chapter elections in the near future, which will easily allow members to vote anonymously in elections from afar. Therefore, the procedural advice above is temporary.

#### 8. *Any other doubts?*

The OWSD Secretary is always available to answer any questions relating to the establishment of a new National Chapter, and also for the continuation of the existing chapters. It is useful to keep us updated so that we can link you to any opportunities and contacts that we know of in your country, and also so that we can keep all of our records up to date. Please do not hesitate to let us know if you are experiencing any challenges, because if we can find a solution together this might also be useful for another chapter. You can email [owsd@owsd.net](mailto:owsd@owsd.net) with any queries.