



Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (OWSD)

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The OWSD Constitution

Article 1: Establishment

1.1 The Organization for Women in Science for the Developing World (hereinafter referred to as OWSD) is an international organization hosted by The World Academy of Sciences in Trieste, Italy.

1.2 This Constitution was revised and approved by the OWSD executive board in February 2017.

Article 2: Objectives

OWSD shall pursue the following objectives:

- a. Increase the participation of women in developing countries in scientific and technological research, teaching and leadership;
- b. Promote the recognition of the scientific and technological achievements of women scientists and technologists in developing countries;
- c. Promote collaboration and communication among women scientists and technologists in developing countries and with the international scientific community as a whole;
- d. Increase access of women in developing countries to the socio-economic benefits of science and technology;
- e. Promote the participation of women scientists and technologists in the sustainable and economic development of their country; and
- f. Increase understanding of the role of science and technology in supporting women's development activities.

Article 3: Activities

In pursuing its objectives the Organization may, inter alia, undertake the following activities:

- a. Improve access to educational, training and professional development opportunities for women scientists and technologists in developing countries;
- b. Recognize scientific excellence and other achievements of women scientists and technologists in developing countries;

- c. Enhance opportunities and develop strategies for the participation of women in the development and utilization of new technologies;
- d. Develop strategies for the participation and leadership of women in national and international science and innovation systems;
- e. Make science more responsive to the needs of society, especially those of women and of women's development activities;
- f. Promote the involvement of women in harnessing science and technology for sustainable development; and
- g. Undertake such projects and actions as it deems appropriate for achieving its objectives.

Article 4: Membership

4.1 Eligible for Membership of OWSD are:

a. **Full Members:**

- **Women** scientists from [developing countries](#) who have completed a **master's degree or higher** in the natural sciences (including engineering, technology and innovation) or social sciences and who are committed to the objectives of OWSD.
- This is the only category with voting rights.

b. **Affiliate Members:**

- **Women** scientists from [developing countries](#) who have completed a **bachelor's degree (or equivalent)** in the natural sciences (including engineering, technology and innovation) or social sciences and who are committed to the objectives of OWSD.
- Affiliate members can advance to become Full Members upon completion of a master's degree (or equivalent) and, consequentially, will receive voting rights.

c. **Friends of OWSD:**

- **Women and men** from developed and developing countries across all disciplines (including science, social science, arts and humanities) who are committed to promoting the objectives of OWSD and who are not eligible for the Affiliate or Full membership categories.
- Friends of OWSD are encouraged to engage with OWSD and its members through other support activities (mentoring, fundraising, networking, promoting). They can maintain their online profile on www.owsd.net for visibility and communication purposes.

4.2 Individuals who wish to become Members shall apply online through the OWSD website and their application will be approved online by OWSD Headquarters. Applications made to national chapters must still go through the OWSD website: www.owsd.net

4.3 OWSD has the right to make specific events for Full/Affiliate members only and/or 'by invitation only'.

4.4 OWSD Ambassadors

An OWSD Ambassador is a woman or man (not necessarily an OWSD Member) who has scientific influence and credibility in both the developed and the developing world.

S/he undertakes to use her/his influence in the scientific circles in which s/he works or in which s/he has influence to further the aims of OWSD listed in Art.2.

Specific activities of OWSD Ambassadors are to:

- Invite OWSD fellows or members to attend conferences or workshops in which the Ambassador is involved;
- Nominate OWSD fellows or members for prizes or awards;
- Fundraise for OWSD
- Increase OWSD visibility at an international level

Article 5: General Assembly

5.1 The General Assembly is a meeting of members convened by the Executive Board.

5.2 The General Assembly shall:

Elect the President and the Vice-Presidents of OWSD, and the Regional Members of the Executive Board out of the shortlist of candidates which were selected by all Full Members through an online voting system.

5.3 All Members shall be invited to attend the General Assembly and have the right to participate in its discussions. Only Full Members have the right to vote.

5.4 At the General Assembly the executive board and OWSD headquarters shall inform members of activities undertaken since the previous General Assembly and present a strategic plan for the next four years. Members will have an opportunity to discuss and provide feedback to the Executive Board and be informed of the general strategies and policies of the Organization. If Members do not agree with the decisions taken they should contact their regional Vice-Presidents, who can raise their concerns with the Executive Board.

5.5 The General Assembly shall meet at regular intervals to be determined by the Executive Board (usually 4 years). All Members shall be notified at least six months (preferably twelve) in advance of a planned meeting of the General Assembly and shall receive a draft programme at least four weeks before the meeting.

Article 6: The Officers of the Organization

6.1 At least six months in advance of the General Assembly, any Member can submit names of **Full** Members to the Nominating Committee (appointed by the Executive Board) for election to the Board. Self-nominations will not be considered.

At least three months before the General Assembly, all Full Members will be invited to vote for the eligible members selected by the Nominations Committee, from which a shortlist will be published on the OWSD website at least one month before the General Assembly. At the General Assembly, Full Members who are present shall elect from the shortlist all members of the Executive Board:

President (from any region)

4 Vice-Presidents (from each of the 4 OWSD regions)

4 Regional Members (from each of the 4 OWSD regions)

6.2 The term of office of the President, the Vice-Presidents and the Regional Members of the Executive Board shall begin at the closure of the meeting of the General Assembly in which they are elected and shall end at the closure of the next meeting of the General Assembly. They may be re-elected onto the Board in any capacity only once (whether consecutively or not).

6.3 The President shall preside over the meetings of the General Assembly and the Executive Board. If the President is unable to attend a meeting, she shall designate a Vice-President to take her place.

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

6.5 If a Regional Member of the Executive Board resigns before the end of her or his term or is otherwise unable to continue as Regional Member, the Executive Board shall leave the position open until the next elections.

6.6 The most recent former President shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board for one term (which is the period between two consecutive General Assemblies). In addition, the coordinator of the OWSD Headquarters shall be an *ex officio* member of the Board. *Ex officio* members do not have the right to vote for decisions which are discussed by the Executive Board.

6.7. The President shall liaise with OWSD Headquarters in handling all official correspondence. If she is unable to do this she will delegate this responsibility to one of the Vice-Presidents.

6.8 The Executive Board shall be responsible for:

- a. Setting the time and venue for the meetings of the General Assembly;
- b. Approving the General Assembly programme drawn up by OWSD Headquarters in consultation with the OWSD President;
- c. Developing a strategic plan drawn up by the President in consultation with a specially formed Executive Board sub-committee;
- f. Approving programmes and activities, as well as their budgets; and
- g. Ensuring that actual spending is in accordance with these budgets.

6.9 The Executive Board may only take formal decisions if at least six members are present (including online) at a meeting. The Executive Board shall decide by a majority vote. In case of a tie, the vote of the President shall decide. At meetings a vote shall be taken by hand raising unless one member requests a secret ballot. Decisions relating to a specific person or persons shall always be taken by a secret ballot.

6.10 In the interval between meetings a vote may be taken by email provided that at least six members participate in the vote. A non-reply is considered an abstention and not a vote. If a vote by email relates to a specific person or persons, the individual votes of members shall be kept confidential.

Article 7: OWSD Headquarters

The staff of OWSD Headquarters shall be appointed with the approval of the TWAS executive director.

Article 8: Finances

8.1 The funds of OWSD shall be derived from Membership fees, grants, subsidies, bequests, prizes, revenue from investments and from such other sources as are accepted by the Executive Board.

8.2 The Executive Board shall set the annual fees to be paid by Full Members.

8.3 OWSD Headquarters shall prepare each year an audited account of all incomes and expenditures of OWSD.

Article 9: Amendments

9.1 The Executive Board can make amendments to the Statutes and these must be presented to the General Assembly.

9.2 The Executive Board may amend the Rules of Procedures of the Organization and these must be presented to the General Assembly.

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