

## **Statutes of the International Environment Guardianship (IEG)**

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Nat to do:

- Check with Hanieh about adding the Technical Advisory Panel
- Check with Hanieh

## **Article 1: Name, Purpose, and Duration**

### **Name:**

The organization shall be called the International Environmental Guardianship (IEG).

### **Purpose:**

The IEG's mission is to promote ethical, equitable, and sustainable stewardship of nature through robust global, regional, and participatory governance frameworks.

IEG is a member-based organisation of Indigenous Peoples (IPs), Local Communities (LCs), and Afro-Descendant peoples (ADs) committed to promoting the conditions for trust and elevating communities and nature-based rights and approaches in present-day nature markets for the benefit of future generations and nature itself.

### **Key activities include:**

- Leading high-trust, human rights, and nature right-based pathways for community representation and participation in nature markets.
- Advocating for transparent time accounting in nature markets.
- Showcasing community market leadership by members.
- Stewarding member data and intellectual property related to nature markets.
- Establishing and maintaining decentralized and inclusive member governance systems.
- Developing and monitoring standards valuation for nature markets.
- Supporting capacity-building and empowerment of member organizations.

### **Duration:**

The IEG is established for an unlimited duration.

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## **Article 2: Legal Form and Headquarters**

### **Legal Form:**

The IEG is a non-profit international association registered under [applicable jurisdiction and legal framework, e.g., Swiss Verein or Belgian INPA law].

### **Headquarters:**

The headquarters of the IEG shall be located in [City, Country], with the flexibility to establish regional offices as necessary to advance its mission.

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## **Article 3: Governance Structure**

The governance structure of the IEG consists of the following bodies:

1. Founding Assembly
2. General Assembly

3. Global Board of Trustees
  4. General Secretariat
  5. Membership Trusted Conduct Ombudsperson
  6. Council
  7. IEG Data Trust
  8. Regional Hubs
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#### **Article 4: Founding Assembly**

##### **Composition:**

- Includes a Chair and six Vice-Chairs representing the seven socio-cultural regions.
- Members of the Founding Assembly are democratically elected from individuals listed in Annex I for a 7-year term, renewable upon re-nomination and approval.

##### **Powers:**

- Approving the IEG's statutes and governance principles.
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- Overseeing the development of member policies.
- Overseeing membership onboarding.
- Approving budgets, strategic plans, and policies during the initial phases. Drafting, approving, and monitoring standards for member participation in nature markets.
- Overseeing IEG data, and member data ownership and access rights.
- Promoting safe and human rights-based data sharing amongst members.
- Electing the initial Global Board of Trustees.

##### **Meetings:**

- The members of the Founding Assembly convenes at least twice a year. Decisions require a quorum of 50% plus one and are passed by a simple majority. In case of non-consensus, the Chairperson will have a deciding vote.
- Founding Members with active pilot projects in nature markets must abstain from the first vote to approve standards for nature markets.

##### **Removal of a member:**

- A member may be removed before the ending of his/her 7-year term under the following conditions:
- Grounds for removal: breaching the ethical and commitment framework.
- Decision process: Requires the agreement of five out of seven members during the annual performance review meeting.

In the event of removal:

- a. Priority is given to candidates from the same socio-cultural region who have been selected from the Council or Global Board of Trustees.
- b. If no suitable candidate exists, the Secretariat will issue a call for nominations from IEG member organizations within the same region.

The Founding Members' Body will elect a new member through a consensus-driven process.

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## **Article 5: General Assembly**

### **Composition:**

- The General Assembly is one of the internal decision-making bodies of the IEG, composed exclusively of representatives from member organizations.

### **Powers:**

- Approving the election of the members of the Global Board of Trustees.
- Approving the organization's five-year strategic plans.
- Approving the IEG's annual financial statements and reports.
- Ratifying the nominations of Regional Coordinators submitted by the Regional Hubs.
- Reviewing and addressing regional reports and recommendations submitted by Regional Hubs.

### **Meetings:**

The General Assembly convenes twice annually, either physically or virtually. Quorum and final decisions are achieved with the participation of at least 50% plus one of the members.

## **Article 6: Global Board of Trustees**

### **Composition:**

- Members shall be elected by the IEG Founding Assembly (and subsequently by the General Assembly) with nominations informed by Regional Hubs and will serve a three-year term, renewable upon re-nomination and approval.
  - Representation is drawn from the seven socio-cultural regions and gender balance to ensure diversity.

### **Powers:**

- Setting the global strategic direction of the IEG.

- Approving major initiatives, including the Vision 2030 Strategy and every 5 years Vision Strategies
- Ratifying decisions from the General Assembly.
- Approving the major expenditures.
- Appointing Data Governance Board

#### **Meetings:**

- The Board meets quarterly virtually, with additional meetings as required.
- Monitoring the implementation of rights-based nature market standards and initiatives alongside the Founding Assembly.

#### **Removal:**

- A member may be removed on grounds of breaching the ethical and commitment framework via:
- A petition by at least 5 member organizations in the same region; and
- A written request by at least three Founding Members submitted to the Secretariat.

### **Article 7: General Secretariat**

#### **Composition:**

- The Secretary-General leads the General Secretariat, categorized as Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, and/or Afro Descendants, appointed by the founding members, and ratified by the chair.

#### **Responsibilities:**

- Managing day-to-day operations, including member communication, record-keeping, and execution of decisions by other bodies.
- Executing decisions from the General Assembly and Global Board of Trustees.
- Developing membership frameworks, onboarding, and outboarding organizational members.
- Preparing financial reports and coordinating with auditors.

#### **Rechoosing the General Secretariat**

The General Secretariat may be removed under the following conditions:

- Grounds for removal: breaching the ethical and commitment framework.
- Decision process: Requires the agreement of five out of eight Founding Members during the annual performance review meeting.

In the event of removal:

- a. Priority is given to candidates nominated by the Founding Members.
- b. If no suitable candidate exists, in the absence of the existing Secretariat, the Council will issue a call for nominations from IEG member organizations.

The Founding Members' Body will elect the new General Secretariat through a consensus-driven process.

## **Article 8: Office of the Membership Conduct Ombudsperson**

### **Composition:**

- The Ombudsperson is an independent authority tasked with dispute resolution and ensuring adherence to the IEG's Member Code of Conduct.
- The Ombudsperson is appointed by the Founding Assembly for a 3-year term on the recommendation of the Global Board of Trustees.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Investigating complaints related to governance and decision-making processes.
- Providing recommendations to the Founding Members' Body, Council, or General Assembly.
- Mediating disputes within the IEG.
- The Ombudsperson is appointed by the General Assembly for a renewable term of three years.

## **Article 9: Council**

### **Composition:**

- During the first two years, members are appointed by the Founding Assembly.
- Subsequent Council members are nominated and elected as follows:
  - Each socio-cultural region nominates candidates based on the founding member's TOR.
  - Nominations are submitted to the General Assembly via the Secretariat.
  - Elections prioritize consensus; in its absence, a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly applies.

Council members serve a 3-year term, renewable upon re-election.

**Chair of the Council:**

- Elected by Council members through consensus or majority vote.
- Serves a 3-year term, eligible for re-election.

**Powers:**

- Ensuring adherence to IEG's statutes and policies.
- Convening General and Extraordinary Assemblies.
- Overseeing organizational policies and procedures.
- Proposing amendments to statutes for the Founding Members.
- Assigning, and publicizing the IEG approval label for rights-based nature market projects.

**Meetings:**

- The Council meets at least twice a year, physically or virtually.
- Decisions are made by consensus; in its absence, a majority vote applies, with the Chair casting the deciding vote in case of a tie.

**Removal:**

- A member of the Council may be removed via:
  - A petition by member organizations and
  - A written request by at least three Founding Members submitted to the Secretariat.
- The Secretariat engages the Ombudsperson for resolution; if unresolved within one month, a call for nominations is issued for a replacement from the same region.

**Article 10: IEG Data Trust****Legal Form:**

· The IEG Data Trust shall be established as an independent legal entity under the IEG's jurisdiction to ensure transparency, accountability, and a human rights-based approach to data governance.

**Purpose:**

- Oversee the application of CARE principles on the governance, security, and management of data and intellectual property related to IEG's activities.
- Ensure equitable access to digital systems and fair and equitable benefit-sharing for member organizations.

- Facilitate innovation and collaboration through responsible data management under TRUST principles and FAIR principles or equivalent regional principles.

### **Governance:**

- Managed by a Data Governance Board appointed by the Global Board of Trustees for 3 years, with representation from member organizations considered from all seven socio-cultural regions.
- Annual reports on operations and compliance shall be presented to the General Assembly.

### **Responsibilities:**

- Develop and enforce policies for data collection, access, and security.
- Support member organizations with technical assistance and biocultural capacity-building for digital engagement.
- Maintain compliance with data protection laws, rights of nature, human rights, and ethical standards, and within IEG and Regional Hubs.

### **Removal of a Member:**

- Grounds for Removal: A member of the Data Trust may be removed if found in breach of the ethical and commitment framework.
- Decision Process: Removal requires the agreement of at least five out of eight Founding Members during the annual performance review meeting.

### **Penalty for Intellectual Property Violations:**

- If an assessment investigation by Ombudsperson determines that a Data Trust member has violated the data ownership rights of an individual, community, or group, they shall be subject to a penalty equivalent to the material and moral damages resulting from the infringement.
- The amount of the penalty shall be determined by the designated Ombudsperson, and the violating party shall be obligated to compensate for the damages accordingly.

## **Article 12: Regional Hubs**

### **Composition:**

- Regional Hubs represent the seven socio-cultural regions and include members from each region's member organizations.
- Each Regional Hub is coordinated by a Regional Coordinator who acts as the primary liaison between the region and the global governance structures of the IEG.



**Regional Coordinator:**

- Regional Coordinators, nominated by the member organizations at Regional Hubs and approved by the General Assembly, also participate to represent the perspectives and priorities of their respective regions.
- The nomination is submitted to the General Assembly's approval.

**Term:**

- Regional Coordinators serve a 3-year term, renewable upon re-nomination and approval.

**Responsibilities:**

- Facilitating communication and coordination among member organizations within the region.
- Representing regional interests and concerns at the global governance level, including the General Assembly and the Global Board of Trustees.
- Ensuring regional contributions to the IEG's strategic initiatives, including the Vision 2030 strategy, all 5 years of Vision Strategies, and nature market standards.
- Supporting capacity-building efforts and promoting inclusive participation from regional members.
- Assisting in the identification and onboarding of new member organizations within the region.
- Regional Coordinators present two interim regional reports during General Assembly meetings, facilitating the integration of regional priorities into global decision-making.

**Powers of Regional Hubs:**

- Facilitating regional coordination and ensuring regional perspectives are integrated into global decision-making processes.
- Supporting the implementation of IEG's policies, programs, and initiatives at the regional level.
- Acting as conduits for communication and reporting between regional members and the General Secretariat.
- Organizing regional meetings and consultations to address specific regional issues or projects.

**Meetings:**

- Regional Hubs hold at least one annual meeting with its regional member organization's focal person, either virtually or physically, to discuss regional priorities and submit reports to the General Assembly.

**Reporting:**

- Regional Coordinators submit regular reports to the General Secretariat and the Global Board of Trustees, summarizing regional activities, challenges, and progress toward strategic objectives.

**Article 13: Membership****Membership Categories:**

- Membership is exclusively organizational and includes NGOs, Indigenous Peoples, Local Communities, Afro-Descendant organizations, academic and science-based institutions, and other entities aligned with the IEG's mission.

**Rights of Members:**

- Voting rights as the members of the General Assembly.
- Participation in decision-making processes.

**Admission and Termination:**

- Membership applications that align with the IEG Membership Criteria are reviewed and approved by the General Secretariat in consultation with the Global Board of Trustees.
- Termination of membership may occur due to non-compliance with the IEG's ethical framework or failure to meet membership obligations via:
  - A petition by at least 5 member organizations in the same region; and
  - A written request by at least three Founding Members submitted to the Secretariat.

**Article 14: Financial Oversight and Accountability****Financial Resources:**

The IEG's resources include:

- Grants, donations, and philanthropic contributions.

- Membership fees from organizational members.
- Revenue from initiatives such as the Vision 2030 strategy.

**Transparency:**

- Annual financial statements are prepared by the General Secretariat, independently audited, and presented to the General Assembly for approval.

**Expenditure Authorization:**

- Major expenditures require prior approval from the Global Board of Trustees.

**Article 15: Amendments to the Statutes**

**Process:**

- Any member of the Founding Members may propose amendments.
- Proposals must be circulated to all members 30 days prior to the vote.

**Approval:**

- Amendments require a two-thirds majority vote of the founding members.
- It must be specified whether the amendment proposal will be discussed and decided upon in the Founding Assembly or, if a decision is needed sooner, through a virtual timely assembly.
- A virtual timely assembly may take place if at least 80% of the Founding Members approve participation or participate in the process.

**Article 16: Dissolution**

**Conditions:**

- Dissolution requires a two-thirds majority vote of the General Assembly.

**Asset Distribution:**

- The remaining assets shall be transferred to non-profit organizations with similar objectives by the vote of two-thirds of the Founding Assembly.

## **Article 17: Entry into Force**

### **Effective Date:**

- This statute shall enter into force immediately upon approval by the Founding Assembly.

### **Ratification:**

- The statutes shall be signed by the Chairperson of the Founding Assembly and the Secretary-General to formalize their adoption.