

## Factsheet

### **International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) – World Chambers Federation (WCF) Membership options for chambers of commerce**

#### **About ICC and WCF**

The International Chamber of Commerce (ICC) is the world business organization, representing enterprises from all sectors in every part of the world. The fundamental mission of ICC is to promote trade and investment across frontiers and help business corporations meet the challenge and opportunities of globalization.

The World Chambers Federation (WCF) was established by ICC in 1950 to be the advocate of its chamber of commerce members worldwide. WCF is a non-political, non-governmental body representing the interests of all local, national, regional, bilateral and transnational chambers of commerce and industry.

#### **Who can become a member**

- All local chambers of commerce, covering a territory of any size, from a city to a whole country;
- Bilateral chambers of commerce, dealing with companies in one country who have a particular interest in doing business with another country;
- National associations of chambers. However, in this case, the membership will not extend to the chambers forming part of the association.

#### **How to join**

There are two possible ways of becoming a member of ICC-WCF:

- Through affiliation with an ICC national committee or group;
- By direct membership with WCF when a national committee/group has not yet been established in your country/territory.

Chambers of commerce have two options when applying for direct membership of ICC-WCF:

1. **WCF membership** (WCF services only);
2. **ICC WCF membership** (which incorporates WCF membership).

**International Chamber of Commerce**  
*The world business organization*

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### **How to apply for direct membership**

Fill out and return the application form indicating WCF membership or ICC WCF membership.

Please visit <http://www.iccwbo.org/wcf/id2847/index.html> to download the application form.

### **Note**

Membership is calculated from the month of the year joined until the end of that current year. The renewal is processed in January of each year.

Depending upon local circumstances, chambers may change their membership category upon membership renewal. A change of membership category could arise due to economic or social conditions within the country, or perhaps to the chamber's own priorities and access to different ICC WCF portfolios.

At any time, please consult with WCF concerning any difficulties your chamber may have.

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## **Membership Options**

### **1. WCF membership**

#### **WCF objectives**

- to encourage cooperation between chambers around the world;
- to provide a forum where leaders of chambers can communicate with each other and collaborate on matters of mutual interest, from identifying opportunities to problem solving;
- to promote the concept of chambers as essential intermediaries between business and government, and between business and the general public;
- to facilitate the role of chambers as local business support agencies;
- to promote collaboration between chambers so as to extend the range and improve the effectiveness of the services that chambers provide;
- to ensure the administration of the international customs guarantee chains set up for the operation of the **ATA Carnet System** functioning under the ATA Convention and/or the Istanbul Convention of the World Customs Organization (WCO);
- to ensure the administration of the CPD/China Taiwan Carnet System operating according to the ATA Carnet rules, on a bilateral basis, between Chinese-Taipei and a certain number of countries throughout the world including the European Union Member States, Australia, Canada, Israel, Malaysia, New Zealand, Norway, South Africa, Switzerland and the United States.
- to assist upon request, the establishment of chambers or the strengthening of existing chambers, especially in developing countries and emerging economies;
- to encourage chambers and their members to cooperate in activities of ICC.



## Services

WCF organizes the World Chambers Congress every two years in a different region of the world. The Congress is the only international forum for chamber leaders and executives worldwide to share best-practice experience, develop networks and learn about new areas of innovation from other chambers. The 7th World Chambers Congress, held in June 2011, in Mexico City drew over 1,000 delegates from 105 countries. One of the highlights of the Congress is the World Chambers Competition, the only global awards programme to recognize the most innovative projects undertaken by chambers of commerce and industry from around the world. The Competition has produced an array of case studies demonstrating entrepreneurial diversity and inspiring other chambers. In 2011, the competition has received entries from 72 chambers from 41 countries.

For more information of the 7th WCC, please visit:

<http://www.iccwbo.org/Congress/2011/Home/>

More than ever, chambers of commerce must work closely together to help their members take advantage of new market opportunities worldwide. WCF's World Chambers Network, Business Opportunity Service provides chambers with the opportunity to place their members' business services online. Via the World Chambers Network, WCF maintains a complete listing of chambers around the world, allowing your chamber to better network with your colleagues worldwide.

For more information about WCN, visit: [www.worldchambers.com](http://www.worldchambers.com)

Through such initiatives and programmes, WCF not only helps individual chambers become more productive, but also strengthens links between them.

In addition to existing services, WCF is readily investigating other services designed to support chambers in their daily activities. These include export documentation, electronic commerce and connectivity enhancement. To stimulate and foster entrepreneurial development, WCF also develops assistance and training programmes that enable chambers to enhance their management and service capabilities.

Our newest work programmes include designing Certificates of Origin and SMEs. As a member, your chamber can participate in WCF work programmes.



### Information Sources

- WCF publishes a regular e-newsletter presenting a series of articles to update members on upcoming events, ICC policy statements, new publications and chamber news from around the world.
- WCF, working with organizations like the International Trade Centre, has produced a series of publications that guide chambers in the development of their daily activities. Titles include:
  - *The Nonprofit Legal Landscape;*
  - *Chambers of Commerce: Services to SMEs;*
  - *Driving Strategic Planning, A Nonprofit Executive's Guide;*
  - *Building the Capacity of Business Membership Organizations: Guiding Principles for Project Managers;*
  - *Supporting the Decision to Join: What Association Boards Should Know and Do About Membership and Affiliation ;*
  - *Fundraising Fitness, A BoardSource Toolkit;*
  - *The Real Value of Joining a Local Chamber of Commerce ;*
  - *The Role of Chambers of Commerce in Trade Facilitation;*

A full range of other titles available to chambers is available from WCF.

Please see full list of chamber guides at <http://www.iccwbo.org/wcf/id3875/index.html>

### For further information

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## **2. ICC WCF membership**

ICC promotes an open international trade and investment system and the market economy. Its conviction that trade is a powerful force for peace and prosperity dates from the organization's origins in 1919. The small group of far-sighted business leaders who founded ICC called themselves "the merchants of peace".

Today it groups thousands of member companies and associations from over 120 countries. National committees in the world's major capitals coordinate with their membership to address the concerns of the business community and to convey to their governments the business views formulated by ICC.

### **Services**

ICC is the world leader in setting voluntary rules, standards and codes for the conduct of international trade that are accepted by all business sectors and observed in thousands of transactions every day. As they are at the forefront of business self-regulation, ICC gives priority to the issues that most urgently concern its members. Through ICC's many working bodies, members shape ICC's policy and elaborate its rules. ICC WCF membership, enables your chamber to take part in the work of ICC commissions and special working groups, composed of a total of more than 500 business experts who regularly meet to scrutinize proposed international and government initiatives affecting their subject areas.

Member chambers and business associations are instrumental in the development of such key international trading instruments as Incoterms, the Uniform Customs and Practice for Documentary Credit (UCP 600) and GUIDEC (a set of guidelines for ensuring trustworthy digital transactions over the Internet).

ICC publications gives chamber members a 20% discount on most of its titles. This allows chamber members to retail ICC publications locally at the recommended retail price, reinforcing the chamber's important work in trade development by promoting recognized international standards.

The discount may vary from country to country, where an ICC national committee exists.

ICC's privileged links with major international organizations, including the UN and its specialized agencies, and the World Trade Organization, allow the organization to effectively represent the interests of its members in international fora. ICC members prepare business positions for submission to international organizations and also, through ICC's global network of national committees, to governments.

ICC membership opens doors and gives members influence both at national and international level.



ICC's programme of conferences and seminars is an essential channel for passing on the world business organization's expertise to a wider audience. ICC events are held in all parts of the world and experts travel the world to stage seminars and courses on subjects in which the organization has unique expertise. These include Incoterms, the Uniform Customs and Practice for Documentary Credits and ICC Arbitration.

The ICC Institute of World Business Law runs courses and seminars for legal practitioners and company executives on subjects ranging from investment protection and negotiation of contracts to international arbitration and audiovisual law.

ICC offers members many of the advantages of belonging to a prestigious club and the chance to forge business relationships at the highest level at exclusive ICC events. Membership allows your chamber to participate in these events at a reduced "members" fee.

The ICC International Court of Arbitration ("the Court") is the world's foremost institution in the resolution of international business disputes. While most arbitration institutions are regional or national in scope, the ICC Court is truly international. Composed of members from some 60 countries and every continent, the ICC Court is the world's most widely representative dispute resolution institution.

Established in 1923 as the arbitration body of ICC, the International Court of Arbitration has pioneered international commercial arbitration as it is known today. The Court took the lead in securing the worldwide acceptance of arbitration as the most effective way of resolving international commercial disputes. Since its creation, the Court has administered over 16,000 international arbitration cases involving parties and arbitrators from some 180 countries and territories. Demand for its services grows year by year in line with the expansion of international trade and the rapid globalization of the world economy.

The ICC Court is not a "court" in the ordinary sense. As the ICC Arbitration body, the Court ensures the application of the Rules of Arbitration of the International Chamber of Commerce. Although its members do not decide the matters submitted to ICC Arbitration – this is the task of the arbitrators appointed under the ICC Rules - the Court oversees the ICC Arbitration process and, among other things, is responsible for: appointing arbitrators; confirming, as the case may be, arbitrators nominated by the parties; deciding upon challenges of arbitrators; scrutinizing and approving all arbitral awards; and fixing the arbitrators' fees. In exercising its functions, the Court is able to draw upon the collective experience of distinguished jurists from a diversity of backgrounds and legal cultures as varied as that of the participants in the arbitral process.



### **Information Sources**

ICC provides a digital news alert service, which enables subscribers to keep pace with the latest ICC activities and announcements.

### **For further information**

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