



INTERNAL RULES OF PROCEDURE

CHAPTER I THE MEMBERS

Article 1 –Procedure of membership

1.1 All applications for membership shall be sent to LIFE's Secretariat, which will in turn inform the members of the Board of Directors of the new application for membership.

The Secretariat will send the applicant organization a form (see annex to these internal rules of procedure) to be completed. The candidate organizations should send the completed form, together with Registration certificate & Articles of Association/Constitution back to the Secretariat, who will submit it to the Board of Directors for their approval. They will decide whether or not to accept their candidature as members within a period no longer than 20 days after submission, judged against the criteria set out in Article 7 of LIFE's Statutes.

1.2 Member organizations are represented within LIFE by the President of the organization or by his or her designated delegate.

Article 2 –Membership fees

2.1 An annual membership fee is to be paid by "full-members", starting in 2022. The amount to be paid by member organizations is set at 10% of the member organization's income from its own membership subscriptions of the previous year. There is no fee set for "Associate members", but they may make voluntary contributions. This procedure and amount can be reviewed annually during the Board of Directors annual meeting.

2.2 The annual fee for LIFE membership must be paid on time no later than **15th January** of the new budgetary period. A pro-forma commitment letter will be sent to LIFE members no later than **one month** before the payment is due. This must be returned by member organizations informing about their income from membership fees and the number of members. This will form the basis on which the member association's membership fee for LIFE will be calculated. The form must be signed and returned, and payment made within one month.

2.3 If the annual membership fee is not received by LIFE's Secretariat by the due date, the organization may be excluded from LIFE, following the procedure laid down in Article 13 of the Statutes and 2.4 of the Internal Rules of Procedures.

2.4 The Board of Directors, upon receiving no response to its reminder letter sent out by registered post, may also exclude an organization which has not paid the annual membership fee, after having signed the commitment letter.

CHAPTER II ORGANIZATION AND STRUCTURE

Article 3 LIFE's administrative bodies

LIFE's administrative bodies are composed by a General Assembly, a Board of Directors, and a Secretariat, which are described in chapters III, IV and V respectively of LIFE Statutes.

Article 4. Board of Directors delegated powers

As stated in Article 30 of LIFE statutes, while respecting the principle of collegiality, the board of directors can mandate internal powers to some of its members, generally the President, the Treasurer and the Secretary who can be assisted by a Vice President, a Vice Treasurer or Vice Secretary or other designated roles. The roles and responsibilities of the Board of Directors are defined as follows, taking into account that part of their duties could be delegated to the Secretariat if possible.

- The President ensures the collegiality of the Board of Directors. He/she must lead the Board of Directors and General Assembly to make collective decisions, promoting constructive debate (facilitate meetings, supervise the management of the Secretariat, etc.) and acting as the senior representative of LIFE.
- The Secretary ensures the administrative tasks of the non-profit organization are undertaken (organization of meetings, reporting, maintaining files of key documents and membership register, etc.)
- The Treasurer makes sure the accounts and budgets of the non-profit organization and formalities are kept up to date (sign the accounts, transactions, etc)

Article 4–Working Groups

4.1 LIFE may set up *ad hoc* Working Groups (WG) to support the Board of Directors and Secretariat's work and projects, engage members in the decision-taking processes, promote regional cooperation and capitalize on members' experience.

4.2 Any member organization or staff member of the secretariat may propose by writing to the Secretariat the creation of a new Working Group and this will be submitted to approval in the following Board of Directors meeting.

4.3 The WGs may be specific groups created for a specific objective within an established timeframe, or they may be permanent working groups. Permanent working groups' mandates are renewed annually by the General Assembly. Once a new WG is approved, the Secretariat will agree on the organizational details, schedule of the meeting and deadlines when convenient and will inform members, opening its participation to all LIFE's membership. Members belonging to the WG must be listed. The secretariat will be present in all WG meetings to facilitate logistics and translation as much as possible.

4.4 Each Working Group will appoint a Coordinator, who can be a member of the Secretariat or a delegate from any member organization, who will hold the position for one year. The WG Coordinator can be re-elected. The WG Coordinator's role is crucial as regards achieving the WG's aims. He or she undertakes the necessary coordination during the discussion and preparation of the recommendations and suggestions. The WG Coordinator liaises with the Secretariat and the Board of Directors, keeping the WG up to date on the general developments and the results of the work carried out. The WG Coordinator prepares the

meetings, writes a report and presents, within a reasonable time, an agreed final document to the Board of Directors and Secretariat.

4.5 To revoke a WG Coordinator's mandate before term a procedure must be set in motion by at least 1/3 of the WG members who present their case to the Board of Directors. A majority of 2/3 of the Board of Directors can debate the issue and if necessary, revoke the WG Coordinator's mandate, convening a WG meeting in order to elect a new WG Coordinator.

4.6 The Secretariat, upon request from the WG Coordinator, may, by written procedure, also nominate experts, to take part to the work of the Working Group as well as inviting scientists, experts and others to participate.

4.7 Members will strive to find a unanimous position in the adoption of its reports. Working Groups are not statutory bodies and as such their advice and reports *cannot bind or oblige* the Board of Directors or the General Assembly in any respect. However, they may provide very valuable advice and work for the progress of LIFE and their conclusions will be of much importance, to be taken into account whenever possible.

4.8 Working Group meetings (face to face or online) are convened at least 14 days before the meetings by sending the draft agenda. If this is not possible then the matters in question should be discussed and deliberated on by email. Members of Working Groups who cannot attend the meeting scheduled are encouraged to submit suggestions and comments in writing on the draft agenda, but not later than seven days before the meeting. Such suggestions and comments shall be taken into account and discussed when the Working Group meets and in its final meeting report.

CHAPTER III VOTING RIGHTS OF THE MEMBERS

Article 5–Voting Rights-Delegates

5.1 Member Organizations that belong to LIFE are represented within the General Assembly and Board of Directors by their own delegates according to Art. 10 of LIFE's Statutes.

5.2 LIFE members will strive to decide on issues by consensus. Where voting is required, each member organization is assigned one vote (1 association = 1 vote). In the case of the Elective Assembly every member organization can vote for three candidates from their region to be elected to the Board of Directors as indicated in article 10 of the present document.

5.3 If the designated delegate of a member organization is unavailable, he or she can be substituted by another member of the same organization, which should be notified in advance whenever possible. In the case of an elective assembly, this change of name must be communicated to the Secretariat at least 3 working days before the meeting begins.

5.4 Member organizations can legitimately be represented by a delegate from another LIFE Member. This delegation should be requested by writing to the Secretariat at least 2 days before the meeting.

CHAPTER IV ELECTIVE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Article 6–Elective General Assembly

6.1 The General Assembly is the highest deliberative body of LIFE and is made up of the delegates of every member organization – both full and associate members.

6.2 At the end of its mandate, the Elective General Assembly arranges for the election of the of a new Board of Directors for the following four-year period, as regulated by article 22 of the Statutes, where each full member organization will vote for between one and three representatives from their region to be elected to the Board .

6.3 Elective assembly will be done whenever possible in a face-to-face meeting. But if this is not possible due to budgetary or other reasons, an online meeting will be valid. The Secretariat must ensure there is the appropriate means to have a valid assembly.

Article 7–Convocation of the Elective Assembly

7.1 Unless the Board of Directors provides other indications, at least 30 days before the date of the Elective Assembly, the Secretariat will inform the member associations of the date of elections using whichever means is considered most appropriate: website, email or any other form of communication.

7.2 This communication should contain the date, time and place of the meeting and the agenda, and will call for candidatures to be elective members of the board for their region.

Article 8–Candidates for Election

8.1 Candidates for the Board of Directors shall include all the delegated representatives on the General Assembly of LIFE’s Full Member Organizations, unless there are reasonable grounds for excluding them and including other nominees. The list of the candidates/ delegates will be sent to all the General Assembly members within 15 days before the date of the elective assembly. Candidates may include a presentation, for example on their intended programme to be carried out during their term of office if elected.

8.2 The admission or rejection of one or more candidatures may be challenged by means of a written appeal that must be presented to the Secretariat by and no later than 10 days before the date of the elective Assembly.

8.3 The Secretariat will prepare the voting slips with the names of the candidates by region, listed in alphabetical order, indicating which association they belong to.

Article 9–Authentication of rights of admission

9.1 The Board of Directors, through the Secretariat, verifies the authenticity of the appointments and the delegations and endorses members’ delegate for the Assembly.

9.2 The Elective Assembly is valid in the first round if half the electorate of delegates plus one of the voting members are present and in the second round, whatever numbers of the members are present. If the session is declared non-valid, the Board of Directors will call another meeting within 30 days.

9.4 The Secretariat will count the votes balloted and the outgoing President will announce the results.

Article 10–Elections

10.1 Three voting sessions will be held successively, one for every Region, calling only on member organizations from that region to vote.

10.2 Every member organization representative shall vote for 3 candidates from their Region on the voting list through secret ballot. The three candidates with most votes will be the new members of the Board for that Region.

10.3 If the same number of votes are received by four or more candidates a second ballot will be held.

10.4 The Secretariat will collaborate with the Board of Directors during all procedures and will prepare the report of the session.

FINAL RULES

Article 11–Reimbursements

11.1 Eligible expenses incurred by LIFE’s appointed representatives and delegates when carrying out their duties will be reimbursed at cost and will be subject to prior approval by the Secretariat. The eligible expenses are detailed in articles 11.6 and 11.7.

11.2 Such expenses must be eligible and included within the limits of the budget available.

11.3 The expenses incurred by delegates who participate in face-to-face meetings will be reimbursed on the basis of prior agreement, and only if they register for the meeting before the deadline given, on a case-by-case basis decided by the Secretariat.

11.4 Starting on January 2022, the delegates of organizations will only be reimbursed for participation at meetings if their organization has paid the annual LIFE membership fee.

11.5. Requests for reimbursement must be submitted on the form provided to the Secretariat with full receipts, no later than 30 calendar days from the last day of the meeting. The requests for reimbursement for meetings held in December, must be submitted no later than two weeks after the meeting. The Secretariat cannot guarantee reimbursement if the request arrives after the date specified or if the receipts are missing. All original receipts should be sent by post to: Brian O’Riordan. Sentier des Rossignols, 2, 1330 Rixensart, Belgium.

11.6 Travel expenses between the participant’s home/work address and the meeting place will be reimbursed as follows:

By air:

- Economy fares on low-cost flights or the most economic alternative.
- Proof of payment must be made available
- Paid registered luggage will not be reimbursed
- Additional travel costs , such as priority boarding, will not be reimbursed

By other means of travel:

- All travel should be by means of public transportation. Taxi fares will not be reimbursed (unless by prior agreement)
- Proof of payment must be made available (tickets/receipts)
- Use of personal car: transport to be reimbursed at a flat rate of 20 eurocents/km. Itinerary to be checked using Google maps or similar tools. Tolls on the highway and parking are eligible costs, tickets should be provided

Meals:

- Alcoholic drinks will not be reimbursed
- The maximum amount which can be reimbursed is of 30€/person/meal
- The maximum reimbursement/person/day is set at 60€
- Hotel minibar consumptions will not be reimbursed

11.7 Loss of earnings of Board of Directors and WG coordinators when carrying out their duties at LIFE will be an eligible cost for reimbursement (if there is an available budget). They will be reimbursed at a flat rate of ***Eur 150/day***.

11.8 All currency exchanges should be calculated through this official site: http://ec.europa.eu/budget/contracts_grants/info_contracts/infoeuro/index_en.cfm

Article 12- Use of languages

12.1. The working languages of LIFE are French, English and Spanish. The Secretariat, depending on the budget and attendance can provide translation and interpretation in the other needed languages, trying to always meet the member's needs as much as possible.

12.2 Interpretation and translation into different languages for the meetings of the Board of Directors, of the General Assembly and of the working groups, as well as for documentation, will be carried out within the limits of the available financial resources.

Article 13–Amendments of the Internal Rules

13.1 Anything not covered by these Internal Rules or the Statutes will be dealt with by the Board of Directors with a proposal for a specific resolution as appropriate, to be brought to the attention of the next General Assembly meeting for approval of the measure.