

THIRD ISC GENERAL ASSEMBLY
Muscat, Oman 2025

Proposed principles for the revision of the ISC membership dues structure

Document 17

For discussion



**International
Science Council**

وزارة التعليم العالي
و البحث العلمي والابتكار
Ministry of Higher Education
Research & Innovation



Proposed principles for the revision of the ISC membership dues structure

17 January 2025

The Dues Revision Working Group was established by the ISC Governing Board in September 2024 to review and revise the ISC membership dues structure. The main aim of the revision is to unify the parallel structures for former ICSU and former ISSC members and address the question of affordable dues for organizations of limited means; the context for the revision is the need to secure the ISC's financial sustainability amidst an increasingly difficult financial situation for many ISC Members.

The composition of the Working Group is broadly representative of the various types of members, and its members are working collectively in the interests of the organization as a whole. The terms of reference and composition of the Group can be found in Appendix A and B respectively.

The Working Group will have met three times, virtually, by the time of the third ISC General Assembly in Muscat, Oman, on 29–30 January 2025.

The Working Group is using the occasion of the ISC General Assembly to consult the membership directly on the core principles that should underlie the review and revision of the ISC dues structure. The aim of this first round of consultation with Members is to reach agreement on a set of principles and guidelines that will allow the Working Group to move to the next stage of the work. Based on feedback received at the General Assembly, or in writing after the General Assembly and until mid-February 2025, the Working Group will proceed to develop a proposal for a revised dues structure, with an accompanying dues scale, for the consideration of the membership, by mid-year 2025.

It must be noted that questions around dues are closely related to questions concerning membership, notably eligibility for a given membership category, short- and long-term consequences of non-payment of dues for whatever reason, new membership of organizations which cannot pay dues, obligations of resigning Members. The Dues Working Group understands the scope of its task as making recommendations on what Members should pay as dues, rather than on questions of membership *stricto sensu*.

The Working Group acknowledges the challenges in defining a perfectly fair dues structure, but is committed to proposing a transparent and practical solution.

Below is a set of proposed principles for discussion at the General Assembly. Written feedback on these principles and attendant questions will be invited after the ISC General Assembly.

Note that information on ISC income and finances can be found on its website at:

<https://council.science/about-us/funding/>

Proposed principles

Income from membership dues is core to ISC operations, sustainability and independence. The following principles should apply to ISC members in Categories 1, 2, and 3. Category 4 members are exempt from paying dues and these principles do not apply.

1. ISC Members are expected to comply with the requirement to pay dues.
2. The membership dues of former ICSU and ISSC members should be consolidated into a single structure.
3. The dues structure should be tiered according to the financial strength of the Members and the category of membership. Factors in assessing financial strength need to be defined with input from ISC Members.
4. New Members should pay dues on a pro rata basis for the calendar year of admission.

Appendix A

Dues Revision Working Group 2024–2025 Terms of Reference

18 July 2024

1. Background

At the 2017 joint meeting of the ISSC and ICSU in Taipei in preparation for the merger of the two organizations in 2018, it was decided that the dues of founding ISC Members would remain the same until a new dues structure was adopted, and that a new, unified dues structure should be developed under the leadership of the first ISC Governing Board, for adoption in 2021. In separate meetings, the ISSC and ICSU membership had agreed to an annual indexation of up to 2%.

An ad hoc Dues Committee was tasked in 2019 with developing a proposal for a unified dues structure for the ISC. The committee produced a report containing sound analysis and viable options¹ but concluded that a new dues structure should not be developed in isolation from strategic considerations around membership matters. The General Assembly in 2021 approved a 2022–2024 budget outline which was based on the existing membership dues structure, including a 2% annual increase for inflation.

With the adoption of revised ISC Statutes and Rules of Procedure in March 2024, which dealt with some of the outstanding membership issues, the dues structure can and must now be tackled. The Governing Board is therefore establishing a Dues Revision Working Group under the aegis of the Committee for Finance, Compliance and Risk with the mandate of developing a new dues structure and other dues-related policies.

2. Composition

Members of the Dues Revision Working Group should be knowledgeable about key factors impinging on questions of dues, including global economic trends, science funding developments globally and regionally, the mission of the ISC, the diversity of the membership of the ISC, the recent revision of ISC membership categories, and issues of fairness and equity. Members of the Working Group should have experience in organizational finances.

The Working Group will be chaired by the Vice-President for Finance, Compliance and Risk and should include individuals nominated by:

- The Committee for Outreach and Engagement
- A Category 1 Member in the natural sciences
- A Category 1 Member in the social sciences
- A Category 2 Member in a high band
- A Category 2 Member in a mid-level band
- A Category 2 Member in a lower band
- A Category 3 Member of large size/structure/means
- A Category 3 Member of smaller size/structure/means

The Working Group may invite input from outside the group, as appropriate.

¹ See <https://council.science/about-us/governance/committees/dues-committee/>

3. Mandate

The Dues Committee will:

1. Review the findings of the Ad hoc Dues Committee of 2019–2021 and, as appropriate and in consultation with the membership, adapt them or develop a new approach to the revision of dues and related policies in the context of the revised Statutes and Rules of Procedure and perennial or emerging issues relating to dues.
2. Offer concrete proposals for a single, fair and sustainable dues structure and associated dues scale and related policies.

Appendix B: Composition of the Dues Revision Working Group

- [Sawako Shirahase](#), ISC Vice-President for Finance, Compliance and Risk (Chair of the Working Group)
- [Magdalena Stoeva](#), Secretary General, International Union for Physical and Engineering Sciences in Medicine (IUPESM)
- [Ehud Keinan](#), President, International Union of Pure and Applied Chemistry (IUPAC)
- [Irasema Coronado](#), International Political Science Association (IPSA) Executive Committee
- [Ourania Kostj](#), US National Academies, Director of Board on International Scientific Organizations
- [Lai Meng Looj](#), Academy of Sciences of Malaysia, Chair of International Committee
- [Jones Fairfax Agwata](#), Kenya National Academy of Sciences
- [Silvia L. Vilches](#), International Consortium of Research Staff Associations (ICoRSA)