



Fisheries
Transparency
Initiative

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

VERSION: 1.0

DATE: 2 JULY 2024



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PREAMBLE

Over the past two decades, collective action for international development has grown enormously. This situation has been aided by the increased understanding that complex and interlinked global challenges, such as sustainable fisheries, cannot be tackled by unilateral actions alone but through collaborative partnerships involving multiple actors.

For this reason, the Fisheries Transparency Initiative (FiTI) has been established as a collaborative effort among various stakeholders, including governments, businesses, and civil society. Their different interests, positions, experiences, and resources are fundamental to shaping the immediate and long-term agenda for marine fisheries sustainability.

In the spirit of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 17, which calls for a "Partnership for the Goals," the FiTI has been legally established as a global multi-stakeholder **members' association** under the laws of the Republic of Seychelles (A431648). The FiTI provides a platform for all bona fide actors and organisations to officially participate in shaping the future of global sustainable marine fisheries.

The FiTI association is governed by its Constitution. [1] With regards to membership, the Constitution determines, among other things:

- eligibility criteria for being elected as a member of the FiTI association [Article 7];
- that membership is organised into three distinction stakeholder groups [Article 8];
- that the sole responsibility of elected members is to serve in the FiTI International Board [Article 9 (1)];
- that membership in the FiTI is personal and not institutional [Article 9 (2)];
- the terms and re-election provisions for membership in the FiTI association [Article 10]; and
- the basic parameters regarding admission, resignation, and removal of members [Article 11].

In accordance with Article 11 (10) of the FiTI association's Constitution, the purpose of this 'Membership Policy' (herein referred to as 'Policy') is to provide additional operational parameters and conditions regarding the admission, resignation, and removal of members, including additional qualification requirements for new members.

[1] <https://fiti.global/association>

APPLICABILITY

This Policy applies to elected voting members (herein referred to as 'members') of the FiTI association only.

Hence, this Policy does not apply to the FiTI Chair, non-voting members of the FiTI association, observers of the FiTI International Board, the FiTI International Secretariat, or National FiTI Multi-Stakeholder Groups.

QUALIFICATION REQUIREMENTS FOR NEW MEMBERS

In addition to the eligibility criteria stated in Article 7 of the Constitution of the FiTI association, individuals who are nominated to be elected for a membership seat in the FiTI association must meet the following criteria:

- Candidates must be officially nominated by an organisation, institution, company, or expert/action network (herein referred to as 'Body') from a government, business, or social sector, as outlined in Article 8 of the Constitution of the FiTI association. The nominating Body must operate in at least three countries and has been legally incorporated or operationally established for at least three years.

- Candidates must demonstrate a strong interest in enhancing transparency and multi-stakeholder participation in marine fisheries, good ocean governance or broader areas of open government, access to information, and practicing high levels of openness, integrity, and accountability.
- Candidates must also have at least two of the following qualifications:
 - Sound technical expertise and strong track record in influencing policy processes;
 - Experience in partnering with senior representatives from governments, businesses, or civil society;
 - Proven ability in support of the sustainability of natural resources or transparency processes;
 - Informed international perspective on core issues of transparency in marine fisheries management to leverage global standards and/or partners; or
 - Ability to support FiTI outreach and fundraising activities.



RESIGNATION OF MEMBERS

As per Article 11 (6) of the Constitution, members of the FiTI association may resign at any time by delivering a written or electronic notice to the FiTI Chair. Such resignation will take effect at the time specified in the notice, or if no time is specified, upon receipt by the FiTI Chair.

CHANGES IN WORKING SITUATION OR STAKEHOLDER AFFILIATION

As per Article 11 (7) of the Constitution, a membership may be terminated in case of changes to the working situation or the stakeholder affiliation of a member. Such a change scenario is determined when a member of the FiTI association:

- leaves the Body which officially nominated her/him for membership in the FiTI association, or
- remains in the Body that officially nominated her/him for membership in the FiTI association, but the member's new position or responsibilities are no longer aligned with the core objectives of the FiTI or relevant to fulfilling the member's duties, or

- retires from her/his profession, or
- becomes unable to fulfil her/his responsibilities as a FiTI International Board member for more than six months.

As soon as one of the above-listed change scenario becomes probable, a member is obliged to inform the FiTI Chair in written or electronic notice, indicating the most likely time such a change will take place, including relevant information about the planned stakeholder affiliation, position, new responsibilities or time of absence from the Board (if applicable). The member is also obliged to state whether she/he is interested in remaining a member if the requirements of the FiTI Constitution and this Policy deems that possible. The same applies if the change in employment, position, or stakeholder affiliation has already happened.

A timely submission of information will ensure a seamless continuation of membership and will be considered when deciding whether the member can remain as such.



PROCEDURE TO ASSESS IMPACT OF CHANGE SCENARIO ON MEMBERSHIP

After becoming aware of a change scenario and/or receipt of the written or electronic notice by the FiTI Chair (as outlined above), the FiTI Chair informs the Board's Election Committee about the change. For those members that confirm interest in remaining a member, the Board's Election Committee assesses each change scenario on a case-by-case basis, following a three-step process:

1. In case the **change scenario becomes effective within six months to the member's second term termination date**, the member will no longer remain as such, and the membership is automatically terminated. No additional approval by the FiTI International Board is required.
2. In case the member had not been removed from membership in the FiTI association under step 1), the Board's Election Committee will determine the member's eligibility to remain in the membership. In the following cases, a member is NOT eligible to remain in the membership of the FiTI:
 - a. A member leaves the Body that submitted the nomination and **engages with another Body affiliated with a stakeholder group other than her/his original stakeholder group**, as outlined in Article 8 of the Constitution of the FiTI association.

Example: An individual member nominated by a private sector organisation is hired or appointed to a position or delegated by an organisation affiliated with the government sector, such as a Ministry or a national government agency.

- b. the member leaves the Body that submitted the nomination and **engages with a Body that is affiliated with the same stakeholder group as her/his original stakeholder group**, as outlined in Article 8 of the Constitution of the FiTI association, but:
- i. the member becomes or plans to become an employee or appointee in a Body that does not work in fisheries, ocean governance, or open government, or does not operate in at least three countries, or was not legally incorporated or operationally established at least three years before the date in which the member joined the Body; or
 - ii. the member plans to or engages with a Body that, in the assessment of the FiTI International Board, creates actual or potential conflict of interests or raises ethical or alignment concerns; or
 - iii. the member's responsibilities within the Body will not allow her/him to stay on top of developments in fisheries, ocean governance or broader areas of open government and access to information, or her/his new responsibilities do not allow the member to obtain regular feedback from other individuals and organizations within the stakeholder group to ensure the FiTI benefits from the broadest representation of interests, positions, and experiences possible; or
 - iv. the member engages with a Body that has already nominated another member to the membership of the FiTI association; or
 - v. the member's Body does not confirm in writing its support of the member's involvement in the FiTI association, including that the member will be allowed to dedicate the time required to fulfil her/his responsibilities as a member of the FiTI association.



- c. A member remains in the Body which officially nominated her/him for membership in the FiTI association, but **the member's new position or responsibilities within the Body will not allow her/him to stay on top of developments in fisheries, ocean governance or broader areas of open government and access to information**, or her/his new responsibilities do not allow the member to obtain regular feedback from other individuals and organizations within the stakeholder group to ensure the FiTI benefits from the broadest representation of interests, positions, and experiences possible.
 - d. A member remains in the Body which officially nominated her/him for membership in the FiTI association, but is **unable to fulfil her/his responsibilities as a FiTI International Board member for more than six months**.
 - e. A member **retires from her/his profession**, including from the Body that submitted the nomination and is unable to demonstrate her/his willingness and ability to serve as a member of the FiTI association until her/his current term ends. Members who retire from her/his profession during their first term as a Board member are not eligible to be elected for a second term.
3. In case the member had not been removed from membership in the FiTI association under step 2), the Board's Election Committee will review the member's **previous track record of compliance with her/his responsibilities**, as outlined in Article 11(8) of the FiTI association's Constitution. This includes a review of the member's attendance at Board meetings, timely responses to Board Circulars, participation in Board Committees or Working Groups, adherence to the FiTI Principles, etc. If the Board's Election Committee determines that the member has not satisfactorily complied with the related responsibilities and principles, a recommendation to cease the membership will be submitted to the FiTI International Board, which will decide if the member remains as such.

Unless a membership has been automatically terminated (process step 1), every case in which the Board's Election Committee recommends the termination of membership must be approved by the FiTI International Board. In determining a recommendation, the Board's Election Committee will also consider the impact of changes to the Board on the Board's ability to operate efficiently. Until such a decision is reached by the FiTI International Board, the member will remain a member of the FiTI association despite the actual or impending changes in her/his working situation or affiliation status.

If a vacancy is created, the Board will follow the established processes to elect new members to fill any vacant positions.

AMENDMENTS

This Policy is a living document and shall be reviewed regularly. Amendments to the Policy shall be discussed and approved by the FiTI International Board.

CHANGE HISTORY

VERSION	DATE	DESCRIPTION
1.0	02 July 2024	Approval of FiTI Membership Policy by FiTI International Board during 25th meeting [BM-25_2024_D-06].



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