



**INTERNATIONAL
COFFEE
ORGANIZATION**

WGEF 20/24

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**Report on the 6th meeting of the Working
Group for the Entry into force of the
International Coffee Agreement 2022**

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1. The Working Group for the Entry into Force of the International Coffee Agreement 2022 (WGEF) met for the sixth time on 13 May 2024. The Chair of the Group, Mr Mick Wheeler of Papua New Guinea, welcomed all participants and thanked delegates for their presence.

2. Representatives of the following Members were present online using the Zoom software: Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, European Union (including EU-Ireland and EU-Sweden), Honduras, India, Japan, Papua New Guinea, Peru, Russian Federation, Togo and Zimbabwe.

Item 1: Adoption of the agenda

3. The agenda contained in document [WGEF-18/24](#) was adopted.

Item 2: Report of the 5th meeting of the Working Group held on 8 April 2024

4. The Chair presented the report of the previous meeting, contained in document [WGEF-17/24](#).

5. The WGEF took note of the report.

Item 3: Terms of Reference (ToRs) of the Economics Committee

6. The Chair noted that, over the course of the last few meetings, two positions had matured with respect to the fixed system: on the one hand, producing countries asking for greater geographical representation and, therefore, a larger number of seats for exporting Members; on the other, importing countries concerned about an imbalance between the two groups. He also stressed that little interest had been shown in the open membership/core group options, also included in document [WGEF-15/24](#).

7. Considering this, the Chair put forward a new proposal, which represented a compromise between the two abovementioned positions and foresaw a reduction in the number of seats for each sub-regional group on the producing side, with 10 seats (two per subregion) for exporting Members and three seats for importing Members.

8. The delegate of El Salvador informed the WGEF that her delegation would consult with the national authorities, but in principle supported keeping 15 seats for exporting Members, especially in light of the current composition of the Joint Committee, for which three Mesoamerican countries had already been appointed.

9. While noting that his country was originally supportive of a fixed system with eight seats for the exporting Members, the delegate of Japan informed the WGEF that the Japanese government would consider the new proposal put forward by the Chair as it represented a reasonable compromise, also in light of the fact that not all 15 seats of the exporting Members had been filled to date within the Joint Committee.

10. The delegate of the European Union echoed Japan's intervention and endorsed the Chair's proposal.

11. The delegate of Brazil noted that his country was willing to join the consensus, while stressing that it was important for other countries to express their opinion.

12. The Chair asked delegations to conduct internal consultations about his new proposal so that a definitive decision could be made at the following meeting of the WGEF.

Item 4: Participation of non-governmental stakeholders in the activities of the Organization

13. With reference to the Board of Affiliate Members (BAM), the Head of Operations presented the following set of pending questions, which were the result of discussions held to date:

- (a) Should the BAM maintain the standard categories of exporting and importing countries and a balance between the two, to maintain geographical representation?
- (b) Should there be a balance between the number of private sector entities and NGOs?
- (c) Should there be a balance among the different private sector entities based on their size?
- (d) Should an ICO Member be in charge of checking that eligibility criteria are met for same-nationality entities? Should an Evaluation Committee be in charge of assessing applications?
- (e) What should be the modalities for the review of affiliate member status?
- (f) How could potential conflicts of interest between the activities of an affiliate member and the objectives of the ICO be assessed?
- (g) What could be the criteria for the suspension of affiliate member status?

14. The delegate of India noted that questions (a), (b), and (c) would be relevant only if there was an agreement to identify a fixed number of affiliate members. He clarified that matters related to balance would in fact make sense only once the number in question had been agreed.

15. The delegate of Brazil highlighted that a fixed number of entities was already foreseen in the International Coffee Agreement (ICA) 2007 and endorsed the same approach within the context of the BAM to prevent an unmanageable number of entities from joining the same.

16. With reference to question (a), the delegate of Brazil informed Members that, following consultations with the national private sector, his delegation would prefer to maintain the distinction between importing and exporting countries, since this had been a feature of the Organization since its establishment in 1962. Regarding question (b), he noted that a balance

between NGOs and the private sector was not considered necessary. Concerning the point raised by the delegate of India, the delegate of Brazil supported the need to set a limit on the number of members of the BAM.

17. The delegate of the European Union noted that it would be interesting to hear any position the private sector had conveyed to the Secretariat on the questions at hand, given the latter's neutrality and familiarity with all stakeholders.

18. In response to the European Union, the Head of Operations clarified that no consultations with the private sector had been conducted by the Secretariat.

19. The delegate of Brazil mentioned that, in addition to the distinction between exporting and importing countries, Members should consider whether it was also necessary to maintain the distinctions between types of coffee, as currently foreseen in the ICA 2007¹, given the differences between these groups in terms of conditions related to commerce and trade, among others.

20. With reference to Brazil's comment, the delegate of Papua New Guinea noted that the division into four types was included in the first Agreement and those that followed in order to ensure that coffee was being supplied with the four different groups demanded by the market during the quota period. He mentioned that, while the four types of coffee were still considered relevant, several countries were currently producing multiple types of coffee and that this could pose a challenge when trying to identify to which group an entity should belong.

21. Echoing the intervention of Papua New Guinea, the Head of Operations stressed that it could be difficult to categorize private sector and civil society entities based on these terms, given the fact they were often dealing with different types of coffee at the same time.

22. The Chair asked Members to consider the questions at hand, with a special focus on whether the BAM should have a maximum number of affiliate members, and to provide feedback at the following meeting.

23. He then introduced document [WGEF 19/24](#), noting that none of the Members present had opposed "three years" of activity as one of the eligibility criteria.

24. The delegate of the European Union noted that the extensive eligibility criteria could generate a lot of paperwork, potentially representing an obstacle to participation.

25. The delegate of Brazil suggested that special attention be given to the endorsement by ICO Members of applications for affiliate member status. He also noted the importance of preventing entities from one country from seeking the endorsement of a different ICO Member State.

¹ Please see Article 29 ("The Private Sector Consultative Board") of the ICA 2007.

26. The Head of Operations noted that, as per the provisions of the ICA 2022, entities would not be “nominated” by an ICO Member but only endorsed by them. He stressed that the Council would be responsible for making the final decision on whether the application was compliant with the procedures for appraisal of applications.

27. Taking note of Brazil’s comment, the Chair mentioned that Members might want to have entities from non-member countries join the BAM. He also stressed the importance of establishing very clear criteria to allow the Council to easily accept or reject an application, taking into account the political implications of any such endorsement and the need to avoid conflict between Members.

28. With reference to the annual review of the affiliate member status, as foreseen in the ICA 2022, the delegate of India noted that Members needed to establish clear criteria upon which the review would take place. He also asked whether a Member that had endorsed an application would be within its rights to later withdraw said endorsement.

29. The delegate of Brazil stressed the sensitivity of withdrawing an endorsement and suggested that the topic be carefully considered to avoid any prejudicial implications on the Organization and its internal consensus.

30. The Chair requested that Members consider the following questions, in addition to those previously identified above, and provide feedback at the following meeting (full list provided in **Annex I**):

- (a) Should the BAM have a maximum number of affiliate members?
- (b) What should be the criteria upon which the Council reviews affiliate member status annually?
- (c) Should a Member that has previously endorsed an entity be able to withdraw its endorsement?

Item 5: Date of next meeting

31. The dates of future meetings were shared on screen for Members’ reference, with the following meeting having been scheduled for 3 June 2024. Members agreed not to meet in August due to the holiday season in Europe.

Item 6: Other business

32. With no further topics to address, the Chair thanked Members for their active participation.

LIST OF PENDING QUESTIONS**Board of Affiliate Members (BAM)**

- (a) Should the BAM maintain the standard categories of exporting and importing countries and a balance between the two, to maintain geographical representation?
- (b) Should there be a balance between the number of private sector entities and NGOs?
- (c) Should there be a balance among the different private sector entities based on their size?
- (d) Should an ICO Member be in charge of checking that eligibility criteria are met for same-nationality entities? Should an Evaluation Committee be in charge of assessing applications?
- (e) What should be the modalities for the review of affiliate member status?
- (f) How could potential conflicts of interest between the activities of an affiliate member and the objectives of the ICO be assessed?
- (g) What could be the criteria for the suspension of affiliate member status?
- (h) Should the BAM have a maximum number of affiliate members?
- (i) What should be the criteria upon which the Council reviews affiliate member status annually?
- (j) Should a Member that has previously endorsed an entity be able to withdraw its endorsement?