

The IFMBE Council of Societies Charter

08.10.2015

1.0. Introduction:

The Council of Societies (CoS) serves as the main communication and feedback channel between the International Federation for Medical and Biological Engineering (IFMBE) and its Constituent Societies.

The CoS members, consisting of one IFMBE General Assembly (GA) delegate from each Constituent IFMBE Society, are thus a subset of the IFMBE General Assembly (GA).

The CoS generally holds annual meetings that are less formal in procedures than the IFMBE GA. The CoS is subdivided into CoS Regional Groups, which are expected to meet independently in the respective Regions. The Regional Group Representatives are considered activators of initiatives, mainly, but not exclusively, related to their Region of the world and conveyors of information to and from the IFMBE Administrative Council (AC), in which they have a seat.

2.0. Definitions:

Delegate to the GA: Every national/transnational Society is represented by one or more delegates to the IFMBE GA depending on the number of national/transnational members of the Constituent Society (Bylaws 12).

(Ordinary) Member of the Council of Societies or CoS Representative: Every Society will appoint one of their GA delegates to be a Member of the Council of Societies.

Region: A Region is a subset of countries and their Societies within the IFMBE. The Regions that are defined at the founding of the CoS are: Asian-Pacific Rim, North-America, Latin-America and Europe-Africa. Redefined and/or Additional Regions are formed based on approval by AC in response to justifiable requests from associated Constituent Societies through the CoS.

Regional Group: All delegates from one Region form the Regional Group of that Region.

Regional Group Representative (RG Representative): Every Regional group elects a person who will represent the Region in the IFMBE AC.

Regional Conference: A conference that is held in one of the Regions is co-sponsored by the IFMBE and that mainly aims at Medical and Biological Engineers from that Region to attend.

Executive Board of the CoS: The CoS Chair, Vice-Chair, Immediate Past CoS Chair, the RG Representatives to the IFMBE AC, and additionally the IFMBE President (ex officio) and Secretary General (ex officio).

3.0 Membership of the Council of Societies:

1. As specified by the Constitution or Bylaws, one appointed GA delegate (called the CoS Representative) per Constituent Society.
2. An Executive Board of the CoS consisting of the CoS Chair, Vice-Chair, Immediate Past CoS Chair, the RG Representatives, and additionally the IFMBE President (ex officio) and Secretary General (ex officio).

4.0. Regions:

1. IFMBE AC defines the IFMBE Regions. One of the National delegates of a Constituent Society appointed to the IFMBE GA is considered to be an (Ordinary) Member of the Council of Societies according to the IFMBE defined Regions. For transnational Societies, Regional Representation is defined according to the registered headquarters of the affiliated Society, unless there are valid reasons to consider the particular transnational Society to belong to another Region. The Executive Board of the CoS can transfer a CoS Representative to a different Region following a justifiable request from the Society and approval from AC.
2. An IFMBE Region is defined by a justifiable distribution of Constituent Societies in a Region and an appropriate number of members in the Constituent Societies. The discussion on the Region of Constituent Societies and their members required for formation of a Region is initiated by the Members of CoS, and a recommendation is made by the Executive Board of the CoS to IFMBE AC. Redefined and/or Additional Regions are formed based on approval by AC in response to justifiable requests from associated Constituent Societies through the Executive Board of the CoS. The Constituent Societies have to be in good standing, in order for the Members of the CoS and RG Representatives to vote.

5.0 Terms of Appointment:

1. Every Constituent Society appoints one of its GA Delegates as an Ordinary Member of the CoS according to the Society's rules. The term ends when the Society appoints another person. To ensure continuity, a term of about three years to coincide with the World Congress GA would be preferable.
2. The Council of Societies Chair is elected by the delegates of the IFMBE GA at the General Assembly for about a 3-year term, till the next IFMBE GA, renewable once. Nominees for the Chair of the CoS must have a written letter of support from their respective Societies.
3. Regional Representatives to the IFMBE AC are elected by the delegates of the corresponding Region. Election will normally take place at the General Assembly or by electronic ballot at a time set by the AC in consultation with the CoS Executive Board. Election will be for a 3-year term, renewable once. RG Representatives are ex officio members of the Administrative Council of the IFMBE. Candidates must have a written letter of support from their respective Societies.
4. The Nominating Committee of IFMBE will check that candidates for CoS Chair and RG Representatives are eligible to be elected.

5. For the CoS meetings, a Vice-Chair and a Secretary are chosen from the RG Representatives. It is to be noted that the Vice-Chair is not automatically the CoS Chair elect in succession.
6. In case of midterm replacement, the same rules for the total time in office apply as those for Members of the Administrative Council.

6.0 Council function, scope and responsibilities:

1. Act as a main channel for information exchange between the IFMBE officials and the Constituent Societies.
2. Provide opportunities for enhancing mutual contacts between Representatives of Constituent Societies.
3. Formulate proposals to the Administrative Council for future actions.
4. Advise on the establishment of Regional working groups to act on various BME areas of common interest.
5. Coordinate the trans-regional events (Conferences, Workshops, Training Schools etc.).
6. Facilitate transfer of best practices and promote mutual understanding among Regional members.
7. Identify Regional differences on professional development and growth of Biomedical Engineers and make recommendations to facilitate appropriate capacity building.
8. Promote the roles of Biomedical Engineers in the health care sector.

7.0 Convening of the Council of Societies:

1. The Council of Societies meetings will be convened at the triennial World Congress and in each of the two years between sequential triennial World Congress events.
2. Other meetings can be called by the CoS Chair, the Executive Board of the CoS, or by at least 20% of the Ordinary Members.
3. All Representatives of the Constituent Societies are welcome to attend the meetings of the Council of Societies, but only Members of the CoS will be eligible to vote.

8.0 Quorum for the Council of Societies Meetings:

1. A quorum for the Council of Societies meetings shall consist of CoS Representatives from at least half the number of Constituent Societies.
2. In case a member of the CoS is not able to attend a meeting of the CoS in person, that member's Society may appoint a substitute and inform the CoS Chair accordingly.
3. Business may be conducted without a quorum being reached, but decisions must subsequently be ratified by a majority vote of the voting members of the Council of Societies, conducted by electronic mail.
4. Decision shall be by a simple majority of voting, any tied vote situation being taken care by the vote of the presiding officer.

5. When necessary, voting will be done electronically by all delegates within the Regional Groups or the GA, depending on the scope of the proposal.

9.0 Responsibilities of the CoS Chair:

1. Formulate the order of the day of the CoS meetings.
2. Conduct the CoS meetings.
3. Report and disseminate the activities at the CoS meetings and associated events and submit a formal report of activities at the AC meetings.
4. Oversee the elections of the RG Representatives. If a RG Representative's position becomes vacant in between Regional Conferences, the CoS Chair will organize elections as soon as feasible.
5. At least 120 days before each IFMBE General Assembly Session, the CoS Chair shall notify the members of the CoS of the upcoming elections and also request from them the names of any of their delegates which they would wish to have considered for nomination for CoS Chair. In case of interim elections, this term may be shortened to 30 days and the voting may be conducted by electronic mail.
6. At least 120 days before each Regional Conference, the CoS Chair shall notify the Regional members of the CoS of upcoming elections and also request from them the names of any of their delegates which they would wish to be considered for nomination for RG Representative. In case of interim elections, this period of advanced notice may be shortened to 30 days and the voting may be conducted by electronic mail.
7. Inform the Societies about activities within the IFMBE and bring Regional developments, initiatives and questions from Constituent Societies to the Administrative Council, committees, and Working Groups.

10.0 Responsibilities of RG Representative:

1. Formulate the agenda and procedures at the Regional Conference meetings in consultation with the CoS Chair.
2. Conduct the meeting of the Regional Group at the Regional Conferences.
3. Provide reporting and dissemination of the Regional Conference meetings and associated activities.
4. Act as the liaison between the organizing committee of Regional Conferences and the Administrative Council of the IFMBE.
5. Oversee the election of the site for the Regional Conference.
6. Inform the Constituent Societies in the Region about activities within IFMBE and bring Regional developments, initiatives and questions from the Constituent Societies of IFMBE to the Administrative Council, Committees and Working Groups.

11.0 Responsibilities of the CoS Vice-Chair:

Act on behalf of the CoS Chair at a Regional Conference Meeting of the CoS, in the absence of the CoS Chair.

12.0 Responsibilities of the CoS Past Chair:

1. Maintain continuity in the operation and activities of the CoS. Attend Executive Board meetings of the CoS.
2. Advise the CoS Chair and RG Representatives on the strategic plans and continuing activities of the CoS.
3. Provide assistance in reviewing the documents of the nominated candidates for the election and in conducting the election.

13.0 Responsibilities of the CoS Secretary:

One of the Regional Group Representatives will be selected to serve as Secretary and he/she will take the meeting minutes and submit to the CoS Chair the minutes of the CoS meetings and the CoS Executive Board meetings.

14.0 Procedures:

Based on the information received from the Council of Societies Chair, the IFMBE Secretariat keeps an "up-to-date" list of the RG Representatives, the Constituent Societies' GA delegates, and the Ordinary Members of the CoS; this list will be used to organize mailing to prepare for relevant meetings, conduct electronic voting and to do the follow-up.

15.0 Time table:

The CoS Chair is responsible for adherence to the following time table: A brief report of the scheduled meeting of the CoS to be made available to the members of the CoS and IFMBE as soon as possible after the meeting. Invitations for the next meeting of the CoS, order of the day and full report at least 45 days are to be sent before the next CoS meeting.

16.0 Revision to the Charter of the CoS:

Any revisions to the charter of the Council of Societies will be made upon recommendations by the Council of Societies for subsequent review and approval by the AC followed by the approval by the delegates of IFMBE at the GA.