

# **IFLA Governance**

## **An Overview**

March 2021



**International  
Federation of  
Library  
Associations and Institutions**

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# 1. IFLA's New Governance – Background and Context

*Following a year and a half of discussions involving IFLA's Governing Board, Members and volunteers, IFLA's new Statutes were agreed at the extraordinary General Assembly of 12 February 2021.*

*This has opened the way to implementing a new governance structure for IFLA, as set out in the new Statutes, and the Rules of Procedure agreed by the IFLA Governing Board. While these will only enter into force on the day following our August General Assembly, all elections and nominations in 2021 are being carried out in accordance with these texts.*

*This document provides an overview of the new structures which successfully elected and appointed candidates will bring to life from August of this year.*

More than 90 years old and with members in more than 150 countries representing all continents and parts of the library field, IFLA has been on a transformational journey since 2018. Since then, we have engaged library and information professionals all over the world to create a shared Global Vision. Inspired by the future outlined together, we undertook an inclusive and exciting strategic planning process, resulting in the IFLA Strategy 2019-2024.

IFLA's governance review was the next major step in the delivery of IFLA's Strategy and wider Development Roadmap. It addressed the operation of, and relations between, bodies which bring our together volunteers to carry out work and take decisions. These bodies – our General Assembly, Governing Board, professional and regional structures and advisory committees – together with IFLA Headquarters, are central to making IFLA what it is.

In defining our priorities, IFLA took the lead from our Members and volunteers. Through a survey in October 2019, you identified the following areas where you wanted to see change:

IFLA Governance: Overview (March 2021)



More transparency, efficiency and collaboration

Stronger regional representation



Greater financial and organisational sustainability

More varied opportunities for participation, esp. for new leaders



Better support for volunteers

On this basis, IFLA's Governing Board worked to develop proposals for the changes. They consulted intensively again with Members and volunteers, through surveys, calls, letters and other feedback, in order to identify the best way to achieve our goals.

This process has created – collectively – a new governance structure for IFLA; one that better enables us to accomplish the things you said were most important to IFLA's future. IFLA's Members showed their overwhelming support for the results at our February 2021 extraordinary General Assembly.

Of course, structures alone cannot guarantee success of the Strategy, but they can make it more likely. Success will depend on attracting the best and most diverse range of people from across our field to contribute their energy and ideas.

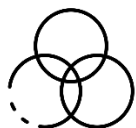
And in this, IFLA depends on you – the global library field. Through your candidacies and nominations, you give life to our new structures. You carry us further towards our vision of a strong and united global library field powering literate, informed and participatory societies.

***Please note that IFLA's new Statutes and Rules of Procedure, which underpin these governance structures, will only enter into force from the day following the August 2021 General Assembly.***

We are IFLA!

## 2. Key Themes

### *You asked for more transparency, efficiency and collaboration*



#### **Our new structures:**

- ✓ **Optimise the Governing Board's ability to focus on governance functions** by reducing the overall size of the Board from 19 to 11, are clearer about the governance skills and experience helpful to these functions, and promote effective delegation of matters to the Regional and Professional Councils.
- ✓ **Increase the proportion of the Governing Board directly elected by IFLA Members**, including the position of Treasurer, which will be directly elected for the first time. The new Governing Board will include the Chairs of the Professional Council, the new Regional Council and the Management of Library Associations Section.
- ✓ **Begin a regular practice of training, support and evaluation** to help the Governing Board improve continuously in their role its role as steward, together with the Secretary General, of IFLA's mission, resources and strategic plan.
- ✓ **Establish regular meetings and communication between the Governing Board and the Professional and Regional Councils.**
- ✓ **Encourage and support more regular collaboration between committees**, as well as clear mandates for committees at all levels to communicate in a timely manner about their work.

### *You asked for stronger regional representation*



#### **Our new structures:**

- ✓ **Create a new Regional Council**, directly supporting the Governing Board, where all world regions are be represented through the chairs of Regional Divisions. This will bring the voice of the regions to the heart of IFLA, support the development of regional strategies and provide a strong voice for the integration of regional priorities in all IFLA work.
- ✓ **Create Regional Divisions** to help develop and deliver plans for building the capacity of our members everywhere to advocate effectively for libraries. They will build on current interactions with corresponding United Nations regional agencies and work with national associations to strengthen IFLA's reach and impact in their regions. These represent an upgrade of the existing three Regional Sections, with new Divisions added for Europe, Middle East and North Africa, and North America
- ✓ **Create new possibilities at all levels**, including on the Governing Board and the Professional Unit Standing Committees, to add new full members, in a

transparent process, in order to ensure regional participation where this has not already been achieved by elections.

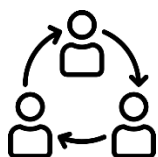
### ***You asked for financial and organisational sustainability***



#### **Our new structures:**

- ✓ **Strengthen financial and risk management in the Governing Board** by targeting specific expertise for the new Finance and Risk committee.
- ✓ **Ensure that our new Regional Divisions, working in partnership with the IFLA staff team and regional offices, have the necessary assistance** to encourage and support increased IFLA membership in every world region.
- ✓ **Strengthen procedures for transparent and regular review of committees and other structures.** This will provide ongoing encouragement and incentives to deliver best outcomes for the global library field and create space for new committees where appropriate.

### ***You asked for more varied opportunities for participation, especially for young leaders***



#### **Our new structures:**

- ✓ **Introduce new ways of being involved in the work of IFLA**, through special interest groups, working groups and networks. This will provide greater opportunities for volunteers to engage in issues that matter to them, gain experience and be recognised for their contributions.
- ✓ **Exploring ways to open up leadership positions** so that there are opportunities for more people to take on these roles.
- ✓ **Develop a new structure of regional representation that builds on current regional sections**, providing a more powerful voice for our members and a new pathway for volunteers into positions of responsibility.
- ✓ **Clarify rules on participation in Standing Committees** to ensure that they prioritise quality of contribution rather than the ability to participate physically in meetings.
- ✓ **Offer opportunities for more diverse participation from around the world on Professional Unit Standing Committees by removing some of the financial barriers.** Each Standing Committee will have up to twenty members elected by vote. However, the Chair, in consultation with the Division Chair, will have the discretion to appoint up to five additional members to boost the diversity of the committee. These members will have full rights and will not have the obligation to attend WLIC. The category of corresponding members is not retained.
- ✓ **Increase opportunities for virtual participation**, in particular at the General Assembly.

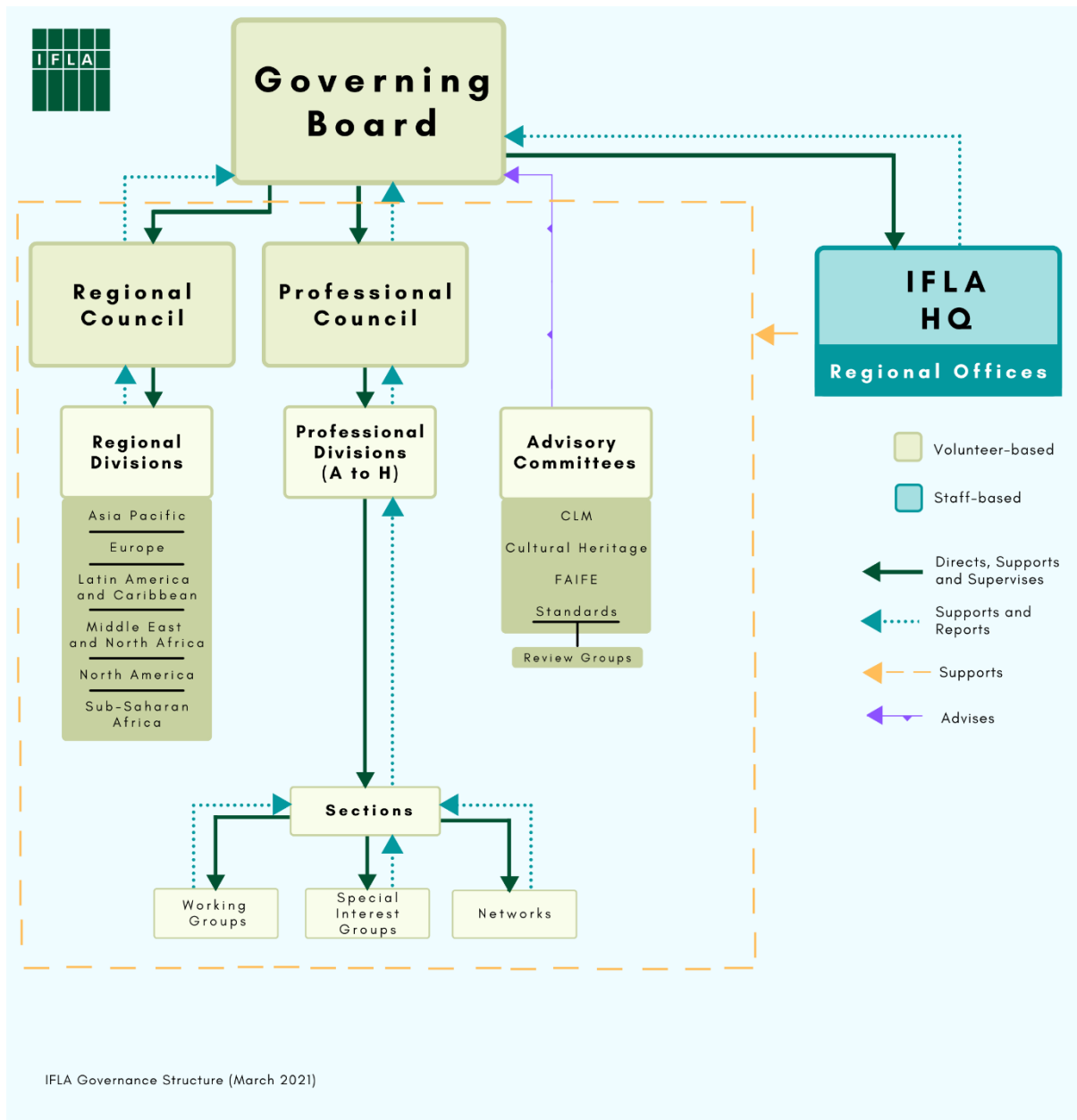
## You asked for better support for volunteers



### Our new structures:

- ✓ **Rebalance our system of Professional Divisions** – the key structures that bring together our Professional Units – to ensure that Division Chairs have the time and scope to offer full support and guidance. There will be eight Professional Divisions, up from five now, each of which will have a similar, manageable number of Professional Units with provision for further adjustments in future to maintain this balance. There will be increased support from the Division Chairs and IFLA HQ for activities that align with and enhance IFLA's Strategy
- ✓ **Increase staff support to Regional Divisions** to enable them to better deliver on their purpose to strengthen IFLA's presence in regions and the voice of regions within IFLA.
- ✓ **Provide clearer definitions of different roles across the organisation** – in particular in the professional structure – in order to ensure that office holders and others have greater clarity about what they can expect and what is expected of them.
- ✓ **Standardise and simplify committee structures** to make it easier for volunteers to identify the opportunities that fit them best.
- ✓ **Reduce financial barriers to serving on the Governing Board.**

### 3. Structures



## 3.1. Governing Board

**The IFLA Governing Board is responsible for the governance and the financial and professional direction of IFLA, and represents the Federation in legal and other formal proceedings.**

It sets the Federation’s culture and values, and develops its strategic direction. In its oversight of the Federation and of IFLA HQ, the Governing Board is guided by principled goal setting, effective decision making and appropriate monitoring of performance. It supports the Secretary General to manage resources and deliver the Strategic.

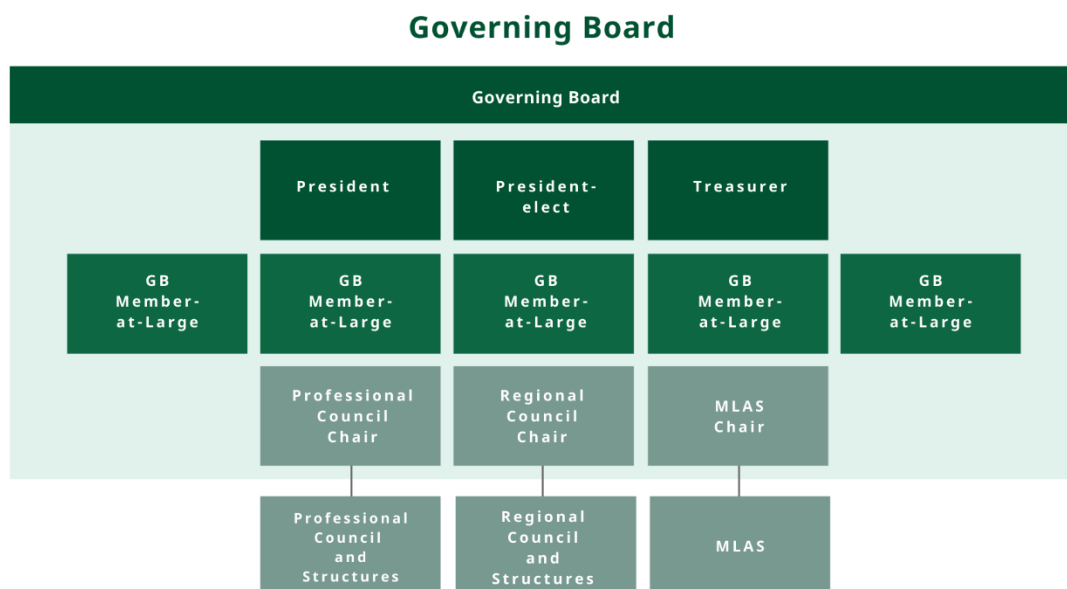
Governing Board members play a crucial role in overseeing and steering the work of a highly complex organisation, requiring both a strong knowledge of the library field and practical competence with skills such as financial management and risk analysis.

The Governing Board is strongest when it reflects the vibrant diversity of the library field and draws on the expertise and experience of librarians worldwide.

### Highlights

- Smaller Governing Board with a higher share of directly elected members
- A directly elected Treasurer
- Greater focus on risk management, through the finance and risk committee
- New focus on providing stewardship for the Federation.

### Diagram



### Details

The new IFLA Governing Board will be comprised of 11 members, as follows:

- ❖ **3 elected officers** (President, President-elect, and Treasurer)
- ❖ **3 ex officio members** (Chairs of Professional Council, Regional Council, and Management of Library Associations Section, each elected through relevant processes)



- ❖ **5 members elected at-large**, accompanied by a practice *to be determined* to improve alignment with skills and experience the board may be missing overall

Streamlined Committees mean more focus on finance and risk: the Treasurer, now directly elected by members, will chair the new Finance and Risk Committee, which may be joined by a non-voting advisor with expertise in auditing and relevant Dutch law. This replaces the current Finance Committee.

With a smaller board, there will no longer be the need for an Executive Committee and all members of the Board will participate in decision-making, in line with the principle of collective responsibility. This will include providing strategic advice on the Congress (including venue selection criteria and final decisions), while technical and logistical issues can be delegated to IFLA HQ.

The Governing Board will be advised by:

- ❖ **The Professional Council**
- ❖ **A newly established Regional Council**
- ❖ **Four Advisory Committees** (formerly named “strategic committees”)
  - Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE)
  - Copyright and other Legal Matters (CLM)
  - Cultural Heritage Programme (CHPAC)
  - Committee on Standards (CoS)

The Governing Board will meet at least once a year with each of the Professional and Regional Councils in order to share information and consult. In the meanwhile, the chairs of these Councils, and of the Management of Library Associations Section, will ensure a flow of information between the Governing Board and their committees on important decisions and activities.

In order to remove barriers to participation at the highest level of IFLA governance, all Governing Board members will be funded for travel and accommodation to attend two meetings per year outside WLIC.

## 3.2. Professional Structures

The IFLA Professional Council provides oversight and guidance to the committees and groups that work together across sectors and around the world to develop and implement activities that inspire, engage, and enable the library field. It is responsible for professional matters and coordinates the professional programme of the IFLA World Library and Information Congress.

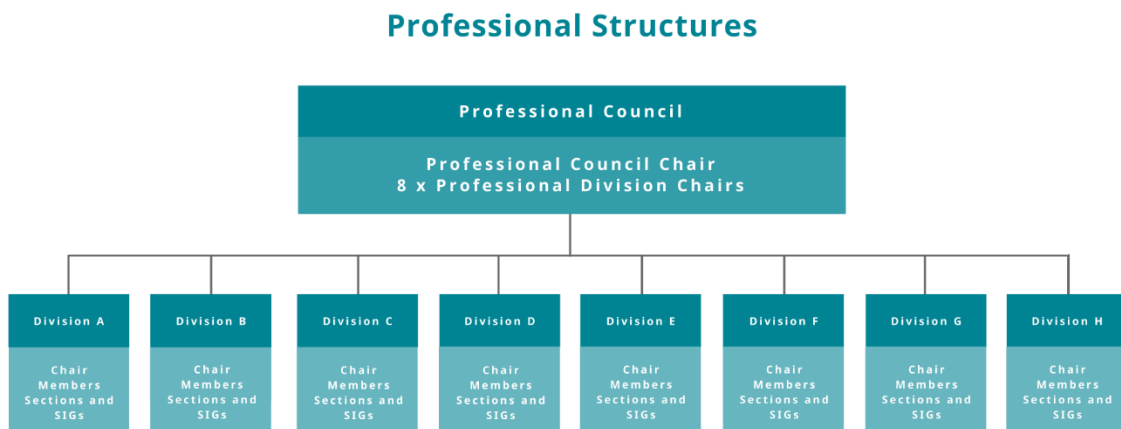
The purpose of a Professional Division is to enable effective and timely communication between Professional Units, IFLA staff and the Professional Council; and to assist the Professional Units with the coordination of professional activities and in understanding better how IFLA works.

The Professional Council reports to the Governing Board.

### Highlights

- The Professional Committee is renamed the Professional Council will now be made up of a Chair and eight Professional Division Committee Chairs
- There will now be eight Professional Divisions, all of a similar size, with a roughly equal number of Professional Units per Division. This will facilitate support to each Unit.
- New possibilities to create Working Groups and Networks in order to explore new and emerging themes in a more informal way
- Professional Sections to have the possibility to name mentors, as well as additional members to ensure stronger diversity

### Diagram



### Details

The new **IFLA Professional Council**, replacing the current Professional Committee, will be made up of 9 Members:

- A Chair, nominated and elected by current Section officers (Chairs, Secretaries, Information Coordinators), from among current Division Chairs and Secretaries
- 8 members, each of whom is a Professional Division Chair. These are nominated by current Professional Section Standing Committee members, from among current Professional Standing Committee Chairs, Secretaries and Information Coordinators, and elected by current Professional Standing Committee Chairs, Secretaries and Information Coordinators.

The Professional Council mirrors the new Regional Council (see below), and its Chair is an ex officio Governing Board Member. The Professional Council will meet at least three times a year, once together with the Governing Board. Its chair will liaise with the Regional Council in order to encourage coordination between the two.

There are more **Professional Divisions** than previously, and each one is of a similar size, in contrast with the very different sizes in the past. Division V (Regions) disappears, with its sections upgraded to become Regional Divisions (see below). The smaller size of Divisions will enable Division Chairs to dedicate more time to each Section or other Professional Unit.

Sections and Special Interest Groups are grouped according to the following principles:

- Each division should be of a similar size (6-7 units)
- Units within a division should have an affinity in focus
- Special Interest Groups (SIGs) should sit in the same Division as their Sponsoring Section, but there should not be too many SIGs in a single Division
- These groupings will be reviewed in future to reflect changes in priorities or patterns of collaboration

The below table sets out the allocation of Units to Divisions (SIGs are marked in grey, with sponsoring units in brackets):

	Division A	Division B	Division C	Division D	Division E	Division F	Division G	Division H
1	National Libraries	Government Libraries	CPDWL	Academic and Research Libraries	School Libraries	Art Libraries	Health and Biosciences Libraries	Bibliography
2	Public Libraries	Library and Research Services for Parliaments	Education and Training	Science and Technology Libraries	Indigenous Matters	Document Delivery and Resource Sharing	Social Science Libraries	Cataloguing
3	Metropolitan Libraries	Law Libraries	Library Theory and Research	Libraries Serving People with Print Disabilities	Information Literacy	Acquisition and Collection Development	Serials and Other Continuing Resources	Information Technology
4	Library Buildings and Equipment	Gov Info and Official Publications	Management of Library Associations	Audiovisual and Multimedia	Libraries for Children and Young Adults	Preservation and Conservation	ENSULIB	Knowledge Management
5	Library Services to Multicultural Populations	Access to Information Network – Africa SIG	LIS Education in Developing Countries SIG (SET)	Library Services to People with Special Needs	Literacy and Reading	Rare Books and Special Collections	News Media	Subject Analysis and Access
6	Local History and Genealogy	Women, Information and Libraries SIG (MLAS)	New Professionals SIG (MLAS)	Management and Marketing	Reference and Information Services	LGBTQ Users SIG (ACD)	Digital Humanities/ Digital Scholarship SIG (KM)	Statistics and Evaluation
7	National Organizations and International Relations SIG			Library Publishing SIG (ACD)	Library History SIG (LTR)	RELINDIAL SIG (SSL)	Evidence for Global and Disaster Health SIG (HBS)	Big Data SIG (IT)

Each Division will now have a **Professional Division Committee** (rather than a Leadership Forum), made up of the officers of Professional Section Standing Committees and Special Interest Group Convenors, which should meet at least three times a year. The Chairs of these will be elected as set out above. Division Committees will also choose a Vice-Chair from amongst their members.

**Professional Sections** are elected in the same way as before, but now Information Coordinators are officially included as Officers. There are no longer corresponding members, but it is possible for Sections to co-opt up to five additional members to boost geographical diversity. These additional members will not be expected to attend WLIC meetings.

Furthermore, Section Standing Committees can also top-up members if they have fewer than 20 people. Sections can also appoint mentors, in order to support new members to engage most effectively.

Sections will still choose Chairs, Secretaries and Information Coordinators

**Special Interest Groups** continue to exist, but will now have a committee of up to 9 members to support them in their work. They will only be able to operate for two four-year terms before either

becoming a Section or taking on another form, but can already apply for Section status after four years.

**Working Groups and Networks** will offer new possibilities for informal cooperation on specific subjects where greater flexibility is desirable, or a more formal structure is not yet appropriate. These will allow IFLA to respond more rapidly to emerging issues.

**Reviews of Professional Units** will take place every five years in order to promote effectiveness and relevance to the IFLA Strategy, led by the Professional Council. There will also be reviews of the make-up of Professional Divisions at least once every five years in order to ensure balance.

### 3.3. Regional Structures

#### The IFLA Regional Council and Divisions are a new addition to IFLA's Governance Structure.

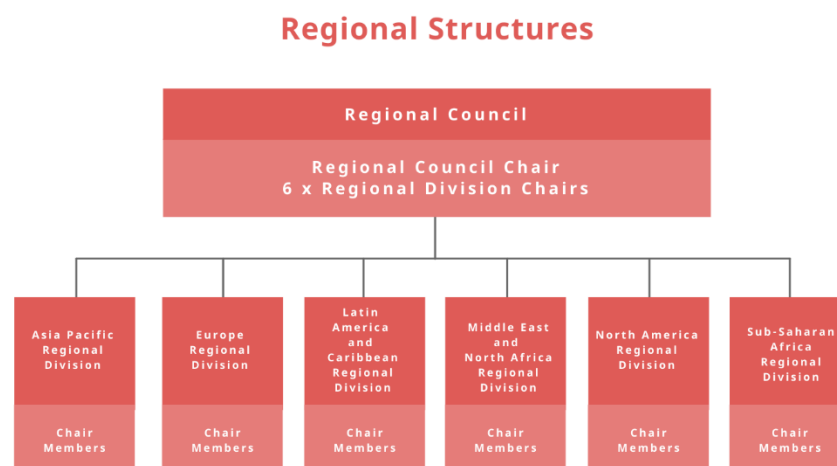
The purpose of the Regional Council is to provide strong representation of regional priorities across IFLA's work and in particular on the Governing Board, strengthen advocacy for libraries, create more opportunities for regional participation, make IFLA more visible globally and implement the regional elements of IFLA's Strategy.

In turn, Regional Division Committees will provide a focal point for IFLA's work at the regional level by preparing regional action plans reflecting their own region's needs, and working with IFLA HQ and others to deliver on these.

#### Highlights

- IFLA will have a new Regional Council, whose chair will be an ex officio Governing Board member, representing the interests of different parts of the world.
- There will be six new Regional Division Committees, for Asia-Oceania, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa
- Each Division Committee will have up to 20 members, with rules limiting the number of candidates who can come from any one country.
- Division Committee members will act on behalf of the region as a whole, developing action plans, advancing advocacy, and promoting IFLA's work with Members and non-Members alike.

#### Diagram



#### Details

There will be a **new Regional Council**, made up of seven members:

- A Chair, who can be nominated by IFLA Members and Affiliates, and is subsequently elected by them

- Six members, who are also Regional Division Committee Chairs. These are selected by members of new Regional Division Committees at their first meetings.

The **Regional Council** will advise and report to the Governing Board, raising emerging issues from the national and regional levels. It will coordinate and support the development and implementation of Regional Division Action Plans, and review progress in developing the regional dimension of IFLA's Strategy. It represents an upgrade of the existing Division V.

It will also bring together information on advocacy priorities within regions in order to shape IFLA's overall advocacy work, and develop advocacy approaches to UN and other agencies working at the regional level.

It will meet at least three times a year, once together with the Governing Board. Its chair will liaise with the Professional Council in order to encourage coordination between the two.

The six **Regional Divisions** will have a key role in developing action plans that deliver on the key highlight of the IFLA Global Vision report – the need to be able to adapt IFLA's action to respond to regional characteristics. There will be Regional Divisions for Asia-Pacific, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean, Middle East and North Africa, North America and Sub-Saharan Africa regions (see the [list of countries per region](#)). These regions follow, as far as possible, the coverage of the United Nations' Regional Commissions.

Each Regional Division will have a **Regional Division Committee** made up of up to 20 members, nominated and elected by all Members and Affiliates within the region. If Regional Division Committees have fewer than 15 elected members, it will be possible to co-opt additional members in an open and transparent way.

Regional Division Committees will provide a focal point for IFLA's work at the regional level, preparing action plans, delivering on projects linked to advocacy, and building IFLA's profile and membership in the region. They will also contribute to efforts to support professional units' work in regions, as well as ensuring that IFLA is carrying out advocacy projects that are most relevant. Finally, they will devise and deliver activities to build IFLA's profile and membership.

There will be limits on the number of committee members who can come from any one country – 1 in the case of Europe and Middle East and North Africa, 2 in the case of Asia-Oceania, Latin America and the Caribbean and Sub-Saharan Africa, and 10 in the case of North America. This is to avoid over-representation by people from any one country. These figures were set in consultation with representatives of countries in each region.

As highlighted above, the chairs of Regional Division Committees, as well as Vice-Chairs, will be chosen from among committee members at their first meeting. Chairs will also serve on the Regional Council, ensuring a strong flow of information. Regional Divisions can also appoint up to three mentors.

IFLA Headquarters will provide support to the new Regional Council and Regional Division Committees, which will also liaise closely with IFLA's Regional Offices.

## 3.4. Advisory Committees

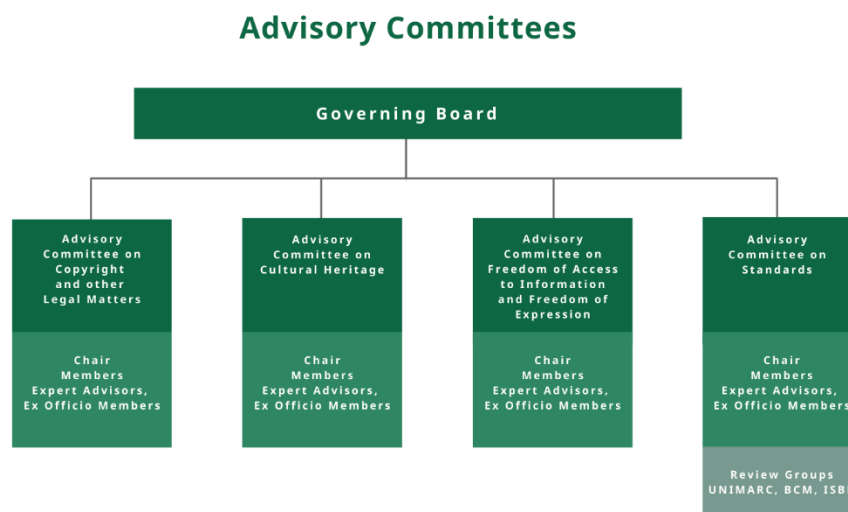
IFLA's Advisory Committees replace the current Strategic Committees. These cover a range of policy areas and topics, and support the work of IFLA's top-level governance on major policy or other cross-cutting issues.

The purpose of IFLA's proposed Advisory Committees is to coordinate related and relevant activities across IFLA, to support IFLA policy development and advocacy, and to support the development of relationships with relevant global and regional organisations on issues for which the advisory committee is responsible.

### Highlights

- There will be greater consistency in the naming and organisation of IFLA's four Advisory Committees – on Copyright and other Legal Matters, Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression, Cultural Heritage (formerly the Cultural Heritage Programme Advisory Committee) and Standards (formerly the Committee on Standards)
- These committees will work to advise and report to the Governing Board, and liaise with other committees and groups across IFLA.

### Diagram



### Details

The four committees that currently serve IFLA's Strategic Programmes are being officially renamed as Advisory Committees, and will have a similar structure and role, although each will maintain their existing areas of focus:

- Advisory Committee on Copyright and other Legal Matters



- Advisory Committee on Cultural Heritage (previously the Cultural Heritage Programme Advisory Committee)
- Advisory Committee on Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression
- Advisory Committee on Standards (previously the Committee on Standards)

The Advisory Committees will formally report to and advise the Governing Board. The Governing Board may refer reports or questions to the Professional or Regional Councils as appropriate. The Committees will be mandated to work to ensure that all parts of IFLA are able to benefit from their deep expertise and work. The board may establish additional Advisory Committees from time to time in responses to emerging issues.

The UNIMARC Programme Committee, as well as the other Review Groups (ISBD, BCM, LIDATEC) will report to the Advisory Committee on Standards.

Each Advisory Committee will have a chair, and up to nine members. These will be appointed by the Governing Board, based on nominations by IFLA Association Members (in the case of chairs) and Association and Institution Members (in the case of members). They may also have ex officio members, in order to support liaison with other groups and processes, as well as expert advisors.