

Welcome from the Professional Committee

We are very pleased that you have been elected to one of IFLA's Standing Committees. It is an exciting and interesting time to be involved in IFLA and you will share some great times with inspiring colleagues from all over the world.

To help you find your way, the Professional Committee (PC) has prepared the following information, explanations and shortcuts about IFLA and the professional units. We acknowledge the *Public Libraries Section* who generously agreed that we could adapt their welcome document.

1. Information about IFLA

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) is the leading international body representing the interests of library and information services and their users. It is the global voice of the library and information profession.

Founded in 1927, IFLA has around 1,300 Members in over 140 countries around the world. It was registered in the Netherlands in 1971 and is based in The Hague, at the Royal Library of The Netherlands. Membership comprises National Associations, International Associations, Institutions, Individual Members and other Organisations.

IFLA aims to promote high standards of provision and delivery of library and information services; encourage widespread understanding of the value of good library and information services; and represent the interests of members throughout the world.

We suggest that you learn more about IFLA and its structure. To begin with, go to www.ifla.org and then, when you participate in the annual Congress (World Library and Information Congress or WLIC) for the first time, do not miss the *Newcomers' Session*. This session offers a brief introduction to aspects of the Congress and IFLA as an organisation and is also a great opportunity to start building and expanding your professional network.

But where is IFLA heading?

There have been three significant events over the past three years that are shaping the future of IFLA.

In 2015, the member nations of the United Nations General Assembly adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and with it 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The SDGs represent an historic global focus on a common set of goals. By activating the library field in advancement of the SDGs, IFLA has an unprecedented opportunity to help align the field and showcase the important role of libraries in society.

In 2016, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation awarded IFLA an unprecedented “Legacy Grant” as part of the wind down of its Global Libraries Program. Legacy Grant funds cover two thirds of IFLA’s operating expenses beginning in 2017, offering an incredible opportunity for IFLA to focus on investing its efforts to help unite and transform the library field.

In 2017, the Legacy Grant enabled IFLA to commence the Global Vision Project and the [Global Vision Report](#) is the result of all the discussions and all opinions that have been gathered and analysed by IFLA. The contribution from more than 30,000 colleagues from 190 countries and all 7 continents shows that across all regions, all library types, and lengths of library experience, we share a deep commitment to the enduring value and role of libraries. The key findings were

1. We are united globally in our goals and values

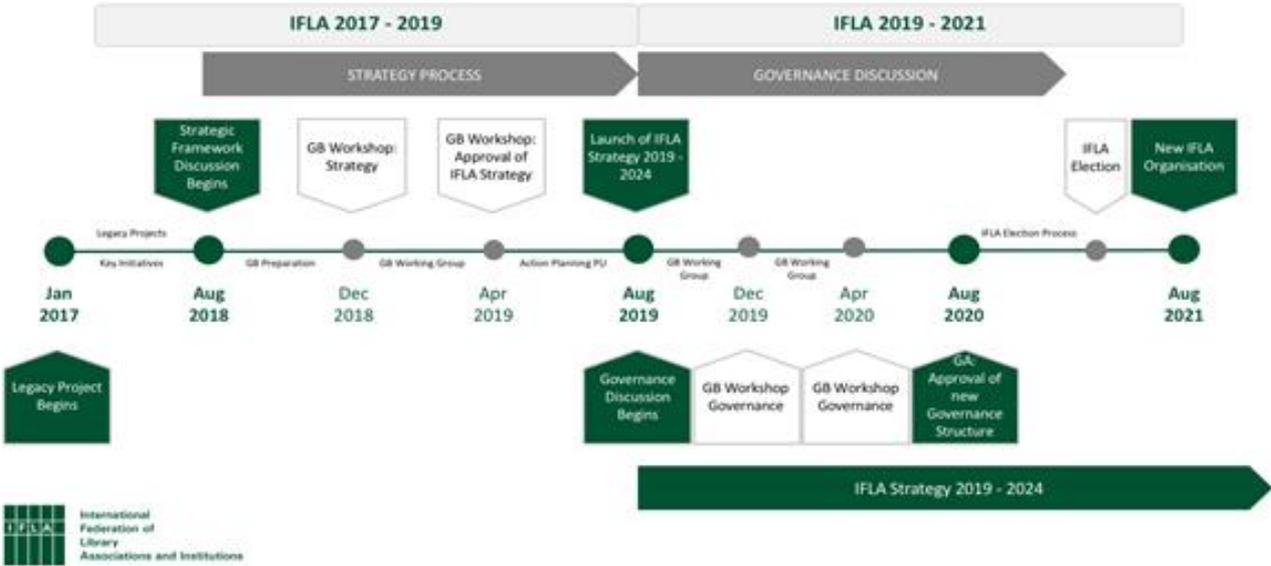
The most important finding is that across all regions, library types, and lengths of library experience, we share a deep commitment to the enduring value and role of libraries.

2. We must connect global and local actions effectively

Acknowledging regional characteristics and requirements will be essential in our future efforts to unite the library field in addressing common challenges.

IFLA’s Governing Board is developing a new Strategic Framework 2019 – 2024 for IFLA which will be launched in Athens at WLIC 2019. As a member of a Standing Committee you may be invited to provide input to the draft plan in early 2019. Below is the roadmap for the process to create a new IFLA organisation.

IFLA Development Roadmap



IFLA the organisation

This section explains how IFLA works and its governance structure.

The General Assembly

The highest level is the [General Assembly](#) of Members. This meeting is held once a year as part of the Congress. In 2019, the [Congress](#) will be held in Athens, Greece. There, the President and members of the Governing Board 2019 – 21 will be confirmed. Resolutions are also considered at this meeting, and those adopted are passed on to the Executive Committee and Professional Committee.

The Governing Board

IFLA's [Governing Board](#) (GB) is responsible for the governance and financial and professional directions of IFLA, and represents the Federation in legal and other formal proceedings.

The Board consists of the President, the President-elect, ten directly elected members, the Chair of the Professional Committee, the Chairs of each IFLA Division, and the Chair of the Management of Library Associations Section's Standing Committee.

The Executive Committee

The [Executive Committee](#) (EC) implements the decisions of the Governing Board and works with the organisation in accordance with the guidelines established by the Governing Board.

The EC consists of the President, the President-elect, the Treasurer, the Chair of the Professional Committee, and two members of the GB elected every two years by members of the GB from among its elected members.

The Professional Committee

IFLA's [Professional Committee](#) (PC) ensures coordination of the work of all the units within the Federation responsible for professional activities, policies and programs (Sections, Strategic Programs, Special Interest Groups).

The Committee consists of the PC Chair, the Chairs of the IFLA Divisions, two members elected from the Governing Board, the Chairs of the CLM (Copyright and other Legal Matters) and FAIFE (Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression) Committees and others as determined in the Rules of Procedure, one additional co-opted member, if appropriate, for specified purposes and limited times, IFLA's President-elect ex officio, and IFLA's Professional Support Officer who serves as its Secretary, ex officio.

The Divisions

On the next level are the five divisions that are so-called administrative units:

- Library Types (Division I)
- Library Collections (Division II)
- Library Services (Division III)
- Support of the Profession (Division IV)
- Regions (Division V).

Underneath them are 43 sections. Check which Division your section or SIG belongs to!

<https://www.ifla.org/activities-and-groups>

The Sections

The sections make up IFLA's organisational base. Each section has a Standing Committee which consists of at least 10 and at most 20 members. IFLA members all over the world can nominate candidates to these Standing Committees. SC members serve four years on a Standing Committee following their election, and may be nominated and elected for a further four years, giving a maximum eight consecutive years on the same SC.

Every second year the SC members appoint a chairperson and secretary for two years with the possibility of an additional two-year period at the business meeting held at the Congress. The chairperson and secretary represent the section in the Division that it belongs to. The SC also elects an information coordinator who can be the same person as the secretary.

An SC may also appoint up to five [Corresponding Members](#). These places are intended for people who are normally unable to attend the Congress (and therefore the meetings of the Standing Committee) for geographical or financial reasons. Their role is to represent countries in geographical areas, which might not otherwise be represented, or to provide expertise in a specific subject field. They are also a great way to introduce people to the work of the Committee who might then later stand for election.

There are in fact more parts of IFLA than those we have described. But we'll leave it to you to find out more if you are interested.

IFLA Headquarters

IFLA's administration is based at The Royal Library, the national library of the Netherlands (Koninklijke Bibliotheek, or KB) in The Hague. The Secretary General (currently Gerald Leitner) is responsible for the strategic and operational direction and the financial management of the Federation within the policies established by the General Assembly and the Governing Board. At IFLA Headquarters there is an international staff of around 25 people who manage and develop programmes for members and the library and information sector worldwide. There is a list of HQ staff at <https://www.ifla.org/hq>

2. Information about your Section and what is expected of you as a member

Most sections meet twice a year, immediately before and also during the **IFLA WLIC in August**. Many sections also have a **mid-term meeting**. While it is understood that other commitments can prevent attendance, there is an expectation that members will be able to attend these meetings at no expense to IFLA. The location of the WLIC is always known 2 years in advance to allow plenty of time for planning. The 2020 Congress will be held in Auckland New Zealand, and the location of the 2021 Congress will be announced in August as part of the WLIC in Athens. Further details are on the IFLA website under the [Annual Conference](#) tab.

Sections can also organise **Satellite Meetings** to coincide with the WLIC. Satellite Meetings could be described as sector or topic specific mini conferences and occur either directly before or after the Congress. These can be arranged in partnership with other IFLA Sections. Between meetings members of Standing Committees work together using email, [Basecamp 2](#) and other shared platforms. There is an expectation that all SC members will be active participants in the process and respond to requests in a timely manner. Once you have Basecamp login and password, you can participate in discussions, update projects and read and upload important files and documents. You will be invited to join Basecamp early in 2019.

Members are also asked to actively engage with the networks within their own country to share stories and information about IFLA's activities.

Standing Committees are responsible for the development of programs for the WLIC, Satellite and Mid-Term Meetings. Sections will usually appoint a subcommittee to work on these programs, and they are often delivered collaboratively with other Sections which is a great opportunity to learn more about IFLA and other sections. There is an expectation that all members will take a role in this area.

Standing Committees are also involved in other projects during the year, for example developing and reviewing library standards and guidelines. From April – August 2019 Standing Committees will develop a work plan for 2019 – 21 based on IFLA's new Strategic Framework. More information and tools will be available to assist with this planning before April.

The IFLA [website](#) provides additional information about the role of Standing Committee members.

3. Information about WLIC and your role as a member of a Standing Committee

The SC's annual cycle, which is of course a part of IFLA's annual cycle, has its hub in the annual Congress. The next congress is in Athens Greece on 24 - 30 August 2019 and has the theme *Libraries: dialogue for change*.

The SC meets on at least two occasions during the Congress to coordinate ongoing and planned activities and tasks. In Athens the SC meetings are:

Date	Time	Event
Saturday 24 August	11.15 – 17.45	SC meetings (see program for details)
Sunday 25 August	8.30 – 10.00	Newcomer's session (if this is your first Congress)
During the Congress		2 nd meeting for SC
During the Congress		Your Unit's session/programme

It is important that as a Standing Committee member you participate in these meetings. The meetings are open to other Congress delegates and can attract big crowds.

Every second year the SC elects its Chairperson, Secretary and Information Coordinator. An **election** for these positions will take place at the first meeting in Athens (Saturday 24 August) with the election being conducted by the outgoing Chairperson. Only continuing and new SC members are eligible to vote. Your Standing Committee may call for nominations in the period leading up to the WLIC to give members time to consider the issue. Proxy votes are allowed for those members not able to attend the meeting.

The **Agenda** and associated documents will be distributed to you in the weeks ahead of the Congress. Take time to read them and don't be afraid to ask questions, nothing is 'stupid'! You should also be prepared to say a little bit about yourself at the first meeting and be able to describe the major library initiatives and issues in your country.

Standing Committee members are encouraged to attend the General Assembly and participate and contribute to the points on the agenda that are of concern, and be present for those issues that most strongly manifest IFLA as an organisation. As a minimum, you should take part in the Opening Session, General Assembly and Closing Session. You are also warmly invited to participate in the President's Session and the President-elect's session.

The annual Congress is an excellent opportunity to strengthen and widen your professional and social network, and we strongly recommend you participate in different kinds of network building and social situations. Find out, for example, if there is a **Caucus** you can take part in. An IFLA caucus is a gathering of delegates who share common backgrounds or interests that are united either by languages, country or region. They are informative, fun and casual. And often Sections will organise a dinner or other social events, such as meetings held by the National Library Associations.

Once the [Congress program](#) is available online take the time to explore it and mark the sessions you're interested in going to. There is an expectation that, wherever possible, SC members will attend the sessions organised by their section and report back through various communication channels. Make sure you take the time to visit the Poster Sessions.

And one more thing, a friendly little idea - take some sweets or souvenir from your country to the SC meetings to give to someone you meet - and, of course bring your business cards, preferably in English.

The Professional Committee congratulates you on being elected to a Standing Committee and values your contribution and expertise to the work of IFLA.