
Bylaws on the operation of Chapters of INFITT

Preamble

International Forum for Information Technology in Tamil (INFITT) is a California, USA registered non-profit non-governmental organization formed to promote usage of Tamil Language in diverse forms on computers across the globe. To promote the organizational charter mission activities, regional chapters may be established with the approval of the Executive Committee of INFITT. The INFITT Constitution does not elaborate on the bylaws under which the regional chapters can operate in different parts of the world.

The present set of bylaws are proposed as an interim measure till the INFITT Constitution Review Committee (CRC) addresses this question and expand the existing constitution on how the chapters can operate. The proposed interim bylaws come into effect upon approval by a majority vote by the Executive Committee of INFITT. For the purpose of the present set of bylaws on the operations of regional chapters, the term "INFITT" refers to the parent international organization registered in the state of California, USA and "chapters" refer to various representation agencies authorized to operate in different regions of the world.

Bylaws

1. Approval of the regional chapters and initial mode of operation

1.1 Based on a written request from a group of registered members of INFITT resident in a geographically well defined area, INFITT EC shall review the proposal and authorize operation of a regional chapter subject to the observance of the following set of bylaws applicable to ALL regional chapters of INFITT.

1.2 The INFITT EC is mandated to review the submission and provide a formal response (affirmative or negative) within 30 days of the written request filed through the INFITT Secretariat by at least 7 GB members of the respective region (addressed to the Executive Director). In the affirmative case, INFITT EC shall name an initial core group as the "Chapter Management Committee (CMC)" for the chapter, as defined in the articles 2.3 – 2.5.

1.3 Taking practical viability of regional chapters into account, proposals for the operation of regional chapters will be entertained only from countries (cf. art 1.4 below) where there are at least 20 registered GB members of INFITT reside at the time of submission of the proposal.

1.4 Chapter operations at the National Level: Financial transaction across international borders is complex, sensitive and in some countries not permitted for local

societies or trusts. Hence Chapters can be formed and operate only within the national borders of any country wherever they exist. For example chapters can be formed in India, Sri Lanka, Malaysia, Singapore, USA, Canada etc. but not one for North America covering both USA and Canada, one for the Gulf states region composed of several independent Emirates, though such grouped geographical representation exists right now at the INFITT GC and EC.

1.5 As soon as the formation of a chapter has been approved by the INFITT, the ED of INFITT shall send a notice to all the "regional" members of the INFITT who reside in the designated territory announcing the decision of INFITT and setting up the schedule for the first Regional chapter meeting to announce the interim team of office bearers for the chapter and on the briefing of bylaws concerning the operation of the regional chapter.

2. Operations of the Regional Chapter

2.1 Regional Representations: The Chapters are formed to facilitate conduct of regional events and to serve as coordinating centers for the international organization, rather than as separate entities with their own set of bylaws.

2.2 Members of the Chapter: All registered members of INFITT who resides within the territorial limits of a chapter shall be considered to be the members of the chapter with full voting rights to elect the members to the Chapter Management Committee (CMC) for that region. They form the "electoral college" for the election of the members of the CMC.

2.3 Chapter Management Committee (CMC): To plan and execute various activities, each chapter shall elect once in two years a "Chapter Management Committee (CMC)" composed of SEVEN members: TWO members nominated by the INFITT EC and FIVE members to be elected amongst the members of the relevant region (GB members)

2.4 Nominated Members of the CMC: INFITT EC shall appoint a Regional Treasurer and one serving EC member (or from the GC in case of an EC candidate is not being available) as its nominee. These two members shall be residents of the region where chapter operates. The two members shall serve as direct liaison with the parent body and participate in the discussion, decision-making at the chapter with full voting rights.

2.5 Election of the CMC members: The electoral college for the CMC (art. 2.2) shall elect five members for the CMC. Any resident member of the region can contest for the CMC seats and each GB member shall have one vote. A registered member of INFITT may hold elected positions in the parent INFITT GC and EC, in addition to taking a role in the management of the regional chapters.

2.6. Returning Officers: INFITT EC shall facilitate the CMC election process (at regular interval of two years), by appointing a team of "returning officers" with a time-table and

provide them clear guidelines on the modalities for the election of the open positions in the CMC.

2.7 Office-bearers of the Chapter: Soon after the election of the five members for the CMC, they shall meet along with the two nominated members (i.e., all seven members of CMC) to elect one of them as the “Convener” and another as the “Secretary” for the planning and execution of various chapter activities. The internal election takes place in the same manner as the election of office-bearers amongst the EC members.

2.8. CMC Meetings: The Convener shall preside over the periodical meetings of the CMC and any annual general body meeting of all members of the region. The Secretary shall prepare minutes for each of the CMC meetings and pass on a copy to the INFITT EC for information.

2.9 Terms of office of CMC Members: The duration of office of a newly elected CMC is two years. To the extent possible, the election of office-bearers shall take place during the last quarter of the calendar year so that the new office-bearers take charge of the regional chapter effectively from 1 Jan of the subsequent year. No individual member can be part of the CMC for more than two consecutive terms (i.e., four successive calendar years).

2.10. Membership Dues: Membership to the parent body INFITT is a statutory requirement for any individual to associate with any of the regional chapters. The annual dues for the INFITT membership has to be paid at the beginning of the calendar year. No separate membership dues will be charged for the association with the regional chapters. As the size of the Chapter grows the funding position will be looked into, as and when the need arises.

2.11 Logos and Identification Banners: Each chapter will be named as per a standard convention "INFITT - region" where region can be India, Malaysia, Singapore, Sri Lanka, etc. (e.g. INFITT-India, INFITT-Malaysia, .. etc.)

2.11.1 In default the approved logos and banners of INFITT shall become the official logos and banners of the regional chapters. Upon request, INFITT EC may permit the use of a slightly modified logo of the parent body (such as a sub line indicating the name of the region where the chapter operates) on a case-by-case basis.

2.12 Website of the Regional chapters: INFITT shall encourage the regional chapters to run their websites to publicize their events, subject to the following conditions. The regional chapter sites shall be hosted from the main portal gateway of INFITT either as a sub-domain or under a separated directory as the root, as in countryname.infitt.org or www.infitt.org/countryname/. If needed Special Global TLDs can be registered with the EC approval . But it should point to the relevant infitt directory or sub-domain.

2.13 Local Registration of the Chapter: In case of any attempt towards the formation of local Society or a Trust, formal approval from the INFITT EC must first be obtained first. The basic elements for such registrations such as identity of the signing authorities and specific additional bylaws separately required for such registrations have to be forwarded for approval from the INFITT EC prior to setting in motion the local registration process.

2.14 Bylaws of the Local Chapter: In the event of additional bylaws included in the local registration, these additional bylaws cannot in any way, either abrogate or modify the generic set of bylaws for the chapters approved by the parent body (INFITT). The CMC should submit a copy of such additional bylaws to the INFITT EC for approval prior to submission to local authorities.

2.15 Finance: To handle the financial aspects of each regional chapter, INFITT EC shall appoint a "regional Treasurer" for a two-year term, with the possibility of renewal for the same person to continue. The renewal beyond the first term needs to be done with a collective consent from both EC and CMC. The regional treasurer is normally resident within the geographical zone defined for the chapter operation and should be a "registered" member of INFITT in good standing.

2.16 Bank Accounts: The Regional Treasurer along with the Convener of the chapter may operate jointly bank accounts to manage the finances of the regional chapter. The account and net access details for such accounts shall be shared confidentially with the ED of INFITT for security reasons. Further, all the bank accounts should have online access and the access credentials should be shared with the Convener, CMC, ED of INFITT and Treasurer of INFITT.

2.17 Communication between the Chapter and the Parent Body on Financial Matters: The Regional Treasurer of the chapter shall operate under the guidance and supervision of the Executive Director (ED) of INFITT who holds the primary financial responsibility of INFITT and regional chapters. To facilitate mandatory financial reporting and audit, the regional treasurer shall provide periodically (quarterly) electronic copies of all financial statement of banks and other institutions where the chapter funds are held or deposited. It is mandatory that both deposits and withdrawals from the bank account need to be informed appropriately to the Convener, CMC, who in turn should be able to provide a summary to ED, INFITT and Treasurer, INFITT upon request.

2.18. Financial Transactions beyond the Chapter Territory: Except in cases of specific mandate from the INFITT EC, regional chapters operating at the national level are not permitted to engage in any financial transactions with or on behalf of other regional chapters of INFITT. For annual Tamil Internet Conferences and other major events organized by INFITT, INFITT EC may authorize a local chapter to collect

conference registration fees, sponsorship and related funds directly linked to the event for a limited period of six months.

2.18.1 Non-Profit Status of INFITT: Parent body INFITT is officially registered as a non-profit non-governmental organization with the State of California, USA. Tax authorities of USA (IRS) have given tax-exempt status to INFITT (a process that is renewed periodically). INFITT operates online payment options via PayPal. Chapters may refer to these important arrangements to the potential donors in any fund raising activity and to members for any payments related to annual membership dues and conference fees.

2.19 Activities of the Regional chapters

Chapters are free to organize events and services locally (workshops, mini-conferences, help desk,.. etc.) as long as these events are in line with the INFITT mission and objectives. The Chapters need to inform details of the planned events to the parent body in advance (by at least two weeks) so that events of the regional chapters can be synchronized with those of the parent body and of other chapters as well.

2.20 Access to Events: Events organized by the chapters are open to all members of INFITT (irrespective of the region where they live) and also to a limited extent to the general public. The organizers of the local events may limit participation on an event-by-event basis.. Members of INFITT shall enjoy unrestricted access to these events with significant reduction in the admission/registration fee for the event (quantum of reduction again to be determined by local chapters on a event-by-event basis).

2.20.1 To the extent possible chapters shall organize local **events in a self-financing manner** (i.e., certain registration fee may be charged depending on the anticipated overall costs and the number of participants). A provisional budget must be made for each event by the CMC of each Chapter prior to the event and a copy submitted to the INFITT EC. To the extent the resources may permit, the parent body shall provide all possible support (manpower, technical and financial) to ensure success of the events organized by the regional chapter.

2.21 Annual Tamil Internet Conference is a major flag event for INFITT and to the extent possible INFITT shall involve the regional chapter to play an important role in such major events. Exhibition and Community Hubs in particular are parts of the TIC where the regional chapters can play major role in the organization as well as ensuring a large public participation.

2.22 The Actions of Each Chapter must be consistent with the stated charter mission of INFITT as elaborated in the INFITT Constitution.

a) The Chapters may not be operated for the primary purpose of carrying on a trade or business unrelated to the mission and purposes of INFITT.

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- (b) The Chapters may not engage in any activities that are unlawful under the laws of the nation in which they are organized.
- (c) The Chapters cannot commit the parent body INFITT to any financial obligation, or to any other obligation whatsoever, unless such commitment is authorized in advance in writing by the INFITT EC.
- (d) The Office-bearers of the chapters may not speak for or act in the name of the INFITT without the prior written approval of the INFITT Secretariat,
- e) Fund raising by chapter officials is permitted only in full coordination with the INFITT Secretariat, except to cover the cost of specific regional events.

2.23 Closure of Chapters and Repatriation of Funds. For chapters that are dormant without any activities continually for a period of two years, INFITT EC may undertake administrative measures to close down the Chapter. Bank accounts and deposits held if any will be closed and arrangements made for the repatriation of funds held by the chapter back to the parent INFITT. In such cases, an advance notice should be given to the CMC of the concerned Chapter and INFITT GC 90 days in advance of the proposed closing date. The closing of the Chapter will be decided by a majority vote of the INFITT GC (voting in such cases shall be executed electronically permitting voting by all members of the GC).

2.24 Adoption of the Bylaws: The present set of bylaws come into force within 7 days of its approval by a majority decision of the INFITT EC and the bylaws are enforceable on all existing Chapters as well as the new Chapters to be started.

Note: Interim bylaw was finalized in December 5th 2014 in EC