

International Consortium of Investigative Journalists

Network Committee Charter

The ICIJ network

The International Consortium of Investigative Journalists (ICIJ) is a nonprofit journalism organization which supports a network of journalists producing cross-border investigative stories of global public importance. The network is distinct from the staff of ICIJ who work for it full or part-time and receive compensation, although ICIJ staff may be members.

What ICIJ members do

ICIJ members collaborate with each other on cross-border investigations. They at all times must abide by ICIJ's rules and guidelines, as promulgated by ICIJ from time to time, and comply with the highest professional and ethical standards.

Members are committed to watchdog journalism and understand that they are part of a team and must be team players. They help each other both on ICIJ projects and when requested by other members pursuing individual stories.

How ICIJ members are selected

Journalists become ICIJ members by invitation only. The ICIJ Network Committee assesses and approves or rejects potential new members in consultation with the ICIJ director or his/her designee.

Criteria for membership include professionalism, integrity, independence, and an established ability to work in a team and produce investigative reporting with impact. The Committee will consider first the professional record of potential members and second where they publish. The Committee also can dismiss members if they no longer fit the membership criteria. Reasons for dismissal include working for governments; doing political or issue advocacy or public relations work; acting in ways contrary to ICIJ's spirit of sharing and collaboration; or violating ICIJ project rules and guidelines (see Dismissal Policy).

Candidates for membership must provide evidence of their investigative stories, written endorsements from two ICIJ members, and evidence of being team players capable of sharing and collaborating.

Categories of ICIJ membership

There are two categories of membership: active and alumni.

Active members are available to undertake ICIJ projects. They include reporters working for media organizations, freelancers, teachers of investigative reporting, or those otherwise engaged in watchdog journalism – the main criterion for active membership is the reporters’ availability and capability to work on cross-border projects, according to ICIJ’s criteria. There is no obligation, however, that ICIJ engage members on projects. The ICIJ editors will select participants in projects based on the needs of the projects.

Alumni members are former active members who have retired or are not available to undertake projects for ICIJ. ICIJ may call on them to assist with contacts, advice, research, on-the-ground assistance, and so on. Members who have moved to political or issue advocacy, or public relations work or government-paid positions (excluding public media) will no longer be entitled to be either full or alumni members.

The ICIJ Network Committee

The ICIJ Network Committee manages the ICIJ network, with regard to membership and matters referred to it by ICIJ’s director or his/her designee, including appropriate strategic and journalistic questions related to ICIJ.

Committee membership

Committee membership is restricted to ICIJ members. The Network Committee has nine members, including a chair and two vice-chairs. The term of Committee membership is three years. Five of the original nine members will remain on the Committee for an extra year (four years in total) to stagger the membership. If the Committee cannot agree on which members serve the extra year, the ICIJ director or his/her designee will determine this. The Committee selects new members subject to the approval of the ICIJ director and his/her designee.

Overall Committee membership shall reflect the diversity of ICIJ members, with the goal of at least one member from each of Africa, Asia, Europe, Latin America, Oceania and the USA/Canada.

Committee leadership

The Network Committee elects its chair and vice-chairs for terms of two years. INC members who have served in any of those positions will be eligible for only one more two-year term either as chair or vice chair.

If at least two-thirds of Committee members confirm in writing that they support reconsideration of the election of the chair and/or either or both of the vice-chairs, the Committee promptly will hold a new election.

The Committee chair and vice chairs will keep in regular contact with the ICIJ director or his/her designee on issues that arise in the Committee.

How ICIJ members are dismissed

The ICIJ Network Committee may dismiss members if they no longer fit the membership criteria. Reasons for dismissal include: working for government; doing political or issue advocacy or public relations work; acting in ways contrary to ICIJ's spirit of collaboration and teamwork, including any harassment, intimidation, or other victimization of another ICIJ member; or violating ICIJ project rules and guidelines, including against leaking or plagiarism.

An ICIJ member or ICIJ staff member initiates dismissal of an ICIJ member by written communication to the chair of the ICIJ Network Committee and the ICIJ executive director or his/her designee. The chairs, in consultation with other members of the ICIJ Network Committee they deem appropriate, determine in their discretion whether the allegation warrants investigation and decision. If the chairs consider that the allegation does warrant investigation and decision, they appoint a three-person review panel of ICIJ Network Committee members.

The panel as appropriate may designate one of its members or another ICIJ member or third party to act as investigator, to interview the ICIJ member subject to the procedure, gather other information, and within a two-week period (subject to extension by the panel) recommend: 1) no action; 2) issuance of a warning; 3) temporary suspension; or 4) dismissal. The panel also may appoint a mediator to attempt to resolve any issue with the ICIJ member.

The panel's recommendation takes effect in two weeks (subject to reduction or extension by the panel with approval of chairs of the ICIJ Network Committee) unless the ICIJ member subject to the recommendation appeals within that time to the ICIJ Network Committee, whose decision will be final, subject to the approval of the ICIJ executive director or his/her designee.