**IALC Observer Membership Policy**

The members of the International Association of Language Commissioners (IALC) voted unanimously in their Annual General Meeting in Bilbao in September 2022 to create a new category of membership which will permit organisations to gain access to IALC activities when they do not meet the criteria for full membership as described in the Full Membership form.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the Observer Membership is to foster greater awareness, engagement, and collaboration between the IALC and other institutions or organisations who have a mandate to oversee language rights, but are unable to fulfil the criteria for full membership set out in the IALC Rules.

The mission of the IALC is to support and advance language rights, equality and diversity throughout the world and to support language commissioners so they may work to the highest professional standards by:

* sharing experience and exchanging knowledge of best practice
* advising or assisting in the establishment of Language Commissioners offices
* facilitating an exchange of training and professional development resources, research and information
* cooperating with like-minded organisations who value the promotion and protection of language rights and diversity.

**Criteria for Observer Membership of the IALC**

Observer Membership may be granted to institutions or organisations who have a mandate to oversee or protect language rights but are unable to fulfil all criteria for full membership set out in the IALC Rules.

Observer Membership is intended for those who have a direct mandate from their government or legislative assembly to oversee or protect language rights and whose role includes investigating, resolving, or making recommendations with regards to language rights.

Please note that this category of membership is not intended for individuals or academic researchers who specialise in language rights and the work of language commissioners. However, the IALC would be interested in discussing all opportunities to collaborate with researchers on the IALC’s core aims of supporting and advancing language rights, equality and diversity throughout the world. Proposals for collaboration or research projects may be submitted to info@languagecommissioners.org.

**Membership benefits**

Observers will have access to a diverse network of language commissioners, ombudsmen and other stakeholders, facilitating collaboration and the exchange of ideas and best practices. In addition, for example, Observers will have :

* observer status at all public conferences and events arranged by the IALC
* observer status at the meetings of the officer-led subgroups (e.g. Policy & Research and Communications subgroups).
* invitations to online webinars designed to disseminate experience and best practice
* invitations to attend special meetings designed to bring all IALC members together
* a space to share information about their work on the IALC website
* regular updates on the IALC members’ activities, publications, and resources related to language rights, policies, and advocacy.

The IALC reserves the right to determine at any time to which category of members it will send invitations for its activities.

**Responsibilities and expectations**

Observer members are expected to observe the rules of the IALC and respect and support the mission, vision, values and objectives of the IALC.

Observer members may be invited to participate in relevant working groups, committees, or projects or to give presentations to IALC members about their work.

Regular communication and engagement with the Chair, secretariat and fellow members are expected to maintain an active association.

**Review and renewal**

Observer memberships will be reviewed periodically to ensure continued alignment with the mission, vision, values, and objectives of the IALC.

Renewal of Observer membership will be subject to satisfactory participation and adherence to the responsibilities and expectations outlined above.

**Application process**

Applications should be submitted to the secretariat of the IALC and will be reviewed by the Executive and Membership Committee. The decision on whether an applicant meets the criteria for Observer membership will be made at the discretion of the association. The IALC shall decide on applications for Observer membership by majority vote of the full membership of the association.

Observer membership will be afforded to office holders rather than individuals and afforded to one member from each jurisdiction.

If applicants are not satisfied with the decision, an appeal may be lodged to the Executive and Membership Committee.