

TERMS OF REFERENCE for the VNGOC Nominations Committee for Board Elections

1. BACKGROUND

The Vienna NGO Committee on Drugs (VNGOC) hold elections every year for its six-person Board of Directors. In order to run these elections in a transparent and fair manner, the VNGOC [Statutes](#) and [Rules of Procedure](#) require that an independent ‘Nominations Committee’ is formed each year to oversee this process.

In April 2021, the VNGOC General Assembly (membership) decided to form a working group tasked with suggesting amendments to the VNGOC Rules of Procedure and/or the Nominations Committee Terms of Reference to further refine and improve this process and help to promote and ensure greater ‘balance’ within the Board (see Box 1). This version of the Terms of Reference will therefore be decided upon by the VNGOC membership at an Extraordinary General Meeting in late 2021.

Box: The concept of ‘balance’ in the context of the VNGOC Board

The VNGOC membership comprises a wide range of different perspectives, views and experiences related to the world drug situation, as well as organisations from all around the world – which remains the greatest strength of the Committee as a whole. It is therefore essential that members feel adequately represented within the VNGOC Board itself, and that the elected officials are from different genders, ages, regions, and backgrounds.

*However, the Board elections are a democratic process and reliant on the applications that are received. Furthermore, with just six Board positions available, it is simply not possible to guarantee complete representation, especially from every region of the world. With these challenges in mind, the concept of ‘balance’ within the Board needs to be implemented in a flexible way. Therefore, the following **aspirations** should be considered by the Nominations Committee regarding both overall composition of the Board:*

- *The six Board members should represent at least four different world regions*
- *Of the six Board members, at least two should identify as men, and at least two should identify as women*
- *The six Board members should represent at least four of the following thematic areas: prevention, harm reduction, treatment, recovery and social reintegration, drug policy reform, and access to medicines*
- *Of the six Board members, at least one should be a person with current or previous lived experience of drug use, or someone otherwise directly impacted by drug policies.*

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This document should be read alongside the Article 14 of the VNGOC [Statutes](#), and Article 9 of the VNGOC [Rules of Procedure](#).

2. SELECTION AND COMPOSITION OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

Article 14 of the VNGOC Statutes currently requires:

1. The General Assembly shall appoint a Nominations Committee comprising at least three representatives of member organizations in good standing. The Nominations Committee shall oversee the nominations and election processes, in line with the VNGOC Rules of Procedure.
2. The Nominations Committee's term of office shall be one year, and expires immediately after the elections for Board positions at the General Assembly. Members of the Nominations Committee may not stand for election to Board positions during this time.

Furthermore:

- The Nominations Committee should comprise a maximum of seven members in order to function effectively, and its composition should aspire for balance in the spirit outlined in Box 1.
- Members of the Nominations Committee need to be from VNGOC member organisations that are in good standing at the time of their selection, and these individuals or other representatives of their organisations¹ may not be nominated for election on the Board in the same year in order to avoid potential conflicts of interest.
- A call for applications will be issued prior to each General Assembly, for a Nominations Committee to manage the following year's election process.
- The Nominations Committee will be supported by VNGOC staff and any Board members that are not due for re-election, as required.

¹ For clarity, this only applies to individuals that are nominated in the name of an organisation that is already represented on the Nominations Committee. It does not, for example, prevent someone from a network's member organisation from being nominated – provided that member organisation is itself a VNGOC member in good standing.

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3. ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE NOMINATIONS COMMITTEE

1. The Nominations Committee will design, implement and oversee the entire Board election process as outlined in Article 9 of the VNGOC [Rules of Procedure](#) (also included as an Annex).
2. Furthermore, the Nominations Committee will start by reviewing feedback received from the previous Nominations Committee members, and by assessing the existing composition of the Board in relation to the aspirations outlined in Box 1. This assessment will then inform a call for nominations which should encourage nominations that have the potential to fill any identified gaps.
3. After verifying the eligibility of the nominated candidates, the Nominations Committee will make every possible effort to reach consensus on a proposed 'slate' of recommended candidates. If a 'slate' is agreed by all but one Nominations Committee member, it may be communicated as a 'Majority Position' while making it explicitly clear that full consensus was not achieved. Otherwise, no slate will be presented at all.
4. The Nominations Committee's deliberations on the 'slate' will consider the overall composition of the Board (see Box 1 above), the capacity of candidates to perform the roles they are running for,² and the quality of applications.
5. The Nominations Committee is encouraged to interview eligible candidates as part of this process.
6. The Nominations Committee will then circulate the proposed 'slate' alongside the full candidate list and all other instructions and information to all member organizations, by e-mail at least two weeks prior to the meeting date – and sooner if possible.
7. The Nominations Committee's proposed 'slate' remains a **recommendation** only, all eligible VNGOC members remain free to vote for the candidates of their choice.
8. In line with Article 14 of the VNGOC [Statutes](#), the Nominations Committee may also propose amendments to the Statutes, the VNGOC Rules of Procedure and/or these Terms of Reference as required to update and improve future election processes, and such proposals will be decided on by the General Assembly.

² The issue of capacity for specific Board positions will include elements defined in the "Terms of Reference for Specific Board Positions" (set forth in Article 10 of the [VNGOC Rules of Procedure](#)), as well as additional operational considerations – such as, inter alia, the need for a candidate for Chair to be able to travel regularly to Vienna at their organisation's expense, or the need for a candidate for Treasurer to be a signatory on the Austrian bank account (which is unfortunately not possible for citizens of certain non-Austrian countries).