

# CONSTITUTION & BY-LAWS OF THE INTERNATIONAL COTTON GENOMICS INITIATIVE (ICGI)

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## CONSTITUTION

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### Article I

#### Name and Legal Identity

1. The name of an organization designated The International Cotton Genome Initiative, also known by the acronym ICGI, is hereby created as a global affinity group with common goals and interests.
2. The identifying logos for the ICGI are shown below.

| Color-Vertical  | Color-Horizontal  | B/W-Vertical  | B/W-Horizontal  |
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### Article II

#### Mission Statement

1. The ICGI is organized exclusively for scientific and educational purposes and shall remain a non-profit entity. To encourage and promote scientific endeavors across disciplines in the field of cotton research, the mission of the organization is two-fold:
  - (a) To increase knowledge of the structure and function of the cotton genome<sup>1</sup> for the benefit of the global community
  - (b) To facilitate i) Global communication, collaboration, and education; ii) Knowledge and resource integration; iii) Technology and resource development; & iv) Coordinated research planning

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<sup>1</sup> It is important to note that the term “cotton genome” is used here in the broadest possible sense, *i.e.*, the “*Gossypium* genome” as it is currently represented in all of the extant members of the *Gossypium* genus.

## **Article III**

### **Organization and Governance**

1. To effectively fulfill the mission as stated in Article II, the ICGI is organized into five discipline-based Workgroups and governed by an Executive Steering Committee.
2. The Workgroups are as follows: (a) Structural Genomics, (b) Functional Genomics, (c) Germplasm and Genetic Stocks, (d) Comparative Genomics and Bioinformatics, (e) Breeding and Applied Genomics.

## **Article IV**

### **Membership**

1. Membership in the ICGI is open to all individuals with a professional interest in cotton genomics, or to any person or organization philosophically aligned with the stated purposes of the ICGI.
2. Organizations or individuals wishing to support the ICGI, but not to participate as active voting members, may do so as patrons or sustaining members.
3. New members may apply on-line at any time via the ICGI's web page. To join the organization, access the ICGI website recruitment page ([https://www.cottongen.org/icgi/become\\_a\\_member](https://www.cottongen.org/icgi/become_a_member)) and submit a completed new membership form to the ICGI Website/Membership Coordinator.
4. There are presently no dues for membership in the ICGI. A change in this policy would be subject to revision of the Constitution as specified in Article VIII.
5. ICGI members can associate with as many workgroups as they deem personally relevant, but must indicate a primary workgroup that is most closely aligned with the member's research interests.
6. The membership list is maintained and updated by ICGI's Website/Membership Coordinator and will be accessible at the ICGI website.
7. The membership list will not be distributed to commercial interests.
8. Membership entitles all individual members (regardless of Professional status) to the right to vote in all elections. Eligibility to be nominated for and to be elected an ICGI officer is limited to "Professional" members as defined in Article VII.

## **Article V**

### **ICGI Activities**

1. ICGI will sponsor a biennial international research conference, to be held at any time or place as determined by the Executive Steering Committee that does not conflict

with the U.S. Beltwide Cotton Research Conferences, the International Plant and Animal Genome Conferences, or the World Cotton Congresses.

2. The ICGI will maintain a website and listserve to disseminate information to the cotton genomics community.
3. To support its activities, the ICGI will solicit funds from industry sponsors and government agencies. The conditions under which these funds are collected, handled, and dispersed will be governed in accordance to the ICGI Constitution and By-Laws, and overseen by the Executive Steering Committee.

## **Article VI**

### **ICGI Structure and Officers**

1. The ICGI structure will comprise (a) the ICGI Officers, (b) three Standing Committees, and (c) the five discipline-based Workgroups.
2. The Officers of the ICGI will consist of (a) the ICGI Chair and Co-chair, (b) the Workgroup Chairs and Co-chairs, (c) a Secretary/Treasurer, (d) a Website/Membership Coordinator, & (e) the Chair of the ICGI Advisory Committee.
3. The composition of three Standing Committees will be as follows:
  - (a) The *Executive Steering Committee* comprises the ICGI Chair and Co-Chair, the Workgroup Chairs and Co-Chairs, the Secretary/Treasurer (*ex officio*), the Website/Membership Coordinator (*ex officio*), and the Chair of the Advisory Committee (*ex officio*). Voting members are elected by the membership at large; *ex officio* members are appointed.
  - (b) The *ICGI Biennial Research Conference Committee* comprises the ICGI Chair and Co-Chair, the Workgroup Chairs, the Website/Membership Coordinator, the Secretary/Treasurer, the Advisory Committee Chair, and the Chair and Co-Chair of the Local Organizing Committee.
  - (c) The *Advisory Committee* comprises Industry Representatives who want to represent their employers' interests in the ICGI.
4. Each of the five Discipline-based Workgroups (Article III) will be led by a Chair and Co-chair.

## **Article VII**

### **Election and Appointment of Officers**

1. Nominations and elections for the ICGI and Workgroup Co-Chairs will be held biennially. Any "Professional" member of the ICGI is eligible to serve as an officer. A "Professional" is deemed to be an individual holding an academic or governmental scientific research position. Individuals actively engaged in obtaining an academic degree or employed by a for-profit company are not eligible to serve as ICGI officers.

- (a) The ICGI Steering Committee via the Chair will circulate a call for nominations by email to the members in January. The ICGI Chair will confirm the nominees' eligibility and willingness to serve before posting the ballots.
  - (b) Elections will be conducted by on-line ballots. The list of nominations will be posted on the ICGI website and distributed by email to the members by 1 February.
  - (c) ICGI members can be nominated for only one position per election, but in successive elections can be nominated for positions other than the one they currently hold. While it will be possible to hold Chair and Co-chair positions simultaneously, no single individual can be Chair of ICGI and of a Workgroup or Chair of two different Workgroups simultaneously.
  - (d) The Website/Membership Coordinator will set up a page on the ICGI Website where the membership at large can vote.
  - (e) Voting will commence 1 February and close 1 March. The Chair will send reminder notices to the members 14 and 7 days before the end the voting period.
  - (f) The election is determined to be valid when 50% of the membership has voted. In the event that less than 50% of the membership has voted by 1 March, the voting will be extended by two weeks. At the end of this additional period, the election will be declared valid.
  - (g) At the end of the voting period, the Website/Membership Coordinator will communicate the results to the Steering Committee for ratification. The nominee with the greatest number of votes in each category will be deemed to be elected. Once the results have been ratified by the Executive Steering Committee, the results will be communicated to the members by email and posted on the ICGI website.
2. Elected officers will serve four year terms. Each officer will serve as Co-chair of ICGI or their Workgroup for two years. After two years, each Co-chair will be elevated to Chair.
    - (a) If a Chair cannot complete their designated term, their Co-chair will assume the Chair for the remainder of Chair's term and for the entirety of their anticipated term as Chair subject to eligibility under Article VII.1. (c). A new Co-chair will be elected on an *ad hoc* basis (organized by the ICGI Chair). If the Co-chair is not eligible to assume the role of Chair under Article VII.1. (c), a new Chair will be elected on an *ad hoc* basis (organized by the ICGI Chair).
    - (b) If a Co-chair cannot complete their designated term, a new Co-chair will be elected on an *ad hoc* basis to complete the term of the former Co-chair followed by elevation to Chair (organized by the ICGI Chair) subject to eligibility under Article VII.1. (c).
  3. The Secretary/Treasurer and Website/Membership Coordinator will be appointed, not elected. Members with the requisite skills and resources will be recruited by the ICGI chair and appointed, subject to ratification by a majority of the Steering Committee. The Secretary/Treasurer and Website/Membership Coordinator will

serve as long as they are willing, subject to a biennial confirmation by the Executive Steering Committee.

4. Advisory Committee comprises Industry Representatives who volunteer to participate in the ICGI as industry representatives.
  - (a) In conjunction with the ICGI elections, the ICGI chair will solicit relevant industry participation in the Advisory Committee.
  - (b) The Advisory Committee will comprise a maximum of five individuals.
  - (c) The Advisory Committee positions will be confirmed by the Executive Steering Committee in March of each biennium after the election of the new officers has been ratified.
  - (d) Advisory Committee positions are for two years, but recurrent terms are possible, subject to reconfirmation by the Executive Steering Committee.
  - (e) The Chair of the Advisory Committee will be determined by a biennial vote of the Advisory Committee immediately following ratification of the members of the Advisory Committee.

## **Article VIII**

### **Amendments to the Constitution and By-Laws**

1. Changes to any or all articles in the ICGI Constitution or By-Laws can be effected as follows.
  - (a) Amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws will be considered biennially in conjunction with ICGI officer elections.
  - (b) Proposals for amendments to the Constitution or By-Laws will be solicited by the ICGI Chair in conjunction with the call for nominations for ICGI Officers.
  - (c) Proposals will be reviewed by the Executive Steering Committee, and if approved by a majority vote, the proposed amendment(s) will be put to a vote by the membership at large.
  - (d) Constitution and By-Law additions and amendments will be determined to be resolved when 50% of the membership has voted. In the event that less than 50% of the membership has voted by 1 March, the voting will be extended by two weeks. At the end of this additional period, the election will be deemed to be valid and the amendments resolved.
  - (e) At the end of the voting period, the Website/Membership Coordinator will communicate the results to the Executive Steering Committee for ratification. Constitution and By-Law amendments will be considered approved if they are approved by 67% of the votes cast in a valid election. Once the results have been ratified by the Steering Committee, the results will be communicated to the members by email and posted on the ICGI website.

2. All procedures and policies not explicitly detailed in the ICGI Constitution and By-Laws will be resolved by a majority vote of the Executive Steering Committee until such time as the relevant amendments can be drafted and ratified.

*(See next page for By-Laws)*

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# BY-LAWS

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## Section 1. Duties of Officers

1. The responsibilities of the ICGI Chair are as follows.
  - a. Supervise the biennial ICGI elections and submit the results to the Executive Steering Committee for ratification.
  - b. Serve as Chair the ICGI Executive Steering Committee.
  - c. Serve as Chair the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Committee.
  - d. Coordinate (with the ICGI Co-Chair) the activities of the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Local Organizing Committee with the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Committee.
  - e. Recruit Industry Representatives for the Advisory Committee.
  - f. Solicit funds from relevant governmental and industry groups to offset the cost of the ICGI Biennial Research Conferences and other operational expenses.
  - g. Organize (subject to the approval of the Executive Steering Committee) *ad hoc* committees to deal with specific issues and tasks.
  - h. Communicate to the Executive Steering Committee issues that need resolution and approval before the next scheduled Business meeting.
2. The responsibilities of the ICGI Co-Chair are as follows.
  - a. Coordinate (with the ICGI Chair) the activities of the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Local Organizing Committee with the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Committee.
  - b. Support and assist in the general activities of the ICGI Chair.
3. The responsibilities of the Workgroup Chairs are as follows:
  - a. Organize the Workgroup sessions for the ICGI Biennial Research Conferences.
  - b. Assist the ICGI Chair and Co-Chair with the organization of the ICGI Biennial Research Conferences.
  - c. Spearhead workgroup initiatives to coordinate global community activities, and to report status of activities to the Executive Steering Committee.
  - d. Contribute as needed to the preparation of proceedings from the biennial meetings.
4. The responsibilities of the Workgroup Co-Chairs are to support the activities of their respective Chairs and share in the duties and responsibilities described for their respective Chairs, in coordination with the Chair.

5. The responsibilities of the Secretary/Treasurer are as follows:
  - a. Draft summary of business meeting minutes, and submit for final approval by Executive Steering Committee.
  - b. Collect and disperse funds as directed by the ICGI Executive Steering Committee.
  - c. Provide a financial report to the ICGI Steering Committee two weeks before each business meeting.
6. The responsibilities of the Website/Membership Coordinator are as follows:
  - a. Host and maintain the ICGI website and membership lists.
  - b. Distribute communiqués to the membership at large via the ICGI listserve.
  - c. Provide and maintain Workgroup listserves to their respective Chairs.
  - d. Post the minutes of the ICGI business meetings after they have been approved by the Executive Steering Committee.
  - e. Provide a portal on the ICGI webpage for elections.
  - f. Provide links to relevant cotton genome websites.
7. The responsibility of the Advisory Chair is to provide the Executive Steering Committee the consensus views of the Advisory Committee Members in how the ICGI can best achieve its mission (Article II) and best serve the needs and interests of the global community.

## **Section 2. Duties of Committees**

1. The Advisory Committee advises the Executive Steering Committee (via the Advisory Committee Chair) on its activities and priorities.
2. The Executive Steering Committee oversees the business of the ICGI.
  - a. Ratifies officer elections and appointments, and Constitution & By-Law amendments.
  - b. Oversees the acquisition and dispersal of monies.
  - c. Ratifies initiatives proposed by individual Executive Steering Committee members.
3. The ICGI Biennial Research Conference Committee is responsible the organization of the ICGI Biennial Research Conference as described below.
  - a. Develop a program for the ICGI Biennial Research Conference.
  - b. Assist the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Local Organizing Committee in preparing for and running the ICGI Biennial Research Conference.
  - c. Assist the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Local Organizing Committee in soliciting and dispersing funds for the ICGI Biennial Research Conference.



- d. The location of the ICGI Biennial Research Conference will be determined by application from self-nominated country representatives who have access to sufficient funds to organize the meeting.
- e. At the close of each Biennial ICGI Research Conference, the ICGI Chair will solicit (by email) proposals from individuals that wish to host the next conference. The proposals will be due six months after the close the previous Biennial ICGI Research Conference should address the following items:
  - 1) The composition of the Local Organizing Committee.
  - 2) The proposed venue of the meeting, and details of its features (capacity of main conference hall, ability to provide rooms for breakout groups, proximity to lodgings and transportation, etc.).
  - 3) Letters of support from host country institutions.
  - 4) Projected level and source of funds the host institution will provide for the meeting.
  - 5) Projected costs for individual participants.
  - 6) Projected costs for the ICGI.
- f. In the event that two or more groups apply to host the biennial ICGI Research Conference, the Executive Steering Committee will review the proposals and by majority vote select a host.
- g. In the event that only one group applies to host the ICGI, the Executive Steering Committee will review the proposal to confirm its acceptance by majority vote.
- h. In the event no applications are forthcoming, the Executive Steering Committee will solicit a host from the membership via the ICGI Chair.

### **Section 3. Approved uses of ICGI funds**

1. Monies contributed to the ICGI can be used to support the following activities.
  - a. Reimbursement of verifiable expenses incurred by ICGI officers traveling to the ICGI Biennial Research Conferences.
  - b. Reimbursement of verifiable expenses incurred by invited speakers traveling to the ICGI Biennial Research Conferences at the behest of the ICGI Biennial Research Conference Committee.
  - c. Distribution of funds to Local Organizing Committees for reimbursement of verifiable expenses incurred by Local Organizers in organizing the ICGI Biennial Research Conferences.
2. ICGI monies can only be disbursed with the approval of a majority of the Executive Steering Committee. The Executive Steering Committee can approve block disbursement as deemed appropriate. Minor expenses (less than \$500) on behalf of ICGI can be disbursed upon approval by the ICGI Chair, Co-Chair and Treasurer.

## **Section 4. Business meetings**

1. The ICGI Chair will coordinate Biannual ICGI Business Meetings in June or July and December or January, in person, via the internet, or via telecommunications.
  - a. Agenda items will be solicited by the ICGI at least 4 weeks prior to the business meeting and distributed to the ICGI Steering Committee two weeks prior to the business meeting.
  - b. Standing agenda items will include:
    - 1) Financial report (Secretary/Treasurer)
    - 2) Website/Membership report (Website/Membership Coordinator)
    - 3) ICGI Biennial Research Conference Committee report (ICGI Chair)
    - 4) Plant and Animal Genome ICGI Workshop Committee report (ICGI Co-Chair)
    - 5) Workgroup reports (Workgroup Chairs)
    - 6) Proposals put forward by ICGI Officers, including *ex officio* members
  - c. New proposals and actions will be deemed approved when they have been proposed by a Steering Committee member and approved by a majority of the Executive Steering Committee members voting. A quorum is achieved when eight or more Officers have voted by the deadline. In the event of a tie vote, a revote will be held and the Website/Membership Coordinator and the Secretary/ Treasurer will vote. If the vote is still tied, the item will be put to the membership at large (by email) unless the proponent elects to abandon the issue. The membership at large will have two weeks to vote, and the issue will be resolved by a majority of the respondents.
2. If the need arises, any member of the Executive Steering Committee may ask the Executive Steering Committee to approve items that need action before the next scheduled Business Meeting.
3. Business sessions will be included in Biennial Workshops and will be open to the membership at large. Proposals and initiatives put forward during these sessions must be sanctioned by the Executive Steering Committee (Section 2.2) will be non-binding until such time as the Executive Steering Committee has reviewed and voted on an appropriate course of action. The decision and disposition of proposals by the Executive Steering Committee will be summarized in meeting minutes, and the final decision posted on the ICGI website and disseminated to ICGI members by email

## **Section 5.**

The original Constitution & By-Laws were ratified 12 May 2005, with minor changes included above, ratified on 29 March 2015 and are effective from this date.