



**World  
Chambers  
Federation**



# World Chambers Federation

The World Chambers Federation (WCF) brings together the chamber members of the International Chamber of Commerce (ICC), facilitating exchange among the worldwide community of more than 12 000 chambers. WCF activities foster personal relationships and collaboration to help chambers strengthen the range of services they provide to their business constituency, particularly small- and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).

For more than 50 years, WCF has provided chamber leaders and senior executives with a global forum to exchange best practices and experiences. WCF strengthens links between chambers, enabling them to improve performance as well as discover new products and services to offer to their members.

WCF works with all chambers, using this network of expertise to create and support partnerships and projects at a local and international level.

WCF also develops partnerships with multilateral aid organizations to assist chambers in developing countries to create sustainable business services, thus consolidating their role in the economic development of their countries.

# Membership

WCF activities and projects involve local, regional, national, bilateral and transnational chambers from all over the world. WCF has members from both public law chambers, where membership is mandatory, and private law chambers, where a business's participation is voluntary.

All chambers that are members of ICC, either via ICC national committees or directly through its headquarters, are automatically members of WCF. This network of ICC members spans over 130 countries.

Only chamber members of ICC are eligible to serve on WCF governing bodies, task forces and committees.

Today's fast-paced, global marketplace makes it vital for chambers of commerce to work together to help their members take advantage of new international opportunities. WCF not only helps individual chambers become more productive, but also strengthens mutually advantageous links between chambers around the world.



# Showcasing chamber best practice and innovation

## World Chambers Congress

Held every two years in different regions of the world, the World Chambers Congress creates the personal networks that chamber executives need to truly exchange expertise and experience. Sharing knowledge on a permanent basis is the core objective of the congress.

### The congress around the world

- 1999** Marseilles, France
- 2001** Seoul, Republic of Korea
- 2003** Quebec City, Canada
- 2005** Durban, South Africa
- 2007** Istanbul, Turkey
- 2009** Kuala Lumpur
- 2011** Americas
- 2013** Africa/Middle East
- 2015** Europe

## World Chambers Competition

The World Chambers Competition is the only awards programme which provides international recognition to the most innovative projects undertaken by chambers of commerce and industry around the world.

The competition provides a unique opportunity for chambers to showcase originality and ingenuity, demonstrating their determination to strengthen SMEs and improve their services to members.

Since its inception in 2003, the competition has provided a vast array of case studies, not only from developed countries but also from developing and least-developed countries, showcasing an entrepreneurial diversity which has inspired other chambers. More than 55 dossiers from 30 countries were received in the 2005 edition of the competition.

[www.worldchamberscompetition.com](http://www.worldchamberscompetition.com)

# Trade documentation services

## **ATA Carnets**



WCF administers the ATA Carnet System and its international guarantee chain according to the conventions developed by the World Customs Organization (WCO) on temporary admission of goods.

ATA Carnets are extensively used by business in most parts of the world, with approximately 150 000 issued every year for goods valued at about US \$13.5 billion. Currently, 63 countries accept the ATA Carnet for temporary admission of commercial samples, professional equipment and goods for presentation or use at international trade fairs and similar events. In co-operation with the WCO, ICC national committees and chambers of commerce, WCF is working to extend the ATA Carnet System to more countries and to further integrate it into current business practice.

## **Certificates of Origin**

A chamber's role in the issuance and attestation of Certificates of Origin and other trade documents is vital to the facilitation of international trade. The role chambers of commerce have played in delivering Certificates of Origin can be traced back to the 1923 Geneva Convention relating to the simplification of customs formalities.

WCF work enhances the position of chambers as the natural agent for the issuance and attestation of these documents. WCF provides a range of tools to support chambers in this task. This includes publishing international Certificates of Origin Guidelines, monitoring chamber activity in preferential and non-preferential Certificates of Origin developments on a country-by-country basis, as well as offering training.

# Linking our global community

## **World Chambers Network (WCN)**



[www.worldchambers.com](http://www.worldchambers.com) provides the platform for WCF's global chamber network, fostering a comprehensive exchange of business information between chambers and their member companies throughout the world. WCN mobilizes the international business activities of WCF's chamber community to work together at one Internet location.

WCN services include:

- A comprehensive chamber directory
- The Global Business Exchange, where chambers can list their members' business opportunities on a database
- Trade and investment information, including material produced by chambers as well as links to local chamber business directories

## **Chamber Trust**

Trust, confidence and exposure are paramount issues faced by SMEs when they enter the global electronic market place. Through Chamber Trust, chambers can verify the online existence of their local companies through objective business information. The company is issued the Chamber Trust seal and is added to the global Chamber Trust registry which allows for extensive, searchable company and product/service descriptions.

# Professional education and development

All staff, from the chamber's president and CEO to the business information officer, want to know that their organization is operating effectively. Chambers of commerce, like all non-profit enterprises, often ask the questions: "How do we compare to other chambers?" and "Are we doing things right?"

To help chambers assess their performance, as well as provide guidelines to experienced chamber professionals or new staff, a range of resource materials is available through WCF. Titles cover issues such as chamber operations and services, setting up a chamber, leadership and management.

WCF partners with leading chambers in various parts of the world, delivering professional development training to chamber executives. Scholarship programmes are available for some of these events.

WCF's key events for the exchange of best practice and experience between chamber executives are the World Chambers Congress and the World Chambers Competition. As part of their professional development, chamber personnel regularly participate in ICC events and seminars. ICC experts travel the world to stage seminars and courses on subjects in which ICC has unique expertise. These include Incoterms, the Uniform Customs and Practice for Documentary Credits and ICC arbitration.

## **New initiatives**

WCF is always ready to explore new global services to support chambers in their daily activities. Areas currently under discussion include chamber branding and accreditation, education and training, and SME development.

# Partnerships

## **Chambers working together**

WCF works closely with leading national and transnational chamber of commerce groups as part of its outreach programme to chambers in all regions.

Transnational chambers and groups represent business within a geographical region, economic grouping, shared culture or common language. Transnational chambers can be found in most regions of the world.

Where such relationships have been very close, ICC WCF has often signed memorandums of understanding, reinforcing the closeness of its ties. Special partners include the Confederation of Asia Pacific Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Junior Chamber International, Union of Arab Chambers of Commerce and Industry, Federation of Chambers of Commerce of Central America, Association of Latin American Chambers of Commerce and Industry and the ASEAN Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

To cultivate ties and increase awareness of these types of chambers, WCF has created the Transnational Chambers of Commerce Forum. This annual meeting serves as a means for transnational chambers to learn more on the latest programmes and developments of their peers, build partnerships and foster networks between their institutions, and explore common areas of interest.

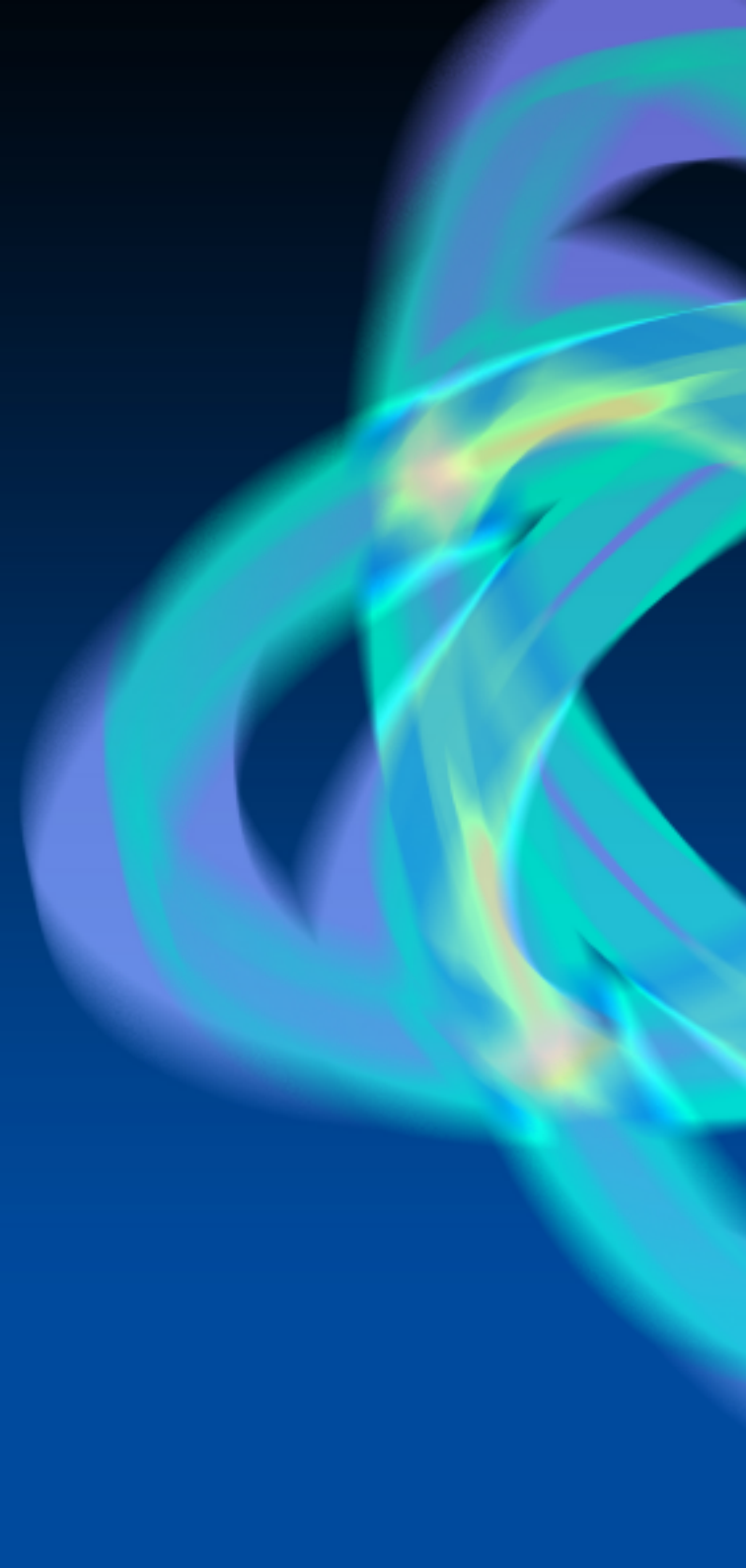


## **Multilateral development organizations**

Chambers play a pivotal role in the growth of the private sector. To enhance their capacity to foster private sector development, WCF has strong ties with a range of multilateral organizations, including The World Bank, United Nations Development Programme and regional development banks. Through these collaborations, WCF extends assistance and training to chambers from developing and least developed countries. WCF is also proud to be a global partner with UNAIDS, helping chambers and businesses to meet the challenges posed by AIDS.

## **Corporate relationships**

Corporations are taking advantage of the unique access WCF provides into the chamber community and its SME market around the world by supporting WCF activities, particularly the World Chambers Congress. Contact WCF to tailor a partnership programme to suit your corporation's needs.





**World Chambers Federation**

*ICC's specialized division for chamber affairs*



**International Chamber of Commerce**

*The world business organization*

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