

Date of Issuance: January 15, 2010

Developing a Nominations Strategy

A Companion Guide to the Call for
Nominations for IFAC Boards and
Committees in 2011



**International Federation
of Accountants**

DEVELOPING A NOMINATIONS STRATEGY
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FOR IFAC BOARDS AND COMMITTEES IN 2011

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Helping You to Better Understand the Nominating Process

While IFAC has made substantial progress in improving the nominating process in terms of providing greater due process, transparency and consistency, we are also making efforts to improve the process from the standpoint of our membership and other nominating organizations. Our objective is to provide members, as well as the Forum of Firms, other international organizations and the general public, with a greater understanding of how they can provide us with the right candidates given the current needs of each board and committee.

Providing the Right Candidate for the Right Time

While we can never have too many good candidates, in many cases the Nominating Committee seeks candidates with a certain combination of skills and attributes that correspond to the needs of a particular board or committee with respect to its current work plan, objectives and membership composition. In this sense, we seek not only regional, gender and professional balance, but we also seek to address the changing demands of each board and committee. A candidate could be very qualified in general, but be lacking in terms of specific professional skills or attributes. To avoid this situation, we are making every effort to provide potential nominees and nominating organizations with the information and guidance to develop a nominations strategy for 2011.

Why Must You Consider a Nominations Strategy?

Of the 157 positions on IFAC boards and committees, roughly one third come up for rotation each year. For the average 50 or more positions that do become available, IFAC generally receives several hundred nominations. These nominations come from among our 140 member bodies, the Forum of Firms, and public member candidates. The key for each of these constituents is to carefully review the Call for Nominations and then research the plans of the boards and committees to which they believe they can make the most effective contributions. In this way, we strive to build IFAC as an organization where constituents seek not just the objective of membership, but rather the objective of effective participation. Your objective should be to seek appointments based on the requirements of IFAC and the global profession.

Step 1: Assess the Vacancies on Each Board and Committee in 2011

Naturally, the best place to start is the *Call for Nominations for IFAC Boards and Committees in 2011*. The *overview* and *mission* sections for each board and committee provide information on the mission, function, and membership structure of the respective board or committee. They also indicate the number of vacancies that must be filled in 2011 as well as the types of vacancies (i.e. member nominated by a member body, public member, or Forum of Firms member).

Once you are aware of what each board or committee does, as well as which positions are available, you should carefully read the section titled *general qualifications for nominees*, which provides information on broad professional qualifications sought as well as the regional, gender and professional balance that will exist prior to new appointments. For example, certain regions may have little or no representation (see Regional Classification System in Appendix D to identify in which region your country is located). In some cases, there may be too much or not enough of a particular professional subset on a particular board or committee (e.g., too many

practitioners and not enough non-practitioners). In other cases, there may be a gender imbalance. In general, this section should provide you with initial guidance; a starting point for considering your own candidates. However, it should not be an endpoint as more refined approaches should be developed to position your candidates for the respective boards and committees (see Step 4 below).

After appreciating the general qualifications sought as well as the impact of the vacancies on the diversity of each board and committee, you should also read the section titled *requirements of membership*, which explains the commitment required in time and support for each board and committee member. Underestimating these commitments, or putting forward candidates who do not understand them, potentially reduces the effectiveness of the board or committee.

Step 2: Organize Your Candidates

The second step in developing a nominations strategy is to develop a list of potential candidates for prospective board and committee positions:

Build a candidate pool: develop a list of potential candidates from your organization who match the general qualifications sought for each board and committee. This preliminary list should include potential candidates from a variety of professional backgrounds.

This preliminary list will also indicate deficits in the diversity of your own candidate pool. For example, you may have too many practitioners and not enough non-practitioners, too many men and not enough women, etc. In cases where such deficits exist, you may need to widen your search for appropriate candidates.

Try to organize your candidates into professional categories, i.e. academic, small and medium practitioners, government, etc. For further assistance in relation to professional classifications please see Appendix A of the Call for Nominations. The utility of this step results from the fact that some candidates may be qualified for more than one board or committee and by organizing them in this way you will be able to assess the potential for positioning a candidate for more than one board or committee.

Step 3: Know Your Candidates

- One of the most practical ways to refine your nominations strategy is to pre-screen your candidates to ensure that they have the optimal background, skills, and interests for membership of a particular board or committee. Equally important, you should pre-screen your candidates to determine if they can make the necessary commitment of time to serve on the boards and committees for which they are nominated. Here are some helpful questions to consider:
- Does the candidate's professional experience correspond to the function and mission of the board or committee? If so, does it add to or replicate the existing skill set of members?
- What specific achievements in the candidate's professional experience (i.e., management of task forces, project development, policy development or implementation, curriculum development, teaching/instructional experience etc.) correspond to the function and mission of the board or committee in question?

- Has the candidate published any works in professional journals, textbooks, or news media that demonstrate unique research or contribution in an area of the profession that clearly relates to the board/committee in question?
- Has the candidate delivered seminars or presentations to IFAC stakeholders or other relevant parties that demonstrate their ability to communicate in the area of the board/committee in question?
- Is the candidate well-known and respected in the accounting profession in their own country and region? If so, does their recognition correspond to the area of activity of the board/committee in question?
- Does the candidate work well in a group setting? Is he/she comfortable working in a global context among many different cultures?
- Does the candidate truly have the time to devote to an IFAC board or committee in terms of the time required for travel and preparation for meetings and special projects? Do they understand the commitment and expectations of the position?

Step 4: Learn More about the Boards and Committees

Once you have an accurate idea of your candidates' backgrounds, skills, achievements and professional interests, you should be in a position to assess which candidates correspond to specific vacancies on IFAC boards and committees and why some candidates would be more appropriate than others. Earlier, it was noted that more refined approaches can be applied toward positioning candidates for specific boards and committees. This step, which has in the past represented one of the most neglected steps in the nominating process, requires research on the boards and committees for which candidates are being nominated. This involves learning more than just the board or committee's mission, compositional statistics and membership requirements; it involves learning about the current projects, strategic plans and environmental issues of a particular board or committee so that your candidate can be positioned to address them effectively. To find this information, we suggest downloading the following documents from the IFAC website (see the Appendix F of the Call for Nominations for a complete guide):

The most recent strategic plan for a board or committee (where available), which generally provides a synopsis of objectives, work plans and environmental issues over several years;

Key exposure drafts, pronouncements or publications of a board or committee to assess the technical nature of its work and its contents;

- Terms of Reference and due process documents (where available) to learn about the rules and procedures of each board and committee;
- Newsletters and press releases to learn about current issues facing each board and committee; and
- Meeting materials to assess the schedules, workloads and project status of each board and committee.

Please note that the Call for Nominations also describes where to find this information on the IFAC website and/or the particular board or committee's website in the section titled *Mission* under each board and committee.

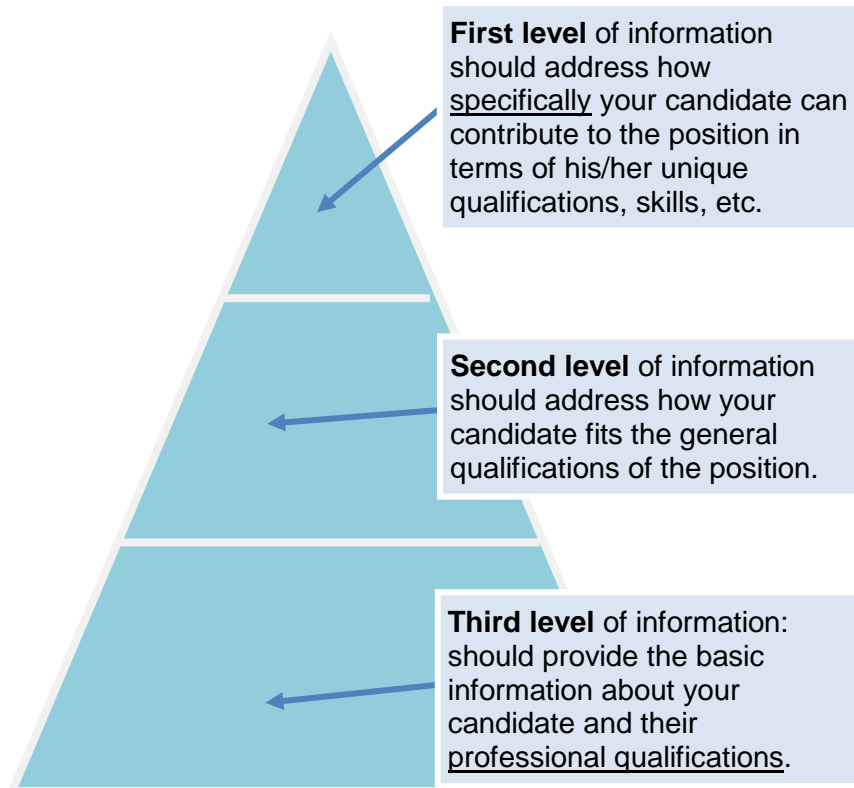
Step 5: Positioning Your Candidate(s) for the Nominating Committee

The final step is the submission of your candidate's nomination on the candidate information form. This form provides the fields of information to be inputted. While some answers are selected from drop-down menus or checkboxes, others require written responses. In the latter case, the individual who provides this information (whether it is the candidate himself/herself or a representative of the nominating organization) must organize the information in a coherent, logical manner so that the Nominating Committee can identify key points in an efficient, orderly basis when reading the forms. The following are suggestions for submitting such information:

- Provide all fill-in answers first by listing or describing information that is most relevant to the actual position on the board or committee. We would like information on exactly how your candidate will contribute to the position before learning about his/her professional history.
- List skills and achievements in order of its relevance to the specific board or committee.
- List published work in order of its relevance to the board or committee in question.
- Provide specific information regarding how the candidate can address challenges and provide contributions to the board or committee before outlining their general abilities and skills.
- Provide the Nominating Committee with an indication that you have more than a general understanding of the board or committee in question through the answers you provide.

All nominations must be submitted via e-mail to nominations@ifac.org between January 15 and March 15, 2010. If you have any questions or problems, please contact **Laura Buijs (Governance Manager) via email at laurabuijs@ifac.org.**

Suggested Approach



Flawed Approach

