



## **INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON LARGE DAMS**

### ***ICOLD's Vision:***

To be the world's leading professional organization "dedicated to advancing the technology of dam engineering and supporting the socially and environmentally responsible development and management of water resources to meet the worldwide demand"

### ***Who is ICOLD:***

ICOLD is a non-governmental International Organization which provides a forum for the exchange of knowledge and experience in dam engineering.

ICOLD leads the profession in setting standards and guidelines to ensure that dams are built safely and economically, and in an environmentally and socially sustainable manner.

### ***Those goals are accomplished by:***

- Providing an international forum for the "exchange of knowledge and experiences" in the planning, design, construction, operation, maintenance and dam safety.
- Technical committees that address emerging issues and publish technical bulletins on issues such as monitoring performance of dams, reanalysis of older dams and spillways, environmental and social impacts and mitigation, the effects of aging and decommissioning of dams
- Promoting public awareness of the beneficial role of dams in the sustainable development and management of the world's water resources

### ***ICOLD's Original Focus:***

Original aim of ICOLD was to encourage advances in dam engineering in the areas of:

- Planning
- Design
- Construction
- Operation and Maintenance



***ICOLD is changing:***

Since 1960s emphasis has been placed on:

- Dam Safety
- Monitoring of Performance
- Reanalysis of Older Dams
- Effects of Aging
- Environmental Impacts

Recently, new areas of focus include:

- Cost Analysis
- Sharing International Rivers
- River Basin Development
- Water Management
- Social Impacts
- Providing Information for the Public
- Financing

***ICOLD in the International forum:***

In addition to its' contribution to engineering, social and environmental issues relating to dams, ICOLD also seen as offering its members a place among equals in the international community.

By talking and working together on shared problems ICOLD members develop a better understanding and more tolerance of each other.

***Promoting Good practice:***

ICOLD promotes transparency and assessment of both the negative and positive impacts of dam projects. We would also support the analysis of alternative options to dam projects as long as there is an objective assessment of the positive and negative impacts of these options.

While promoting good practice, we also respect the sovereignty of our members and the decision making processes and structures that exist in individual countries.

By promoting good practice in all aspects of water resource development especially those involving dams, ICOLD strives to provide effective economic, sociologically and environmentally sustainable solutions to meet the needs of both current and future generations.

***Main benefits for ICOLD members:***

- To belong to a widely recognized international organization, which brings the members the possibility to deliver their message and to be listened globally.
- To share a one century-old experience and knowledge, in every field associated with dams, water and hydroelectricity, with engineers, operators and stakeholders from 92 countries.
- To meet potential partners for elaborating and developing projects in any areas: engineering, financing, environment, social...
- To get logistical support from ICOLD Central Office for documentation and contacts.
- To access to the richest library in the world in the field of dams.



- To have the ability, through participation in one of the 26 Technical Committees, to contribute to the evolution of knowledge in the field of dams, water and hydroelectricity, and thus to be an actor of the improvement of the well-being of the world population.

**A final quote:**

*"Political freedom alone is still not enough if you lack clean water. Freedom alone is not enough without light to read at night, without time or access to water to irrigate your farm, without the ability to catch fish to feed your family. For this reason the struggle for sustainable development nearly equals the struggle for political freedom. They can grow together or they can unravel each other."* Nelson Mandela





March 2011

## **APPLICATION FOR MEMBERSHIP OF ICOLD**

### *MEMO ON PROCEDURES*

1. The first step is to set up a National Committee on Large Dams with Constitution, Committee Officers and Members.
2. When a National Committee has been set up, it should write to the Secretary General stating :
  - that a National Committee on Large Dams has been set up in the applicant country;
  - names of Committee Officers;
  - full address of the Committee to which correspondence has to be directed with telephone and fax numbers;
  - that it wishes to become an ICOLD member;
  - that it is acquainted with the Constitution and By-Laws of ICOLD;
  - that it is prepared to adhere to this Constitution and collaborate fully with the Commission;
  - that it is in readiness to compile as soon as possible after election a Register of the large dams in its country.
3. On receipt of this letter, and if the Secretary General is satisfied that the application is in order, he will include the application on the Agenda of the next Executive Meeting for consideration.

ICOLD Secretary General

## 1. Model of application letter (letter from Croatia)

Zagreb, 2 June 1992

CROATIAN COMMITTEE ON LARGE DAMS

Secretary General, ICOLD

Dear Mr.

We have pleasure in notifying you that a Croatian Committee on Large Dams (CROCOLD) has been formed in the Republic of Croatia and that CROCOLD wishes to apply for membership of the International Commission on Large Dams.

We have read the ICOLD Constitution and By-Laws and fully accept the provisions therein. We would be most pleased to work with ICOLD.

On election to ICOLD, we should prepare the Register of Large Dams in the Croatian Republic for inclusion in the World Register. We enclose a short list of our dams as Appendix 1.

The particulars of our National Committee Officers are as follows :

Chairman : Mr.XXXXX  
Title

Secretary : Mr.YYYYY  
Title

Address :.....  
Tel.  
Fax  
e-mail  
Site

The list of Committee members appears in Appendix 2.

We trust you will treat this letter as our official application for membership of ICOLD and include our application on the Agenda of the 60<sup>th</sup> Executive Meeting in Granada.

A copy of the Constitution of the Croatian Committee on Large Dams is enclosed.

Please accept our sincere thanks for your support for CROCOLD's membership of ICOLD.

Sincerely,

(signature)

## NOTE ON THE INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION ON LARGE DAMS (ICOLD)

### CENTRAL OFFICE

Secretary General : Mr. Michel De Vivo  
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### 1.- BACKGROUND

The idea for an International Commission on Large Dams was first mooted by a group of engineers attending the 5th Conference on Hydro-Electric Power and the Conference on the Development of Science that were both being held in Grenoble, France, in 1925.

The **purpose** was to provide an international forum for discussion devoted exclusively to large dam engineering issues.

The French delegation to a Sectional Meeting of the World Power Conference in Basle (Switzerland) in 1926 tabled a proposal for setting up an International Commission on Large Dams, together with a draft Constitution of the new organisation. The conference **voted** in favour and accepted the **French Government's offer** to take the necessary action.

The **proposal** was again supported in much the same terms by the World Power Conference Executive Council at its meeting in Cernobbio in 1927 but even earlier than this, in December 1926, the 14th International Navigation Congress meeting in Cairo had decided that it would be useful to set up an International Commission on Large Dams.

A French Committee on Large Dams was accordingly **created** near the close of 1926 under the aegis of the Société Hydrotechnique de France, with Government support. It proceeded to draw up proposals and a draft Constitution, dated 22 December 1927, for circulation through diplomatic channels to interested Governments.

**The constitutive meeting** of the International Commission on Large Dams was held in Paris on 6 July 1928. The closing session of the International Congress of Electricity Producers and Distributors, on being so informed on 10 July 1928, approved a resolution moved by the new Commission to give moral support. G.G. Ponti, from Idroelettrica Piemonte, Turin, was appointed President of the Interim Executive Council, with G. Mercier as Vice-President and A. Genthial as Secretary.

Six nations attended this first meeting : USA, France, Italy, Romania, United Kingdom and Switzerland, although not all as members.

The French Government notified countries likely to show interest through diplomatic channels.

The 3rd October 1928, the Executive Council of the World Power Conference in London voted unanimously to **recognize** the International Commission on Large Dams.

**The first meeting of the ICOLD Executive Committee** (as opposed to the acting committee that had been operating previously) was held in Paris on 20 February 1929.

A cloud appeared on the horizon at the World Power Conference Executive Council Meeting in Paris in September 1929 when a **controversy arose** over relations between these two organisations; the terms of the Constitution, tentatively adopted on 20 February 1929, was questioned.

In order **to overcome these difficulties**, which prevented countries like the USA and Italy from becoming full members of ICOLD, a meeting of the ICOLD Executive Committee was arranged for June 1930 in Berlin, where the Second World Power Conference Congress was being held; **the Constitution was reviewed** and the name was changed to the "International Commission on Large Dams of the World Power Conference". It had only borne its independent title for a matter of two years (July 1928/June 1930).

The **first Executive Meeting** was held in London on Monday 1st June 1931.

G. Mercier, formerly Vice-President, Chairman of the Permanent Office and Chairman of the French National Committee was elected President of the International Commission on Large Dams of the World Power Conference in recognition of his unceasing efforts to establish the Commission over the previous five years.

The meeting was attended by Germany, Austria, France, British India, Norway, United Kingdom, Switzerland and Czechoslovakia; five other member countries : Dutch India, Japan, Morocco, Romania and Sweden were prevented from attending. The USA and Italy were present as observers. By June 1931, therefore ICOLD of World Power Conference boasted thirteen members.

An Executive Meeting was held every year thereafter except during the war years from 1940 to 1944. Two meetings were held in 1933, 1936 and 1963.

As for the **Congresses**, the first was in Stockholm in 1933, together with a Sectional Meeting of World Power Conference. Since that time, there has been a Congress every three years, except in 1939, 1942 and 1945.

**At the 35th Executive Meeting** in Istanbul in 1967, under the Presidency of J. Guthrie Brown, just before the 9th Congress, it was decided that the Commission

had grown to the point where it should become an **independent association**. J. Guthrie Brown had formed a special Committee on Relations between World Power Conference and ICOLD, under G. Drouhin in 1965, and this decision was based on the report from that Committee, with full and friendly support from World Power Conference 1. ICOLD had at least reverted to its short title.

It was Volume VI of the Proceedings of the 1967 Istanbul Congress that was the first to make no reference to World Power Conference, even though it had appeared on the five other Volumes.

Yet even now, not all formal ties have been severed because some countries like Malaysia share their National Committees with ICOLD and World Power Conference. In Germany, the ICOLD Committee is in fact a section of the German World Power Conference Committee.

ICOLD's title, particularly the word "**Commission**" has been open to debate because for some, it recalled the earlier dependence on World Power Conference. At the 39th Executive Meeting in 1971, President José Toran formed an ad hoc Committee, under J. Cabanius, to report to the 40th Executive Meeting in Canberra in 1972, which they did, in these terms :

*"... ICOLD should conserve its present denomination of "International Commission on Large Dams" considering that the word "Commission" refers to the mandate received from National Committees to fulfil the mission defined in Section 2 of the Constitution. Such an announcement does not involve any modification of the Constitution".*

This clever move was unanimously welcomed and the attempt to change the name to "International Conference on Large Dams" was side-stepped.

The bulk of the present **Constitution and By-Laws** were adopted by the 31st Executive Meeting in Paris in 1963, which had been specially convened by President Claudio Marcello (Italy) to discuss the new wording. The 30th Executive Meeting had been held earlier in the year in Cairo.

Amendments to the Constitution and the drafting of the By-Laws were the work of a sub-Committee on Constitution and By-Laws, chaired by J. Guthrie Brown that had been formed by the 29th Executive Meeting in Moscow, June 1962. It was in fact an amalgamation of three existing sub-Committees:

- sub-Committee on Papers and Communications  
set up under G. Drouhin (France),  
by the 22nd Executive Meeting, Paris, 1955
- sub-Committee on the Constitution and By-Laws  
set up under M. Mary (France),  
by the 24th Executive Meeting, Istanbul, 1957

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<sup>1</sup> The World Power Conference Executive Council Meeting in Accra (Ghana) in August 1967, having been advised by J. Guthrie Brown in July 1967, voted a resolution encouraging the split.

<sup>2</sup> at that time, the word "Committee" was still not used.

- sub-Committee on Subscriptions  
set up under J. Guthrie Brown (U.K.),  
by the 22nd Executive Meeting, Paris, 1955.

This last sub-Committee was not merged until the 30th Executive Meeting in Cairo in 1963.

The By-Laws provisions on Congress arrangement were dealt with at the 34th Executive Meeting in Rio in 1966, when J. Guthrie Brown was still President, on proposals put forward by the sub-Committee on Constitution and By-Laws, after M. Mary had succeeded J. Guthrie Brown as Chairman.

Frequent changes have been made to the Constitution and By-Laws since that time, although without adding any new issues.

Since the seventies and even before, however, more emphasis has come to be put on certain aspects whose importance has appeared with time. Thus dam safety focuses on monitoring methods and systems, re-analysis of old dams and spillways on the basis of modern criteria and methods, and ageing effects. Environmental impact is now also an important preoccupation.

More recently, new subjects of study have appeared: cost savings accruing to better constructional approaches, the harnessing of rivers forming international boundaries, information for the public at large, optimization of costs.

After a twelve-year re-organisation effort following on from the post-war reconstruction (1955-1967), **ICOLD had been growing fast**. The membership rose 61 to 92 countries. The number of papers has also been rising and proceedings intended for the Congress Participants are in addition sold to an ever increasing number of customers; they are now found on the shelves of most Universities, Contractors and Consultancy firms engaged in dam engineering. The Technical Committees had issued an average of 3 to 4 Bulletins per year, with a concentration of almost 6 and even 9.

The high technical standards of its Congresses and its Publications, the efficiency of its operation due to its outstanding Constitution and By-Laws, the vitality of its National Committees and the skill and experience of their members have all contributed to making **ICOLD a leader in the community of international technical associations**.

In addition to its engineering importance, ICOLD has come to be a medium for international entente. Membership is seen offering a place among equals in the international community, and individuals, by talking and working together on shared problems, develop a better understanding and more tolerance of each other.

## 2.- OBJECTIVES

To encourage improvements in the design, construction, maintenance and operation of dams by bringing together information thereon and by studying technical questions relating thereto.

## 3.- ORGANISATION

**Officers** elected for a three-year term of office (President, 6 Vice-Presidents, a Secretary General-Treasurer with special status), National Committees, Technical and Special Committees.

A **Central Office** in Paris with the Secretary General and staff.

**Languages** : English and French

**Finances** : membership fees from National Committees and the sale of publications

**Relationship with Unesco** : NGO (non-governmental organisations) - Category A.

## 4.- ACTIVITIES

The Commission accomplished its objects by :

- a) exchange of information among its several National Committees (by correspondence or on the ICOLD website : [www.icold-cigb.net](http://www.icold-cigb.net)).
- b) holding executive and technical meetings; these meetings are organised by National Committees and are followed by study tours where problems of design and construction of dams are discussed;
- c) organising and co-ordinating studies and research;
- d) publication of proceedings, reports and technical documents.

The ways and means are as follows:

- **Executive Meeting**, with representatives of all National Committees, meets annually;
- **Technical and Special Committees** meet annually;
- **Congress** : every three years : 24 up to 2012;
- A **Technical Symposium** every non-Congress year (one full day after the meeting of Technical Committees).

**5.- PUBLICATIONS** : see ICOLD Catalogue (available on the ICOLD website : [www.icold-cigb.net](http://www.icold-cigb.net))