

**TEMPLATE FOR SUGGESTED ISTF CHAPTER BYLAWS  
INTERNATIONAL SOCIETY OF TROPICAL FORESTERS, INC.  
16 August 2020**

**Yellow in parentheses indicates content that a chapter can modify for its own purposes.  
Blue in brackets indicates comments that should be eliminated in the final version.**

ARTICLE I – NAME, AREA COVERED

Section 1. Name

The name of this organization shall be \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of the International Society of Tropical Foresters, Inc., (ISTF).

Section 2. Type of chapter, area covered

This chapter shall be a (general membership, student) chapter covering (academic institution, region, country).

Section 3. Chapter language

The language(s) to be used for chapter functions (is, are) \_\_\_\_\_.

ARTICLE II – OBJECTIVES

Statement of projected objectives/activities is adequate, but the chapter may want to state more specific mission, vision, goals, objectives, activities. NOTE: Chapters organized at the \_\_\_\_\_ supranational or national level shall assume a fostering, coordinating role serving the whole of the region or nation, and in the process can promote subregional or subnational chapters. Local chapters can be formed independently of a national chapter (for example, at an academic institution), but the Central ISTF encourages collaboration and coordination among chapters. The Central ISTF encourages the formation of local chapters at a scale in which members can meet in person to share information, including on local ecosystems and issues, and possibly engage in other activities.

The objectives of the chapter shall be to further the objectives of the Central ISTF, as set forth in the bylaws of the Central ISTF, including to [following are example objectives]:

1. Promote better understanding of tropical forestry, sustainable land use practices, and environmental perceptions and practices by acting as a (supranational, national, or local) body to effectively communicate forestry and natural resources information, updates on professional activities, and information on tropical forest-related and environment-related issues to members in XXX.
2. Facilitate the exchange of information about and build awareness of tropical forest science and environmental science, protection, conservation, management, policy, planning, and legislation by recruiting and linking members in XXX.
3. Promote research and dissemination of scientific knowledge on tropical forests, their biodiversity, natural resources, ecosystem services, carbon dynamics, and sustainable development among stakeholders such as tropical foresters, researchers, environmentalists, developers, educators, policy and decision makers, and community members.

4. Contribute to the sustainable management of tropical forests and the environment through informing, advocating, and liaising for international and local policies and best practices, and promoting compliance with international and local laws, guidelines, frameworks, and standards, that affect tropical forests and the environment.

5. Promote the development and implementation of equitable and ecologically sustainable (ecologically viable) land use practices that value and conserve tropical forests and the environment through networking, knowledge-sharing, participation, cooperation and collaboration with other organizations, including other ISTF chapters, and government, non-government, academic, and private sector organizations, agencies, national or local organizations of foresters, networks, groups, bodies, consortia, and research centers working in tropical forestry and environmental research and development.

6. IF A NATIONAL CHAPTER: the XX chapter shall assume a fostering, coordinating role serving the whole of country, to promote and work with local chapters. Local chapters can be formed in association with, or independently of, the XX chapter, but the Central ISTF encourages collaboration and coordination among chapters. IF A LOCAL CHAPTER: The XX chapter shall coordinate with other chapters.

7. In every aspect of its mission, vision, and activities, respecting diversity in all its cultural, religious, economic, personal, and other manifestations.

8. Maintain fairmindedness by not being involved in, sponsoring, or carrying out (partisan) political activities.

## ARTICLE III – MEMBERSHIP

### Section 1. Chapter membership

1.1 The chapter shall consist of at least ten (10) members. Membership shall be open to (only students at \_\_\_\_ [academic institution], persons who are interested in and committed to the sustainable use and conservation of tropical forests and resources.

1.2 Members of the X Chapter shall also be members of the Central ISTF, with information on chapter members shared with the Central ISTF for the membership database. An exception is for student chapters, for which the student must request membership in the Central ISTF and agree to share information [university policy may require this]. [Any current member of ISTF shall be eligible for membership in an appropriate chapter based on location or student status at an academic institution.]

1.3 Chapter member rights shall include:

1.3.1 Voting in chapter elections.

1.3.2 Participating in chapter activities, committees, communications, and forums.

(OTHER CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP RIGHTS)

POSSIBIILITY: 1.3.3 Access and ability to contribute to a shared, online drive containing chapter information, documents, and contact, with due consideration of individual's privacy concerns.

1.4 Chapter member responsibilities shall include:

1.4.1 Representation of the chapter and ISTF in accordance with ethical standards and chapter and Central ISTF objectives.

1.4.2 Dues. (Student members (shall, shall not) pay the annual dues for student members set by the Executive Committee. Regular, non-student members (shall, shall not) pay the annual dues for regular chapter members set by the Executive Committee. These chapter dues are in addition to any dues that may be required by the Central ISTF.

## Section 2. Membership in the Central ISTF

2.1. Central ISTF Membership. Except for student chapters, all members of chapters must also be members of the Central ISTF. Membership in the Central ISTF is open to all individuals interested in and committed to the sustainable use and conservation of tropical forests and tropical resources.

2.2 Central ISTF Member rights shall include:

2.2.1 Voting in Central ISTF elections.

2.2.2 Participating in ISTF committees, communications, and forums.

2.2.3 Access to members-only sections of the website; and access to the ISTF membership database for developing collaborations and sharing ideas.

2.3. Central ISTF Member responsibilities shall include:

2.3.1 Paying annually any imposed dues (membership is free for students in the Central ISTF).

2.3.2 Sharing personal and professional information needed for the membership database.

2.3.3 Being open to communicating with other ISTF members.

2.3.4 Members of student chapters who are not members of the Central ISTF do not have these rights or obligations.

## ARTICLE IV – OFFICERS

### Section 1. Officers

The officers of the chapter shall be a (Chair/President, Vice-Chair/Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, Representatives, Liaison to the ISTF Central Board, OTHER). [These offices may be modified, but must include a Chair/President (or Co-Chairs/Presidents), Treasurer and a Liaison]. These officers shall be elected by the chapter membership and shall constitute the Executive Committee of the chapter.

### Section 2. Liaison to Central ISTF Board

The (OFFICER or specifically elected LIAISON) shall serve as the chapter liaison to the Central ISTF Board.

[One of the members of the Chapter Executive Committee must be designated as the Liaison to the Central ISTF Board.]

### Section 3. Terms of office

Officers will serve for a term of (one (1), two (2)) years.

Section 4. Duties of chapter officers [reformat to match the chapter officers]

4.1 President/Chair. The President shall act as Chair of the chapter Executive Committee, supervise chapter affairs, and perform the other usual duties of the office. The President/Chair shall preside at Committee meetings. With advisement from the Executive Committee, the President/Chair shall appoint members of chapter permanent committees and temporary committees and shall perform all other duties incident to Chair of the Executive Committee. In the absence of the President/Chair, the duty of presiding over meetings succeeds to the Vice-President/Vice-Chair.

4.2 Vice-President/Vice-Chair. The Vice-President/Vice-Chair shall assist the President as needed and perform other customary duties of the office.

4.3 Secretary. The secretary shall keep the minutes of the chapter Executive Committee and the membership, shall conduct its correspondence, shall be custodian of its records, and perform other customary duties of the office.

4.4 Treasurer. The Treasurer shall be custodian of chapter funds, shall receive and disburse chapter funds, perform other customary duties of the office, and shall prepare the chapter annual financial report, to be submitted no later than February each year to the Central ISTF Board and the chapter membership.

4.5 Representatives. The responsibilities of the Representatives shall be to bring the concerns of the membership to the Executive Committee and to assist the Executive Board as needed.

4.6 Liaison. The responsibility of the Liaison is to serve as a link to the Central ISTF Board.

4.7 Other Officers. The responsibilities of other officers include....)

## Section 5. Vacancies

[If the president is lacking, who will succeed him/her?] In the event of vacancy in the office of Chair/President the (Vice-Chair/Vice-President, other) shall succeed to the Chair/Presidency. In the event of vacancy in the offices of the (Vice-Chair/Vice-President, Secretary, Treasurer, or OTHER), the vacancy shall be (announced to the membership within two weeks and shall filled by election by the membership within 2 months of the announcement. Nominations for such elections shall be from the membership, and a candidate shall be declared elected upon receiving the highest number of votes from voting members).

## ARTICLE V. COMMITTEES

### Section 1 Executive Committee

1.1 Composition. The chapter shall have an Executive Committee consisting of the (Chair, Secretary, a Treasurer, and a Liaison) to the Central ISTF Board elected from the membership.

1.2 Responsibilities. The Executive Committee shall exercise full control of all funds and property of a chapter. It shall provide full direction and management of its affairs, including setting the annual dues, provided however, that the funds and property shall be used exclusively for the objectives set forth in Article II.

(Section 2. Other committees [This section can be modified to fit the permanent and temporary committees desired by a particular chapter].

2.1. The permanent committees of the chapter shall consist of (the Nomination and Election Committee, Fiscal Oversight Committee, a Control Committee [combining functions of the previous two suggested committees]), \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and

\_\_\_\_\_ . The Executive Committee may appoint temporary committees at its discretion).

## 2. Composition and responsibilities of permanent committees

[State here the responsibilities of the different permanent committees.]

2.1. The Nomination and Election Committee shall consist of persons who are not prospective candidates for office. This committee is charged with selecting candidates from among the nominees for Officer positions, receiving amendments to the bylaws, and overseeing the chapter elections and votes on bylaw amendments.

2.2. The Fiscal Oversight Committee shall consist of chapter members not on the Executive Committee. This committee is charged with oversight of chapter finances.

2.3 Appointments to chapter committees. Members of committees will be appointed by the President/Chair, with guidance from the Executive Committee. Committee members will come from the membership of the chapter.

## ARTICLE VI. ELECTIONS

### Section 1. Election frequency

Election of chapter officers will be held (every two years, every three years) by the chapter membership. All positions will be elected at the same time.

### Section 2. Term limits

Officers will be limited to (two (2), three (3)) (consecutive) terms in the same position.

### Section 3. Nominations

Nominations shall be made to the Secretary by the Membership up to (three (3)) months before elections. Nominated individuals must consent to the nomination for inclusion as Candidates. The Nomination and Election Committee will review nominations and select a maximum of (three) candidates for each position. In keeping with ISTF's commitment to gender, ethnic and geographic diversity, no more than (50%) of nominations for positions will be of members of (one ethnicity or other group), and no more than (70%) of one gender. The Membership will be notified of Candidates for positions and their qualifications at least (one month) before elections.

### Section 4. Elections

Voting will be conducted (in person, electronically), during the period October-December in the year prior to the year in which new officers assume their positions. All positions will be voted on at the same time. Chapter members in good standing may vote for all positions. Candidates for each position receiving a (majority, plurality or relative majority) of the ballots received shall be declared elected. [If majority is selected, you need to decide what to do if there is a plurality. Majority means one person receives more than half of the votes. A plurality or relative majority is the number of votes received by the person with the most votes, but less than 50% of the total votes].

### Section 5. Assumption of positions after the first chapter election

The first chapter election will be held within two months of the formal approval and adoption of the chapter bylaws. Officers elected in the first election will serve for a term of not less than one

year and not more than two years, up until assumption of officers elected in the first October-December elections. After the first election for the XXX Chapter, all positions will be assumed at the same time, immediately upon election.

#### Section 6. Assumption of positions at subsequent elections

Officers shall assume their positions at (the beginning of the next calendar year). (The Past President /Chair will remain as a non-voting member of the Executive Committee for one year after his/her term expires, to ease the transition to the new Executive Committee).

### ARTICLE VII – MEETINGS

#### Section 1. Meetings of the Executive Committee

1.1. Meetings can be convoked by (President/Chair, or upon request of any member of the Executive Committee) with a minimum of (1 week, 10 days) of notice communicated by (electronic media). Meetings will be arranged at a time and date of convenience for the majority of the Executive Committee. Meetings may occur (in-person or by means of electronic media). Quorum [minimum number to make decisions] for a meeting will be (half of the Executive Committee membership plus one).

1.2 Voting. Each member of the Executive Committee shall have one vote. Voting can be held (at in-person meetings or virtually via electronic media).

#### Section 2. Meetings of the chapter membership

1. A meeting of the chapter members shall be held at least (once every year, three times a year, other) or more often as the officers determine. Meetings may occur (in-person or by means of electronic media). Quorum [minimum number to make decisions] for a meeting will be (20%, 40%, half of the membership plus 1, other).

2.2 Voting. Each chapter member shall have one vote. Voting can be held (at in-person meetings or virtually via electronic media).

#### (Section 3. Guidance for conduct of meetings

To guide conduct of meetings. Roberts' Rules of Order on Parliamentary Procedure, will be used, as newly revised, as far as applicable and when not inconsistent with Chapter Bylaws or any resolution of the Executive Committee.) [The chapter may want to use an established guide to help conduct orderly, fair meetings.]

### ARTICLE VIII FISCAL ACCOUNTABILITY [Some possibilities indicated here -chapter can decide what to do]

#### Section 1. Financial autonomy

Chapters shall be financially independent of the Central ISTF.

#### Section 2. Use of chapter funds

Chapter funds may be used to cover local expenses for correspondence, meetings, and other purposes consistent with the goals and objectives of the chapter.

#### Section 3. Fundraising.

The chapter shall conduct fundraising activities as needed to finance its activities.

#### Section 4. Financial Management

Management of chapter funds shall be carried out by the Treasurer.

#### Section 5. Fiscal Oversight

(The Fiscal Oversight Committee shall be responsible for financial oversight of the chapter funds. The Fiscal Oversight Committee shall review the financial records and support documents maintained by the Treasurer at least annually, and prior to the change in the office of Treasurer, to ensure that chapter funds are being managed in a fiscally responsible manner and to make recommendations for procedural changes to the Executive Committee, as appropriate.) (All books and records of the chapter shall be open at any reasonable time to inspection by any member of three months standing or to a representative of more than five percent of the membership.)

#### Section 6. Chapter Dissolution [Good idea to include something on dispersal of chapter fund in the case that the chapter ceases to exist]

(In the event of the dissolution of the chapter, its property and funds, at the time of such dissolution, shall be distributed only for the purposes set forth in Article 2 above, and for no other purposes. Any assets remaining after 1) payment, 2) discharge of any existing liabilities or obligations, and 3) lawful provision for the administration or disposition of any property held in trust by or for the chapter, and all other acts required to adjust and terminate its business and affairs, the chapter's assets shall be collected and distributed entirely to one or more organizations focused on tropical forests and devoted exclusively to educational, scientific, and charitable purposes.)

### ARTICLE IX – REPORTING

The Chapter shall submit an annual report of its activities, which includes a financial report and membership and activities summaries. The ( ) shall make the report. The report shall be submitted no later than February each year to the Chapter membership, and to the ISTF Central Board to facilitate communication and planning between chapters and with the Central ISTF. Branch chapters should also send their report to the Central ISTF, in addition to the XX Chapter.

### ARTICLE X – AMENDMENTS

Amendments to the bylaws can be proposed by the Executive Committee or by the membership, to the Nomination and Election Committee. The bylaws are amended when the proposed changes are approved by at least 60% of the membership, usually to be considered at the time of elections. Under no conditions may the bylaws be amended to the conflict with the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws of the Central ISTF.

### ADOPTION OF THESE CHAPTER BYLAWS

We the members of the Executive Committee of the \_\_\_\_\_ Chapter of the International Society of Tropical Foresters, Inc., (ISTF) hereunto sign our names for the purpose

of giving legal effect to these bylaws on this \_\_\_\_\_ day of  
\_\_\_\_\_20\_\_\_\_\_.

Signed, (Give NAMES, POSITIONS).