

## **Regulation on membership and accreditation for joining/confirmation of membership in EARAZA**

### **1. General provisions**

1.1. The purpose of accreditation is to confirm that an organization applying for EARAZA membership or being a member of EARAZA adheres to modern standards of zoo and aquarium operations in such areas as animal welfare, conservation education, and management, and that the work of the organization complies with the principles and requirements of EARAZA regulations.

The accreditation is regulated by this *Regulation on membership and accreditation for joining/confirmation of membership in EARAZA* (hereinafter referred to as the Membership and Accreditation Regulation) and other regulatory documents of the Association.

1.2. Accreditation is undergone by organizations applying for membership in EARAZA<sup>1</sup> (hereinafter referred to as the applicant organization), and organizations that are already members of EARAZA (cyclic accreditation). It may also be required for an EARAZA member organization that has been the subject of a serious complaint. The exceptions are Full WAZA Members and members of the associations of zoos and aquariums that are WAZA Association Members; such institutions should only provide the Executive Direction with the necessary documentation (application form, Bylaws, filled out questionnaire, information on their animal collection and two recommendations).

1.3. An EARAZA member organization must undergo cyclical accreditation at least once every 10 years. Zoos with the longest membership history are the first to be cyclically accredited. The order of accreditation is developed by the Executive Directorate of EARAZA and approved by the Presidium.

Any EARAZA member organization has the right to apply to the Executive Directorate of EARAZA with a request to set an earlier term of cyclic accreditation.

An EARAZA member organization has the right to request to reschedule cyclical accreditation for valid reasons not more than three times for a period not exceeding one year.

1.4. The accreditation procedure should be as transparent as possible for all EARAZA members and should be based on the principles of mutual respect, objectivity, and professionalism.

### **2. Rights and obligations of the Executive Directorate of EARAZA**

2.1. Upon receipt of a letter from an applicant organization expressing their wish to join EARAZA, the Executive Directorate should include the following information in the response letter:

- a list of documents to be sent to EARAZA (if necessary, attach samples of such documents or indicate the section of the website where they are published);
- a list of EARAZA documents, which the applicant must familiarize themselves with before submitting the application and which they must agree to comply with in the application for membership<sup>2</sup>.

2.2. The Executive Directorate should ensure that the data provided in the documents are up to date.

2.3. The Executive Directorate, together with the Presidium, has the right to reject the application for accreditation procedure if, based on the results of review of the submitted documents, it becomes obvious that the activities of the applicant organization do not comply with the principles and

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<sup>1</sup> See ““Procedures for joining EARAZA” document approved by EARAZA Annual General Meeting (Almaty, Kazakhstan, 2023)

<sup>2</sup> See Appendix 1 to this document.

regulatory documents of EARAZA. The applicant organization in this case may apply to the EARAZA Arbitration Commission. The applicant organization may reapply for membership in EARAZA only after the elimination of the factors that caused the rejection of the application.

2.4. If the applicant organization is a member of a national or regional association, the Executive Directorate has the right to contact the relevant association with a request to provide any relevant information about the applicant organization.

2.5. If the applicant organization refuses to cooperate or does not get in touch for more than 2 (two) months, the Executive Directorate has the right to send a rejection letter to the application organization. In this case the applicant organization can reapply for EARAZA membership not earlier than after one calendar year.

2.6. The Executive Directorate should organize systematic and structured recording and storage of all requests, submitted information, and other documents received by the Executive Directorate in the course of accreditation.

### **3. Obligations of organization undergoing an accreditation procedure**

3.1. Before submitting an application, the applicant organization should carefully study the EARAZA guidance documents specified in the letter from the Executive Board and/or posted on the EARAZA website.

3.2. The management of the applicant/organization undergoing cyclic accreditation procedure should answer honestly all questions of the accreditation questionnaire and promptly answer all additional questions, should they arise.

Without advance receipt of this questionnaire from the applicant organization, the accreditation inspection will not be conducted and the application for membership will remain pending.

Without receiving this questionnaire in advance from the organization undergoing cyclical accreditation the organization is considered to have failed the accreditation procedure.

3.3. The organization undergoing the accreditation inspection shall pay all travel expenses, as well as meal and accommodation costs for the members of the Accreditation Team. The work of the members of the Accreditation Team is not paid. The payment method is negotiated with the Executive Directorate of EARAZA before the beginning of the accreditation inspection.

3.4. The organization undergoing the accreditation inspection shall provide the Accreditation Team with full access to all the facilities of the zoo or aquarium, including places not accessible for visitors, veterinary department, and administrative areas, as well as to all animal data bases/records.

3.5. One of the senior managers (director, deputy director, chief veterinarian or other manager) must accompany the Accreditation Team during the visit. The participation of other specialists is left to the discretion of the management of the organization undergoing accreditation inspection.

3.6. Employees of the organization undergoing an accreditation inspection must also be present in their departments and answer questions of the Accreditation Team within their competence.

3.7. A concluding meeting should be organized at the end of each working day and a member of the zoo management staff should be present at the meeting to continue the discussion and answer questions.

### **4. Accreditation Team**

4.1. The Accreditation Team will consist of three people. The head of the Accreditation Team is a member of the EARAZA Executive Directorate of Presidium.

It is desirable that one of the members of the Accreditation Team represents the country of the applicant organization and/or is familiar with local laws, language, and traditions. This member of the Accreditation Team should assist the other members of the team with the translation and various organizational matters.

One more member of the Accreditation Team shall be an employee of an EARAZA member organization, similar to the applicant organization and located in a country other than the applicant organization's country (possible exceptions due to objective circumstances shall be agreed with the Presidium). A member of the Accreditation Team may be a senior or middle-level manager or a specialist (director, deputy director, chief veterinarian, head of the educational department, etc.) from a similar EARAZA member organization with at least five years of experience in this position.

4.2. All members of accreditation teams should have relevant qualification and be well versed in the EARAZA governing documents. EARAZA will endeavour to ensure that inspectors are trained in various areas of the inspection process including administration aspect and, depending on the inspector's specialization, animal husbandry, welfare, animal facility design, veterinary, education, etc. EARAZA shall hold special courses for EARAZA inspectors at least on an annual basis, using resources of the Moscow Zoo's Academy or involving other experts in various areas of zoo science, which will ensure the consistency of animal welfare evaluation process.

4.3. To be included in the list of potential members of the Accreditation Team it is necessary to fill in the special questionnaire and send it to the Executive Directorate of EARAZA. Applications for the position of the Accreditation Team member are considered by the Executive Directorate. In the process of reviewing a candidate's application, the Executive Directorate shall have the right to request information on the candidate's working experience, ability to travel and any specialized knowledge that may be required during the accreditation inspection. All members of the Accreditation Team should be able to participate in at least one inspection per year and provide consent from their supervisor assuring that the candidate will be available to participate in an on-site accreditation inspection at least once per year.

4.4. Candidates for members of the Accreditation Team are proposed by the EARAZA Executive Directorate and submitted for approval by the EARAZA Presidium.

4.5. The head of the Accreditation Team is responsible for every aspect of the inspection, including visits to the organization's facilities, review of submitted documents, and meetings.

During the accreditation visit, the head of the Accreditation Team serves as meeting coordinator, makes notes on the Accreditation Questionnaire in the course of inspection, informs representative of the applicant organization of all required tasks, and writes the report of the Accreditation Team after the visit. Any problems that arise should be solved by the head of the Accreditation Team.

4.6. The accreditation inspection should last one to three days (depending on the size and type of the accredited organization). The inspection should be organized in such a way that the costs of the receiving party are minimized.

4.7. Confidentiality and neutrality must be respected during the inspection. While the members of the Accreditation Team may exchange views during a visit to the applicant organization, they may not, at any point during the inspection, discuss information related to the results of the inspection with representatives of the organization undergoing the accreditation procedure.

4.8. The detailed results of the accreditation inspection are confidential and can only be provided to the Executive Directorate and the Presidium, as well as to the head of the organization that has undergone the accreditation procedure. The final decision of the accreditation inspection is first brought to the attention of the management of the organization that has undergone the inspection, and then included in the newsletter for EARAZA members.

## 5. Accreditation inspection procedure

### **The management of the applicant organization shall:**

#### *Before the visit:*

- 5.1. Coordinate in advance the dates of the visit and the time of meetings of the members of the Accreditation Team with the employees of their organization, as well as confirm the possibility of providing accommodation for the team members;
- 5.2. Promptly respond to letters from the EARAZA Executive Directorate;
- 5.3. Notify their staff about the need to be prepared to answer all questions from the Accreditation Team.

#### *During the visit to the organization*

- 5.4. Arrange a meeting and transfer of members of the Accreditation Team.
- 5.5. Provide members of the Accreditation Team with a separate room for working with documents, a computer with Internet access and other necessary office equipment.
- 5.6. Ensure the presence of employees and prepare documents, including video- and audiorecords, related to the following topics:
  - financial support;
  - consent of the governing bodies for the organization to join EARAZA;
  - education, professional experience, and professional development of employees.
  - organizational structure and management system;
  - master plans;
  - collection planning;
  - plans and protocols for emergency situations;
  - purchase of animals, animal exchanges and transportation;
  - participation in species conservation programs;
  - animal care/registration of veterinary data;
  - presence of licenses for keeping animals in the collection;
- 5.7. Provide access for members of the Accreditation Team to the entire area, including service areas and off-exhibit animal housing as follows:

#### ***Physical facilities***

- general condition, repair work and cleanliness;
- security and maintenance of animal facilities;
- safety of visitors, employees, and animals;
- visitor access;
- waste management and waste disposal system;
- attractions not related to animals.

#### ***Animal care***

- exhibits and off-exhibit zones;
- life support systems;
- animal welfare (physical condition, housing conditions, meeting species-specific needs, environmental enrichment, training, etc.);
- nutrition and food handling; access to food and water;
- registration of data on animal health;

#### ***Veterinary medicine***

- facilities and equipment;
- education and qualifications of employees.
- autopsy;

- capturing and immobilizing equipment;
- veterinary drugs and their handling;

### ***Education***

- facilities and equipment;
- education and qualifications of employees;
- availability and quality of information panels and signs;
- availability of general information and educational materials;
- availability and topics of guided tour programs;
- integration of the theme of species conservation in educational activity;
- work with special categories of visitors.

### **The head of the Accreditation Team shall:**

- 5.8. Familiarize representative of the applicant organization with the inspection schedule and answer questions associated with the inspection procedure.
- 5.9. Resolve all questions and concerns that arise during the accreditation inspection.

### **Members of the Accreditation Team shall:**

- 5.10. Perform duties in a tactful, professional, honest, and unbiased manner.

## **6. The end of the accreditation inspection**

- 6.1. After completion of the accreditation inspection, a closing meeting of the zoo management (including the director, deputy directors, and senior vet) with Accreditation Team must be held. At the closing meeting, the Accreditation Team should give the senior zoo team a verbal report outlining what will be in the formal report and hold a discussion on timelines for the implementation of recommendations/corrective actions.
- 6.2. The head of the Accreditation Team has the right to delegate the preparation of a part of the inspection report to other members of the Accreditation Team.
- 6.3. The full version of the standardized report on the results of the accreditation inspection shall be drafted by the head of the Accreditation Team. If the members of the Accreditation Team do not agree on any issue, each of them has the right to record their dissenting opinion in the report.
- 6.4. The report of the Accreditation Team with the notes on the necessary corrective measures in various aspects of the organization activities that require improvements must be signed by all members of Accreditation Team and sent to the EARAZA Membership and Ethics Committee within 30 working days from the date of the inspection.

## **7. Membership decisions**

All decisions related to the accreditation shall be based on the results of the inspection processes that should be guided by EARAZA Animal Welfare Standard and carried out with the use of objective, consistent criteria that should be equally applied to all institutions. Accreditation is granted to the institutions that demonstrate compliance with all accreditation requirements. If the results of inspection show that not all standard requirements are met, the decision on accreditation will depend on the specific situation. The membership decision making procedure is described below.

### **7.1. Decisions on membership and accreditation of a new applicant**

7.1.1. Membership and Ethics Committee reviews the report and, if necessary, contacts the institution that has undergone the accreditation procedure for obtaining its comments and clarification. In 30 working days, the Committee submits to the Presidium their informed recommendation regarding the possibility of assigning membership status to the applicant.

7.1.2. Within 30 working days, EARAZA Presidium makes a preliminary decision and, if the conclusion on the admission of the organization to the membership of EARAZA is approved, the Executive Directorate sends information about this to all EARAZA members.

7.1.3. Within two weeks, members of the Association may send objections to the Presidium regarding the candidacy of the member in question (with justification).

7.1.4. The Presidium makes a final decision on granting membership or refusing admission to EARAZA membership in accordance with the Charter and other regulatory documents of EARAZA no later than one month after the date of the preliminary decision and sends information about the final decision to the applicant organization and all EARAZA members.

7.1.5. The decision of the Presidium to refuse to accept the applicant organization as a member of EARAZA may be appealed to the Arbitration Commission no later than 1 (one) month from the date of receipt of the notification of refusal.

7.1.6. The applicant organization has the right to reapply for ERAZA membership no earlier than one year after receiving the refusal and only if the causes of refusal have been eliminated.

## **7.2. Decisions on membership and accreditation of an existing member of EARAZA**

7.2.1. Membership and Ethics Committee review the report and, if necessary, contacts the institution that has undergone the accreditation procedure for obtaining its comments and clarification. In 30 working days, the Committee submits to the Presidium their informed recommendation regarding the decision based on the results of the cyclic accreditation procedure.

7.2.2. There are four possible outcomes of accreditation decisions for existing members: continued membership, continued membership with the condition that the EARAZA member will resolve the identified problems within the period established by the Presidium, warning, and termination of membership (see document “Regulation on measures in case of a violation of the EARAZA Code of Ethics or rules of participation in EARAZA Programmes”). The last decision is made if the Accreditation Team identifies severe violations of the requirements established by the Charter and internal documents of EARAZA.

7.2.3. Within 30 working days, the Presidium makes a final decision arising from the results of accreditation, and the Executive Directorate sends relevant information to the relevant institution and all EARAZA members.

7.2.4. The decision of the Presidium to issue a warning or terminate the membership of the institution may be appealed to the Arbitration Commission no later than 1 (one) month from the date of receipt of the notification membership termination of membership.

7.2.5. If EARAZA Presidium makes a decision on continued membership with the condition that the EARAZA member will resolve the identified problems, relevant EARAZA Committee or Working Group should communicate with EARAZA member to work together to solve detected problems. After the expiration of the established period, the EARAZA member must send to the Membership and Ethics Committee a written report that should contain evidence to show that the animal welfare concerns or other problems have been satisfactorily addressed by the institution, after which the Committee submits its conclusions to the EARAZA Presidium.

## **8. Exceptional circumstances**

8.1. Under exceptional circumstances (such as a pandemics, logistic barriers, etc.) the animal welfare evaluation process may relay on the study of evidences (documents, video records) provided by EARAZA member. When accreditation does not include an on-site visit, all applicable provisions of this document must be followed.

## **9. Complaint procedure**

The complaints related to the violation of EARAZA Code of Ethics or non-compliance with animal welfare standards should be dealt with in a quick, equitable, and effective manner.

### **9.1. Complaint procedure related to the violation of EARAZA Code of Ethics or non-compliance with animal welfare standards**

A complaint should be sent in writing (by post or email) to the EARAZA Executive Directorate. Executive Directorate acknowledges the receipt of the complaint within 10 working days and provides the complainant with information about the complaint procedure and timeline. The Executive Directorate conducts the preliminary assessment of the complaint within 30 working days from the date of its reception. If the complaint is vague or not detailed, the complainant is asked to provide additional information.

If after the review of the complaint it is found to be valid the complaint will be send to the EARAZA member concerned. EARAZA member should response in writing to the relevant points of the complaint within 30 working days. The response may include necessary documents and video- and audio-materials with the indication of the time when they were made.

Executive Directorate reviews the response. If the response is deemed to be satisfactory the issue is closed. In the case when the complainant is not satisfied with the response the complaint is passed on to the Membership and Ethics Committee.

Membership and Ethics Committee considers serious complaints or cases of violations of the ERAZA Code of Ethics or non-compliance with animal welfare standards. To verify the veracity of the complaint, the Committee may request additional information from either parties or conduct an inspection through the on-site visit, with photo and video recording. The complainant has no right to participate in the inspection.

After completing the investigation of the matter, taking into account all reports submitted, the Membership and Ethics Committee may set a period during which the EARAZA member must correct any deficiencies identified during the review of the complaint. The duration of such a period is determined from the day of the receipt of the notification from the Committee.

In case of a severe violation of the EARAZA Code of Ethics or EARAZA Animal Welfare Standards Membership and Ethics Committee may recommend EARAZA Presidium to apply an appropriate level of measures as stated in the document "*Regulation on measures in case of a violation of the EARAZA Code of Ethics or rules of participation in EARAZA Programmes*".

If EARAZA Presidium makes a decision on applying a certain measure both parties to the complaint shall be informed of the decision of the Presidium within 30 working days of the date of the decision.

The EARAZA member against which the complaint has been made has the right to appeal the decision of the Presidium by filing an appeal with the Arbitration Commission within 30 working days from the date of receipt of the notification.

### **9.2. Complaint procedure related to the violation of the rules of participation in EARAZA Programmes**

A description of the procedure for considering complaints related to violations of the rules of participation in EARAZA programmes is given in the document "*Rules for participation in the EARAZA programmes for the conservation of species*".

## **10. Monitoring of animal welfare by EARAZA members**

10.1. In between EARAZA's accreditation procedures, EARAZA members must monitor the welfare of the animals at their institutions on systematic and ongoing basis and once in three years perform an

audit of the welfare of all animals under their care and submit the reports on the audits to EARAZA Animal Welfare Committee. Animal Welfare Committee will control the implementation of this requirement and selectively review submitted reports, communicating with the relevant EARAZA members, when necessary.



**LIST**

of documents to be sent by the EARAZA Executive Directorate to the applicant organization

1. Accreditation questionnaire
2. Charter of EARAZA (or electronic link to the website page)
3. EARAZA Code of Ethics (or electronic link to the website page)
4. EARAZA Animal Welfare Standard (or electronic link to the website page)
5. Regulation on membership and accreditation (or electronic link to the website page)
6. Other documents (electronic link to the website page)