



**INTERNATIONAL ROUNDTABLE
FOR
CORRECTIONAL EXCELLENCE**

**FRAMEWORK
DOCUMENT**

Introduction

The International Roundtable for Correctional Excellence (IRCE) comprises the Chief Executive Officers of a network of prison and correctional services, which share broadly similar correctional philosophies and practices.

This framework document sets out the rationale for, the rôle and purpose of, the IRCE, and the means by which it operates. It is accompanied by a number of specific annexes, which detail:

- IRCE guiding principles (Annex 1);
- the operation of IRCE Secretariat (Annex 2);
- the responsibilities of the host country (Annex 3);;
- the rules and procedures for IRCE meetings (Annex 4);
- the background to IRCE (Annex 5); and
- a listing of current IRCE members (Annex 6).

The Rationale for the International Roundtable for Correctional Excellence

Strategic international partnerships are an important tool to inform, support, and strengthen the domestic corrections' agenda. The sharing of knowledge, experience and expertise with international colleagues creates valuable opportunities both to contribute to, and to learn from, broader corrections and criminal justice trends, issues, and developments. A small group that brings together similar, yet distinct international correctional authorities to meet regularly to share information, ideas and approaches to common challenges has significant potential to contribute to ongoing correctional reform and improvement.

While there are international organizations that promote ongoing collaboration and information sharing, there is no mechanism that brings together a select group of prominent (in terms of correctional philosophy/practices) and influential correctional organizations who share, not only a common vision and values about the rôle and contribution of corrections, but also a commitment to achieving excellence in all aspects of their work.

The Roundtable is not intended to replace or to replicate existing international structures and organizations. It is, rather, a unique opportunity for a small group of 'like-minded' Chief Executive Officers to meet regularly to share information, experiences and ideas that will help each other in carrying out their complex and difficult responsibilities. There is no other similar mechanism that can provide this valuable opportunity.

The focus of the Roundtable is to promote excellence in corrections through mutually supportive and ongoing partnerships that encourage free and open dialogue.

The Rôle and Purpose of the International Roundtable for Correctional Excellence

Specifically, the rôle and purpose of IRCE is:

- to create a mechanism for dialogue on approaches to *common* problems, challenges, and opportunities;
- to provide a forum for members to raise *unique* issues and challenges facing their respective organizations and to benefit from the views and experiences of their colleagues;
- to promote greater understanding of each member's criminal justice and correctional systems and their environment; and
- to facilitate greater cooperation and collaboration, both horizontally and vertically, among the member countries which may include, *inter alia*, bilateral or multilateral projects among member countries, ongoing information exchange etc.

IRCE Secretariat, March 2001

Annex 1

Guiding Principles

The guiding principles of the IRCE are:

- open and frank discussions are carried out in a non-judgmental, respectful and collegial environment in a spirit of professionalism;
- members are encouraged to share not just their "successes", but also their "failures" which should be viewed as a valuable learning opportunity;
- meetings are held *in camera* and no formal minutes of the discussions are prepared. This reflects the nature of IRCE discussions and the need to respect confidentiality. However, resource information, prepared to support informed discussion, will be shared with each member subject to the approval of the sponsoring member;
- the use of outside speakers will be kept at a minimum to promote discussion among members, which is the primary purpose of IRCE.
- membership in IRCE is restricted to the Heads of the respective correctional organizations of the member countries. In the event that any member is unable to attend, a representative may not be appointed to attend on his/her behalf.

Annex 2

IRCE Secretariat

A permanent Secretariat has been established to provide ongoing support to IRCE. The current members of the Secretariat are as follows:

- Ed Wozniak, Head of Research, Scottish Prison Service;
- Pelle Granström, International Adviser, Swedish Prison and Probation Administration; and
- Peter Cummings, Director, International Relations, Correctional Service of Canada.

The Secretariat is responsible for coordinating the strategic planning (i.e., development of the agenda) and logistical arrangements (hotels, travel information, meeting venue, etc.), in consultation with the host country.

Specifically, the Secretariat will provide a ‘service orientation’ to IRCE members by obtaining and sharing requested information, responding to *ad hoc* requests, etc. and providing overall planning for IRCE meetings. This includes, among other things:

- developing the agenda;
- developing proposed content guidelines for oral and written presentations to ensure consistent and comprehensive discussion of topics by members;
- identifying and advising on any issues requiring a decision by the IRCE with respect to the management and operations of the IRCE;
- coordinating the preparation and submission of timely and relevant documentation;
- compiling and distributing any reports or background papers that are submitted, as far in advance of the meeting as possible;
- developing a schedule for future meetings to promote as much participation by member countries as possible;
- providing advice and support to the host country and chair of the meetings as required;
- maintaining and updating the IRCE web site as required.

Annex 3

Responsibilities of the host country

Each host country will be responsible for the logistical arrangements for the meeting. This includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- reserving an appropriate conference room for the meeting and preparing name tags, etc.;
- providing specific instructions regarding location of the meeting room and a telephone number for messages;
- booking hotel accommodation on behalf of the IRCE members and the Secretariat and providing verification of hotel registration (Secretariat members may meet in advance of the Roundtable and will therefore require a room earlier than IRCE members);
- arranging for easy access to, or providing, fax, computer (laptop), photocopier, overhead projector, etc as required (consult with IRCE members, and any outside presenters, regarding specific needs and software requirements);
- providing explicit travel instructions, including visa requirements, transportation arrangements to and from the airport, etc. (If appropriate, arrangements may be made both to pick up and return members to the airport);
- arranging for a dinner, normally scheduled on the evening between the two day meeting;
- providing morning and afternoon coffee/tea/juice breaks for each day of the meeting;
- organizing suitable meals while IRCE members meet; and
- providing an information package (final agenda, and any background or resource papers, travel, hotel information, etc.) to all participants, *at least 3 weeks* in advance of the meeting.

Annex 4

Rules of procedure for IRCE meetings

Chair of the Meetings There is no permanent Chair for IRCE meetings. Chairmanship of the meeting will be on a rotational basis with the member from the host country acting as the chair.

Host Country Each member country will act as host with the site of the next two meetings determined at each meeting.

Frequency of Meetings Meetings will be held twice per year. Specific dates at least the next two meetings will be decided at the conclusion of each meeting. Members should therefore be prepared to confirm their availability for the next two meetings so that the optimum time may be determined to accommodate the schedules of as many members as possible.

Format of the Meetings Due to time constraints, and the busy schedules of the members, meetings will be held from Sunday until noon Tuesday, with Sunday being a travel day. The Secretariat shall meet in advance of IRCE (usually on the Sunday) to confirm all arrangements for the meeting.

Membership The following 11 countries are currently members of IRCE (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, Ireland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Scotland and Sweden,). Names and addresses (including e-mail) for each member are attached at Annex 6.

Agenda Topics for discussion will be identified initially at the conclusion of each meeting, taking into consideration the discussions and issues raised throughout the meeting. The Secretariat, in collaboration with the host country, will contact member countries *at least 3 months in advance of the next meeting*, to provide the list of potential topics identified at the last meeting and to obtain members' consensus on agenda items.

In order to promote in depth discussion, agenda items will usually be limited to three or four items as prioritised by member countries. Meetings will be conducted in English.

There will be a standard agenda item at the beginning of each meeting covering reports on developments of interest in each country since the last meeting.

It is recognized, however, that there must be some flexibility to accommodate members' needs and that members may raise additional items that they believe warrant discussion. Wherever possible, these items should be identified before the meeting or raised at the beginning of the meeting for review by the members. Members will decide collectively, after balancing the importance of the issue and the availability of information to support informed discussion, either to add the issue to the agenda or to carry it over to the next meeting.

Each member will be asked to lead discussions on one of the items placed on the agenda.

Annex 5

Background

The idea of establishing an international roundtable, comprising the heads of leading international correctional organizations, was initially proposed by the Correctional Service of Canada in 1998.

A first meeting of the group of 10 founding member countries (Belgium, Canada, Denmark, England and Wales, Finland, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Scotland, and Sweden) was held in Kingston, Ontario, Canada, in March 1998. This meeting immediately followed the *'Beyond Prisons'* international conference that was organized by the Correctional Service of Canada.

The objectives of the conference were to bring international perspectives on ways to reduce safely the over-use of incarceration, to promote safe offender reintegration into society as law abiding citizens, and to strengthen corrections' overall contribution to social safety and protection.

This inaugural meeting concluded with a shared commitment to the value of, and the need for, an international roundtable to support member countries' efforts to achieve the highest possible standards of performance.

Seven Research Task Forces were also established to support the work of IRCE on the following issues:

- Professionalism;
- Communication;
- Special Risk and Needs Groups;
- Community Engagement and Restorative Approaches;
- Quality and Accountability;
- Research; and
- Security (Institutional and Community).

The Task Forces have met their terms of reference and completed their work. However, in order to maintain an IRCE research capability, the Research Task Force, chaired by Ed Wozniak of the Scottish Prison Service, has been maintained.