

<p>Internal Rules of Procedure</p> <p>Topten International Group – TIG</p>
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September 2006

## **1. Introduction**

This document presents the rules of procedure of the association Topten International Group (TIG), based in Paris. In accordance with the statutes of the TIG association, the Board draws up the internal rules of procedure so as to be able to carry out its missions and to define the various responsibilities and competencies. The Board may revise the rules of procedure, at its initiative. Should it be the case, the Board will present the new document at the next meeting of the General Assembly.

Reminder: TIG objectives are to promote internationally the production and utilisation of energy in an efficient, ecological and economical way. The association is in charge of training partners and controlling the quality of Topten projects.

## **2. Membership**

### **2.1 Member admission / exclusion**

The board decides on the admission of new members, following a request for admission made in writing.

Pursuant TIG's statutes, apart from the founding members, there are three categories of members:

- Sector A: associations, organisations, businesses or individuals carrying out a Topten project
- Sector B: environmental organisations, consumer organisations and/or energy agencies
- Sector C: members of the supporting committee (without the right to vote).

In taking its decision, the Board will have sole authority to review whether:

- In sector A, there is no more than one organisation voting per country.

- If sectors A and B are considered, there are no more than two votes per country.
- If sectors A and B are considered, international organisations or groups of organisations working together do not have more than two votes.

The Board may decide to reallocate members in different sectors in order to reflect new situations (e.g. a supporting organisation in sector C launching a Topten project in its country thus becoming a sector A member).

Pursuant TIG's statutes, at the request of the President or the majority of voting members, the board may decide to exclude a member in situations when the Board considers that:

- The member does not comply with one or more of the Topten Criteria (see below paragraph 3.2)
- The member can no longer meet the criteria of one of the sectors A, B and C
- The accreditation is not recommended for sector A members (after a quality control procedure, see below paragraph 3.1)
- The member is not pursuing the objectives of the Association or is carrying out contradictory activities

## **2.2 Membership dues**

All members pay annual dues.

However, the Board can authorise exemptions of the dues (total or partial, for a limited period of time). For example, partners of the Euro-Topten project may be, should they wish so, exempted of this due for the duration of the project (i.e. until October 2008).

## **3. Accreditation for Topten projects**

In order to become a sector A member, i.e. carrying out a Topten project, an accreditation is required. This should be understood as a quality control activity not as an attempt to impose a single version of Topten projects.

### **3.1 Procedure**

- Application report: The applicant has to formulate an application report according to a template delivered by the Board of TIG. In the exceptional case of Euro-Topten partners and Switzerland until October 2008, if requirements of Euro-Topten are met, then there is no additional application report requested.
- Review: TIG's Board mandates a referee to review the application report. The referee may either be member of TIG' Board, a member of TIG or an external expert chosen by TIG's Board. The referee formulates recommendations on

- Evaluation on compliance with Topten-criteria (see below)
  - Requirements for mandatory improvements
  - Recommendations for voluntary improvements
- Accreditation: The decision is made by TIG's Board based on the referee's review (in case of protest, the decision will be made based on the majority of voting members of TIG at the next meeting of the General Assembly).
  - Renewal: The accreditation will be renewed every year by the Board on the basis of short annual status reports, provided the Topten project still complies with the criteria.

On demand of TIG's Board and at least every four years, a thorough evaluation shall be carried out using a similar procedure as for the application (based on an exhaustive status report and review).

- Fees: The accreditation fees of 1000 € are paid by the applicant to cover the expenses for referees. In exceptional cases, TIG's Board may admit total or partial exemptions.

### 3.2 Topten-criteria

Applicants should comply with:

- The Topten Charter (see appendix)
- Quality requirements (e.g. user friendly website, enough stringent selection criteria for products, dissemination activities)
- Success requirements (e.g. hits and visitors, media response, partnerships, influence on large buyers, retailers and producers)
- Comprehensiveness: The national concept and vision should cover all important domains (household appliances, cars, office equipment, consumer electronics, lighting). If the applicant cannot cover all important domains it may be necessary to include appropriate partners in the national Topten-team.
- Open attitude:
  - The national product lists, criteria and guidelines should be exchanged between TIG members.
  - For common products, Topten visitors should have free-of-charge-access to all product lists, criteria and guidelines (exceptions may be accepted at national level, notably for specific products, but should not restrict the freedom of other countries presenting categories).

## **4. Software**

A software to establish a Topten website is available for TIG's category A members for free, should they wish to use it. The software's full name is "EuroTopten CMS".

Ownership, copy and usage rights of the central Topten software belong to TIG.

Copying is not allowed. Publishing is not allowed. Giving the software to parties is not allowed. Only TIG is allowed to grant -for free- usage rights provided the user be a member of TIG (sector A) and thus respect the Topten Charter. Only accredited members are allowed to use the software.

Upon request to TIG's board, members of sectors B and C may use the central Topten software.

Members using the software are free to modify the software for further development or specific needs for national websites. Complete access to all software codes is provided. Should members make modifications to the software, complete software codes of modified versions should be provided to (the software is based on free codes and it is a usual practice to share modifications).

## **5. Relationships with stakeholders**

Stakeholders are crucial to enhance the impact of Topten and TIG is therefore interested in involving them in an appropriate way, adopting an open attitude. However, the freedom of Topten regarding products' selection must not be restricted.

### **5.1 Producers and retailers**

Topten works in cooperation with, but is independent from producers and retailers and their respective associations. Topten aims at shifting their product ranges towards improved energy efficiency.

The logo of TIG may only be used with written permission.

Every member is sole responsible of its logo, including legal protection.

Topten should be neutral and treat applications for the use of Topten-logos on an equal basis. It may be good if Topten is quoted by manufacturers and retailers.

### **5.2 Large buyers**

In addition to targeting the general public via the website, Topten is used for public and private procurement purposes. Topten supports large buyers with tools and selection criteria to purchase energy efficient products. Large buyers may refer to Topten and its criteria (e.g. in their call for tenders).

### **5.3 Media**

High attention in the media is crucial to enhance the impact of Topten. Topten contents and logos may be cited by media if Topten as source is mentioned correctly.

#### **5.4 Consumer and environmental organisations, electric utilities**

Topten may also be used as a basis for various energy efficiency policies, campaigns or rebate programmes. Such activities are encouraged by TIG. All national partners need not to be quoted on all supports.

#### **6. *National Topten organisation***

At every national level, it is recommended to establish a fully independent Topten legal entity (as compared to, for example, a WWF or national energy agency carrying a Topten project). This facilitates enlarging activities, independency and avoids confusions about partnerships and use of logos.

#### **7. *Control Unit***

The full application of the internal rules of procedure may be verified by the Control Unit mentioned in TIG's statutes.

## Appendix: Topten Charter

1. Topten is a concept with tools for end-users to speed up sales, focus quality and lower barriers for market access of energy efficient equipment and respective information in households, offices, buildings, industry, transportation, etc.
2. Topten is internationally coordinated by the Topten International Group (TIG: a non-profit association, based in Paris/France) in order to increase influence on energy efficiency standards, to safeguard high quality of operations, to maintain independence, to speed exchange of experiences and data and to provide access to tools and web-systems for national Topten organisations. TIG safeguards the use of the Topten concept worldwide. It will protect international property rights of Topten.info, its name, logo and web content.
3. Topten wants to move national and international markets, individual manufacturers and retailers, organisations of trade and manufacturers, international standard organisations, etc. to contribute to the efficient use of energy by providing, designing, building, marketing and operating more energy efficient equipment.
4. In order to achieve this goal Topten has led by TIG the following tasks:
  - a. Research in national and international markets for the best products.
  - b. Building and updating databases for energy efficient equipment.
  - c. Design of criteria catalogues for the Topten-qualification (cut-off line).
  - d. Providing independent testing facilities.
  - e. Support of procurement programmes for energy efficient equipment.
  - f. Design and hosting of a series of national and international websites.
  - g. Support of design and distribution of print products with information on energy efficient equipment, etc.
  - h. Training for personnel working in national Topten projects.
  - i. Contacts to national and international organisations to influence the sale of more energy efficient equipment.
5. Topten works in cooperation with, but is independent of, equipment manufacturers and retailers and their respective associations.
6. Topten is not engaged in the sales of equipment that is mentioned on any Topten site.
7. Topten is organised nationally in order to better understand and guide market conditions.
8. Topten is financed and supported by national, regional, local and international governmental agencies, consumer and environmental NGO's and other partners (utilities, media, etc.). No sponsor shall be directly linked to the manufacturing and selling of energy using equipment displayed in Topten.
9. TIG does not normally support national Topten projects with funds except in developing countries under special agreement.

10. TIG chooses, gives accreditation and supports national organisations that want to use and distribute Topten in their country according to the Topten Charter. For the process of accreditation the prospective national Topten organisation has to setup its national partners, funding, operation managers etc. and provide the relevant information to TIG. The accreditation procedure is a transparent process with a peer review.
11. TIG tries to avoid having more than one national Topten organisation in a given country / or in a given market.
12. All national organisations accredited by TIG are members of the Topten International Group and are linked to [www.topten.info](http://www.topten.info). They pay an annual membership fee. They can use the Topten logo, operate their national Topten system and have access to the Topten database and international market research.