

**INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION FOR CHORAL MUSIC**  
**Presidential Candidacy — Vision Document**

**ONE CHORAL WORLD**

A Vision for IFCM 2026–2029

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## 0. Prelude

IFCM is a global organisation. It needs to connect the dots between national and international associations, between regions that rarely speak to each other, between the choral world's great events and the people who make them meaningful.

Connecting the choral world — with love, with interest, and with respect for every member that is part of our choral ecosystem.

## 1. IFCM Today: A Global Presence, A Growing Opportunity

IFCM brings together choral organisations, choirs and individuals from more than sixty countries across six continents. It holds the World Symposium on Choral Music — one of the most significant gatherings in the international music calendar — and has built decades of relationships with the global choral community. That foundation, built by the people who came before us, is real and valuable.

The world IFCM now serves is genuinely different from the one in which it was founded. New national federations and initiatives have emerged across most regions. Choral culture is growing in communities that had little or no representation in international structures a generation ago. Digital tools have changed how choirs, conductors and managers find each other, share repertoire, and imagine what international connection looks like. Our members have changed, too — their expectations of what a global federation should deliver are higher, and rightly so.

The opportunity ahead is larger than before. The choral world deserves a federation as active, connected, and alive as the communities it serves — and IFCM has every asset required to become exactly that.

IFCM's unique role is indispensable: It is the main organisation in the world whose mandate is to serve the entirety of the global choral community — every region, every culture, every language.

## 2. Core Vision: The Choral Home

My vision is straightforward: a network that contributes real value to every choir in the world.

That means events worth travelling to, conversations worth having, and connections worth making. A global calendar that keeps IFCM visible and relevant every year. Member organisations that find real, concrete value in their affiliation, and potential members that see IFCM as the place they belong.

It means a governance structure where the General Assembly is a genuine deliberative body, the Board is active and accountable, and the committees lead with clarity and purpose. Working groups bring expertise from the membership into focused, deliverable outputs. And IFCM's role is clear: to strengthen the work of national and regional associations, amplify what they do brilliantly, provide opportunities to choirs and individuals, and build the international bridges that no single organisation can build alone.

This vision builds on the work of those who came before — including the recommendations of the outgoing board and the vision working group established in early 2026. Their insights will be part of the strategy discussion at the September 2026 retreat.

### 2.1 The Strategic Focus

Three areas where IFCM can make the greatest difference in 2026–2029:

#### Community Events

Creating and growing the gatherings that define IFCM's character — energetic, inspiring, relevant, and genuinely worth attending.

#### Network Building

Connecting regions, traditions, and communities across continents, and giving those connections institutional permanence.

#### Expertise Sharing

Channelling the knowledge inside our membership — artistic, educational, organisational — into formats that benefit the whole choral world.

### 3. Governance: Clear, Active, Participatory

Governance is the architecture of how decisions are made, how accountability is maintained, and how members experience their relationship with IFCM. My commitment would be to build a governance structure that is clear, active, and participatory — where every body in the organisation has a defined role, a mandate, and a way of being held accountable to the membership.

#### 3.1 Executive Committee Focus Areas

Each member of the Executive Committee will lead a specific focus area, supported by a working group drawn from the membership:

Artistic	Programming, World Symposium, activities, music education, repertoire development, encounters and online campus
Administrative & Operations	Secretariat operations, staff, legal compliance, governance documents, board logistics, events steering
Membership & People	Member engagement and renewal, new member development, indirect membership, interacting with real people, fieldwork
Communication & Marketing	Digital presence, International Choral Magazine, Global Choral Calendar, brand and outreach
Financial Sustainability	Budgets, financial reporting, grant strategy, partnership development, reserves building, fundraising

Focus areas cover concrete outcomes, with deliverables and accountability. Each ExCom member chairs a working group consisting of board members joined by expertise from our membership. Working groups meet periodically, produce concrete outputs, and report to the board. Accountability runs in both directions.

#### 3.2 The Board: A Team of Builders

Board members will be contributing in their best capacity. Everybody in the board has different backgrounds, different expertise areas and also a different timezone. We would leverage that intensely. IFCM can easily become a 24-hours running ecosystem, if we organise our structure accordingly. This is a great advantage.

Also, the board members have active networks in their regions, can mobilise communities, and are prepared to do the substantive work of a federation. Each board member will support an executive focus area, contributing regional knowledge, professional commitment and relationships to that area’s working group.

### **3.3 Working Groups: Membership Expertise in Action**

IFCM's greatest resource is the expertise that lives inside its member organisations. National federations employ music educators, event managers, communications professionals, governance specialists, and fundraisers of the highest calibre. Working groups bring that expertise into IFCM's work formally, with clear mandates and SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, time-bound) key results. How we will set our north star for 2026-2029 term and the quarterly objectives will be explained in the next section.

Working groups will be active in the following areas: Music Commission; Education; Event Steering Committees; Community and Membership Development; Communication and Digital Media; Financial Sustainability; Youth Committee; Audit and Monitoring Committee; and Governance and Strategy Groups, plus working groups that the board will propose that will be needed within the mandate term. Each will have a chair, a mandate document, and initial objectives agreed at the September 2026 strategy retreat.

The Youth Committee, in particular, will receive dedicated attention. The next generation of choral leaders is already active in our member organisations — they need a clear pathway into IFCM's work, with real responsibilities and real influence, not a symbolic seat at the table.

### **3.4 The General Assembly**

The General Assembly is where IFCM's member organisations exercise their sovereign authority. It should be our aim that the GA meets annually with materials distributed in advance, agenda items substantive, and decisions genuinely implemented. In the years between formal general assemblies with elections, the Annual Members Forum will provide the community layer that the full governance cycle requires.

### **3.5 Staff: The Operational Foundation**

An elected board governs but real results can only be delivered with the executive mechanism of professional staff.

IFCM enters this term with a single staff member whose long service deserves recognition. Now, there must be careful planning for continuity.

The first priority is appointing a Secretary General. This is a Year 1 commitment. The SG will manage the secretariat, support the board and working groups, lead membership services, and coordinate communications. The role will be recruited openly, with a clear mandate and fair compensation.

Staffing will grow as activity and income grow. A Digital Media Officer joins in Year 2. No position will be created without a confirmed funding source. Looking further ahead, a sustainable IFCM would benefit from a Membership and Partnerships Officer to drive member engagement and institutional relationships, and a Programme and Events Coordinator to support the Annual Members Forum and the World Symposium cycle. These are not commitments — they are the natural shape of an organisation that is growing and delivering. Funding comes first.

## **4. How We Work: Objectives and Measurable Results**

An organisation that measures its progress knows whether it is moving. I will introduce an OKR (Objectives and Key Results) based planning culture across IFCM's governance — from the Executive Committee to the board to every working group.

OKRs pair an inspiring Objective — a qualitative statement of what we want to achieve — with measurable Key Results that tell us, concretely, whether we are getting there. The combination connects goals to accountability.

Example:

Objective — Strengthen IFCM's relationships with member organisations across all regions.

Key Results — Direct outreach completed to 100% of lapsed members by March 2027; World Choral Day participation confirmed from at least 40 countries; at least 3 regional member roundtables held before the first Annual Members Forum.

Organisation-wide OKRs will be set at the September 2026 strategy retreat for all focus areas and working groups, reviewed at each board meeting, and reported to the membership annually. This is how we stay accountable to the members who have trusted us with their federation.

## 5. The Annual Members Forum

Across many years in the international choral world, I have observed that our member organisations know too little about each other. A national federation doing extraordinary work on youth engagement may be entirely unknown to another federation on a different continent facing exactly that challenge. A festival that has solved the problem of participation funding could share that solution. A membership organisation that has found innovative ways to re-engage lapsed members could help others do the same.

What IFCM can provide — that nothing else can — is the room where those conversations happen. The Annual Members Forum is designed to be that room.

Beginning in 2027, IFCM will aim to host an annual gathering built around conversation: structured exchanges between member organisations, sessions where real questions are asked and real answers shared, and the informal relationship-building that happens when people who care about the same things are in the same place together. The Forum will also serve as a governance anchor between General Assemblies — a moment for the board to present its work and for members to engage directly with the direction of the organisation. Hosting will rotate across regions to ensure global reach. In today's world, we can easily think about a hybrid model for physical and online participation.

## 6. The Global Choral Ecosystem: IFCM's Role

Across the world, thousands of choral events take place every year — festivals running for decades, competitions drawing ensembles from dozens of countries, masterclasses led by the finest conductors of our time, youth programmes shaping the next generation of singers. Most operate within their national or regional context, with their own communities and relationships.

This is a thriving ecosystem. IFCM's role within it is to map it, connect it, and amplify it. Our member organisations already run the most significant choral events on their continents. IFCM's task is to ensure that a festival in Asia is known to a conductor in South America, that a masterclass in Europe reaches a choir in Africa, and that the relationships within our membership produce genuine international exchange. The relationships required for this already exist — they need to be activated.

One concrete benefit we will introduce is indirect membership advantage: members of IFCM member organisations — the choirs and conductors who belong to our international, national or regional federation members — will have access to discounted conditions at IFCM events. This extends the value of IFCM membership beyond the federation level and into the communities that actually do the singing, giving national federations a tangible benefit to offer their own members.

Choral singing in schools remains one of the most powerful arguments for the public value of what we do. In many countries, school choirs are where lifelong singers begin — and where the case for music education is won or lost. IFCM will actively support its member organisations in advocating for choral singing in education policy, and will work with international partners — particularly ISME — to ensure that choral music has a strong voice wherever music education is being discussed at policy level.

## 7. The World Symposium on Choral Music: Renewal and Future

The World Symposium on Choral Music is IFCM's flagship event and its most important asset — the gathering that matters, where relationships are formed and the state of choral music is genuinely debated. It must remain central to IFCM's identity and grow with the community it serves.

The format, programme structure, and host partnership framework of the Symposium will be reviewed during the first 100 days of the next term. An independent Music Commission consisting of experts will lead this review, with active input from members and WSCM participants. The goal is a Symposium that is more accessible, more representative of the full global choral community, and more financially robust for both IFCM and its host partners.

Having served as Festival Director of WSCM 2023 in Istanbul, I have seen first-hand what a host city needs — and what IFCM must deliver as a partner. That experience informs every aspect of how I think about the Symposium's future.

The 2026 Symposium in Macau will be a gathering for our community. The planning for 2029 begins the moment it closes. A formal call for expressions of interest from potential host cities will be issued in November 2026, giving hosts the full preparation time they need to build strong bids.

Milestone	Detail	Timeline
Host Expression of Interest	Formal call issued to full IFCM membership	November 2026
Full Bids Received	Detailed host proposals submitted to board	April 2027
Host City Selected	Board decision after evaluation process	August 2027
Detailed Agreement Signed	Host contract finalised and executed	By end 2027
Preparation Phase	Programme, partnerships, logistics underway	2028–2029

A host city needs time — for political relationships, fundraising, and programme design. Starting the call in November 2026 gives them that time.

## **8. World Choral Day: A Global Moment for Every Choir**

World Choral Day, held annually on the second Sunday of December, will become a genuine global moment of participation — open to every choir in the world, regardless of size, tradition, or IFCM affiliation.

The livestream: a 24-hour global singing relay beginning at dawn in the Asia-Pacific and moving westward through the day, so that choral music is sung continuously across every inhabited continent from sunrise to sunset and beyond. Every choir contributes what it does best, in its own tradition and language, connected to every other choir sharing the same moment in history.

On World Choral Day, we will invite all the world to sing with us.

World Choral Day 2026 will also mark the launch of the Global Choral Census — IFCM's systematic effort to map the choral world. Choirs, organisations and events register, share basic information about their community and tradition, and become part of a global database that belongs to the entire choral world. The data will inform IFCM's planning, strengthen grant applications, and give us a genuine picture of the global choral community for the first time.

## **9. Global Choral Calendar: IFCM Visible Every Day**

IFCM will maintain a live, publicly accessible calendar of internationally significant choral events — festivals, symposia, masterclasses, youth programmes, and major competitions. Free to access. Continuously updated. The Global Choral Calendar is where member organisations announce their events to an international audience — not a substitute for regional or national calendars, but the natural home for everything that travels beyond borders.

The Global Choral Calendar makes IFCM visible every day of the year. It also serves as a concrete demonstration of what the global choral ecosystem looks like — and the best possible argument for the value of the international connection that IFCM makes possible.

The International Choral Magazine — IFCM's long-standing publication — will be redesigned for a digital-first audience, becoming a living editorial platform rather than a periodic PDF. Together with the Calendar, the Magazine will ensure that IFCM is not only a convener of events but a daily presence in the professional life of choral musicians worldwide

## 10. Membership: Value, Reach, and the Case for Belonging

The case for IFCM membership must be concrete. International, national and regional associations, as well as member choirs face real resource constraints. The decision to invest in international federation membership deserves a clear answer to the question: what do we get?

The answer has three parts. First: access to the global choral community — the relationships, knowledge exchange, and connections that the Annual Members Forum, the Global Choral Calendar, and the federation’s network-building work make possible. Second: visibility through IFCM’s platforms, publications, and events for the work that member organisations are already doing. Third: a voice in the governance of the international federation that represents choral music globally.

### 10.1 Indirect Membership: Value at Every Level

IFCM will introduce indirect membership benefit — preferential conditions at IFCM events for members of our member organisations. A choir belonging to a federation or association that belongs to IFCM will access IFCM events at preferential rates. This extends IFCM's relevance beyond the federation leadership level and into the communities of choirs and conductors who are the living heart of our world.

### 10.2 Growing the Membership

The global choral community extends well beyond the current IFCM membership. Countries and traditions ready for international connection are waiting to be genuinely invited. A systematic, relationship-based approach to membership development — built on direct conversations with choral communities in underrepresented regions — will be a VP Membership priority from year one.

### 10.3 IFCM as a Tool for Choral Leaders

Choral leaders have a job to do at home. They don't only work internationally. On the contrary, national-level priorities are more prominent for associations, understandably. Federations and associations answer to governments, funding bodies, and national music councils that respond to international standing. IFCM membership should be a concrete instrument in that work: a credential that carries weight in conversations with a Culture Ministry, a source of co-branded recognition for nationally organised events, and a network that helps member organisations access relationships and opportunities they cannot reach alone.

Therefore, the measure of IFCM's value goes beyond what happens at our events. It is actually what becomes possible for our members in their own countries — because they are better connected and more credible for belonging to us.

## 11. Financial Sustainability: A Responsible Path

Financial sustainability is a governance priority and a prerequisite for everything else in this vision. Our commitment should be a clear, multi-year path toward structural stability: diversifying income, building reserves, and ensuring IFCM’s financial position improves measurably year on year. The budget will reflect confirmed reality, and planning will be based on what is solid.

Like many international organisations navigating a period of disruption, IFCM enters this term with financial commitments that require attention and resolution. Our plan starts from where we actually are — honestly and without illusion — and builds from there. We should be quite realistic about finances.

### 11.1 Year-by-Year Financial Direction

2026 — Stabilise	Consolidate the income base. Pursue all outstanding membership dues. Establish financial controls and reporting that give the board a clear, transparent, real-time picture of IFCM's position.
2027 — Break Even	Membership income growing. Grant applications submitted. Digital income diversified. First Members Forum delivered responsibly. Income and expenditure move towards balance.
2028 — First Surplus	A modest budget surplus. Reserve fund begins to build. Additional fundraising capacity engaged as income allows. WSCM deal done. Sponsorship pipeline active.
2029 — Sustainable	The World Symposium 2029 delivered with a sound financial model. Reserve fund at a meaningful level. IFCM's financial position is structurally stable. Grant applications for the 2029-2032 term already started.

Income diversification is the key to resilience. The 2026–2029 strategy will develop multiple income streams — membership dues, event-related income, grants from foundations and international bodies, institutional partnerships, and digital programme development — so that IFCM's financial health rests on a broad base.

## 12. International Music Relations

IFCM's relationship with the broader international music community — including the International Music Council, international networks of music educators, and cultural institutions worldwide — is part of what gives the federation its standing and reach. These will be working relationships: joint projects, shared advocacy, and mutual amplification.

The case for choral music as a public good, an educational tool, and a peacebuilding instrument is stronger when made by a coalition of organisations. IFCM will be an active and leading voice in that coalition.

The **International Music Council (IMC)** is the natural anchor. Its Five Music Rights framework — covering access to music, music education, artistic freedom, and cultural diversity — aligns directly with IFCM's mission. IFCM will be an active contributing voice within the IMC, proposing joint projects and positioning choral music prominently in its global advocacy agenda. The #Culture2030Goal campaign, advocating for culture's inclusion in the UN Sustainable Development Goals, is exactly the kind of initiative IFCM should be amplifying through its membership.

**Culture Action Europe (CAE)** carries significant weight in EU-level cultural policy. EU advocacy is necessarily anchored in European frameworks — and within that context, a partner with genuine global reach becomes a concrete asset. IFCM's membership across six continents gives CAE's advocacy a wider evidence base and a more compelling case when European cultural policy reaches for international relevance. The European choral community, already embedded in CAE's networks, is the natural bridge between the two.

**TENSO Network Europe**, the professional chamber choir network, occupies the artistic frontier of the choral ecosystem — new repertoire, young composers, professional development. IFCM and TENSO are natural allies: IFCM brings global community breadth, TENSO brings artistic depth. A closer relationship between the two would benefit both, and there is an immediate personal connection here that makes it a practical starting point.

**ISME** — the International Society for Music Education — is the partner for any serious work on choral singing in schools and community settings. Choral music education is one of the strongest arguments for the public value of what we do, and ISME is where that argument is made at policy level.

The common thread: IFCM can draw significant strength from what already exists in the culture sector. It needs to position itself clearly within the ecosystem, contribute its unique global reach to coalitions that are stronger for having it, and ensure that choral music has a voice at every table where the future of music — as education, as culture, as a public good — is being decided.

## 13. The Three-Year Journey: 2026–2029

Here, we outline a simple timeline, across three years:

### Year 1 (2026–2027) — Connect the Dots

The Executive Committee is in place, working groups are active, and OKRs are agreed by September 2026. The Annual Members Forum is confirmed and planned. The call for the 2029 Symposium host goes out. Secretary General hired. Partner outreach begins. The Global Choral

Census launches at World Choral Day in December. The new website is live. The Global Choral Calendar goes live. IFCM becomes more visible every day. In late summer, The first Annual Members Forum is organised.

## **Year 2 (2027–2028) — Build and Invite**

The 2029 World Symposium host is confirmed and the financial model agreed. Membership categories are reformed at the 2027 General Assembly. The International Choral Magazine is redesigned for a digital-first audience. World Choral Day grows in regional reach. A Digital Media Officer joins the team. New digital communication model is active. IFCM's financial position reaches break-even and the first surplus budget is in sight. In late summer, The second Annual Members Forum is organised.

## **Year 3 (2028–2029) — Deliver and Sustain**

2029 World Symposium is delivered: artistically exceptional, financially sound, a genuine gathering of the global choral community. IFCM achieves its first budget surplus. The reserve fund builds. The next generation of board members is already developing. The organisation runs on systems. Partnership work produces first concrete joint outputs: Co-publications, shared advocacy, cross-community programming.

## **14. Postlude**

I have spent my professional life on the stages where music is made and in the work of building organisations that bring people together. This takes a lot of energy, belief, and strong determination. The path is never without obstacles. But we, as people working in the field of collective singing, have the strongest asset of our times: Values created by human beings.

I strongly believe that collective singing presents a perfect model for a well-functioning organisation. Our role, as leadership in the choral world, depends on our ability to enable our members, choirs, and national organisations to reach their full potential. Just as a conductor would mean nothing without their singers, IFCM is only meaningful with the flourishing of its members and the choral community.

I look forward to continuing this conversation in person — at WSCM 2026, and in the coming years beyond.

Thank you.

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