



Changes to Cooperation Canada Membership Fees Factsheet

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Executive Summary

Cooperation Canada Membership Fees have not changed since they were updated in 2011. In March 2020, the Cooperation Canada Board of Directors approved changes to the Membership Fees, introducing a comprehensive shift in the formula. This change will apply to all members on April 1, 2021, and already applies to new members seeking to join Cooperation Canada between April 2020 and March 2021.

The purpose of the change to membership fees structure is to (1) simplify and improve the transparency of the calculation of the fees, (2) improve accessibility and inclusion by reducing barriers to entry for small organizations, and those based outside Ontario/Québec, (3) include access to all Working Groups for all members as a core service of Cooperation Canada (i.e. no separate fees for working groups) and (4) ensure fee levels are progressive based on organization size.

Because the change is to the formula, the impacts on member fees vary. For some, these will decrease, and for others, these will increase. For the large majority of members, these changes are not significant. Combined with the integration of Working Group services which were previously 'additional' (ex. regional working groups), an increase in member services also accompanies this change in fee structure. To learn more about changes to Working Groups, [click here](#).

Background

Rationale for a change to membership dues formula

The last significant change to Cooperation Canada membership dues was implemented in 2010-11, following the loss of federal funding. This model achieved its stated objective of ensuring Cooperation Canada's survival and independence from federal funding. Over time, however, the membership dues formula revealed significant shortcomings in the following areas:

- Lack of **transparency** on the dues calculation process (depends on unverifiable data provided by members) exposes concerns about **fairness** and **equity** in dues levels.
- High **administrative burden** for Cooperation Canada to annually calculate, validate, communicate, invoice and chase up membership dues payments from its members. The exchanges with members on this topic are a recurring source of **frustration** and **confusion**.
- Two questions of **accessibility/inclusion**:
 - No accommodations provided for members located far from Ottawa.
 - Progressive nature of dues only applies to smaller members. One-third of members (medium-to-large) pay the same maximum dues.

The 2011 Dues Formula

The formula used to calculate membership fees since 2011 has been: 0.4% for the first \$1 million of eligible expenses (expenditures related to international programs) and 0.15% of expenses thereafter, to a maximum fee of \$15,730. The minimum fee is \$315.

In 2019-2020, 30% of members paid the maximum of \$15,730.

This formula is applied for the last time to all members on April 1, 2020.

Objectives of a change to the membership dues formula

The following objectives guided the analysis and modelling for changes to Cooperation Canada's membership formula.

- Simplify the membership dues calculation and payment process for members
- Improve transparency on dues calculation
- Ensure dues are progressive relative to organization size
- Reduce geographic barriers to participation in Cooperation Canada activities
- Reduce fees or maintain levels for the majority of members
- Secure the financial resources to fund the changes to Cooperation Canada Working Groups (i.e. replace the need for separate working group fees).

Cooperation Canada Membership Dues Formula (Effective April 1, 2021)

Effective April 1, 2021, Cooperation Canada membership dues will be calculated based on organization staff numbers reported in the organizations' most recent CRA annual T3010 filing available online at the start of Cooperation Canada's fiscal year (April 1). The Full-Time Equivalent (FTE) number used in calculating the dues level is the sum of full-time positions reported plus half (1/2) the part-time positions reported.

A fee discount of 25% is assigned to members who do not have an office in Ontario or Quebec (75% discount if these organizations also have 2 or less FTE). Coalition and network organizations (who serve other organizations) are not eligible for the geographic discount.

	Staff # as FTE *	Full Dues	Geographic discount (25%)
- Level 1	Staff ≤ 2	\$200	\$50
- Level 2	Staff ≤ 5	\$1,000	\$750
- Level 3	Staff ≤ 12	\$4,000	\$3,000
- Level 4	Staff ≤ 25	\$8,000	\$6,000
- Level 5	Staff ≤ 40	\$12,000	\$9,000
- Level 6	Staff ≤ 75	\$15,500	\$11,625
- Level 7	Staff ≤ 100	\$18,500	\$13,875
- Level 8	Staff ≤ 200	\$21,500	\$16,125
- Level 9	Staff ≤ 500	\$25,500	\$19,125
- Level 10	Staff over 500	\$28,500	\$21,375

* FTE = full-time equivalent

Notes on the calculation of dues level

- Members who do not file a T3010 may provide Cooperation Canada with attestation of their employee numbers when calculating their fee levels.

New Members Joining April 2020-March 2021

The 'new' formula applies to all members joining Cooperation Canada after April 1, 2020.

Questions and Answers

Why base membership dues on staff levels?

This will allow membership dues to be relative to an organization's size and ability to engage – or make use of – Cooperation Canada member services. Staff numbers are an objective criterion, published annually by a large majority of Cooperation Canada membership to CRA through their T3010.

Why not use revenues as a proxy for organizational size?

This was considered, and such data is equally available through annual T3010 submissions to CRA. Given the availability of two data sets (staff and revenues), the decision was made to select staff size as a better reflection of how members engage with Cooperation Canada. The more people work for a member organization, the more people will participate in our activities. Ultimately, our sector works to advance inclusive human progress, not raise and spend money (though that is needed too!). Anyway, isn't it nice to talk about people rather than money? We think so.

Why provide a 25% discount to organizations that are based outside of Ontario and Québec?

Cooperation Canada recognizes the additional cost for participation in activities it organizes in Ottawa for organizations that must send their staff long distances. This point is raised with Cooperation Canada consistently and partly explains the historically small number of our members based outside of Ontario and Québec.

Note that the 25% geographic discount is not available to organizations whose headquarters are based outside of Ontario and Québec if they have offices in either of those provinces or if they are networks or coalitions that serve the international development community.

Why draw the line at Ontario and Québec? Travelling to Ottawa from parts of those provinces is also expensive.

We know this isn't perfect. But it's a start, and a line had to be drawn somewhere. Until now we couldn't offer any geographic accommodation at all. We know it is a challenge to travel to Ottawa. We also know it is not possible to take a train, bus or car to get to Ottawa from outside Ontario and Quebec. Let's face it, travel from anywhere else in the country is more expensive.

With this change, will we be required to pay any other membership dues to Cooperation Canada, like the Regional Working Groups, for example?

No – the new fees now include participation in all Cooperation Canada working groups as part of core annual contributions. As many staff as you have and wish to participate in these groups can do so without additional fees. The only exception is the Humanitarian Response Network. While this is hosted at Cooperation Canada, it has separate governance, membership and funding from GAC to operate.

It appears Cooperation Canada will collect more membership dues overall following this change. Why is that? Where is that money going?

Cooperation Canada is integrating all the activities, revenues and expenses of the Regional Working Groups – which presently operate as semi-autonomous groups and collect their own dues – into its core operations. The increase in Cooperation Canada total revenues from core membership dues under this new model should mostly replace the revenues previously collected through the Africa Canada Forum and Asia-Pacific Working Group. For Cooperation Canada, this change is designed to be revenue-neutral.

This is an exciting change as it is accompanied by a significant renewal of Cooperation Canada's approach to all its working groups. In 2020, we will be rolling out a more flexible and consistent model to support all thematic and geographic working groups we host. Just as we host a CFO Working Group, we will be adding more based on member interests and ensuring they have the basic support needed to convene, share experience, inform policy and hold events. Burgeoning groups are already being formed this year on topics like Innovative Finance and Public Engagement. Find out more about this [here](#).

We are glad to pay less to Cooperation Canada than we did previously, but we don't need to. Can we contribute additionally?

Yes, during the membership renewal process, you will be provided with an opportunity to make an additional contribution to Cooperation Canada. This could be to support core operations or a specific project.

Our organization will pay more under this new formula. The new dues levels are too high.

The changes to the Cooperation Canada dues formula are intended to ensure member contributions are progressive based on member organization staff size. Until this change, many medium organizations paid the same as very large organizations. Some organizations with 30 staff were paying the same as organizations with 800 staff. The Cooperation Canada Board felt it was important to apply principles of fairness through the application of a progressive formula based on an organization's capacity to engage with the many services and activities of Cooperation Canada. Even at the very highest dues levels (\$28,500), paid by organizations with over 500 staff, this represents only a percentage of one staff person's salary yet provides benefits to a great many more than that.

Please also note that Cooperation Canada dues now include participation in all our Working Groups. If you were paying separately before to participate in the Working Groups; you are no longer required to do this.

We want to pay our share, but we are struggling this year and have less capacity than appears based on last year's staff levels. Is there any room to accommodate us for a short period of transition with lower fees?

Cooperation Canada's dues structure is based on a progressive formula relative to organizational staff size. With respect to all our members and in the spirit of fairness, we must apply this formula consistently to everyone. However, Cooperation Canada also recognizes that members go through good and bad years. If you remain committed to Cooperation Canada membership and wish to discuss a temporary reduction of fees, please contact the Member Engagement Officer. We will do so with you in good faith to support your work. In return, we also expect that you provide us with a timetable to return to your appropriate dues levels based on the formula.

This is a big change to the Cooperation Canada dues formula. Will there be others?

We've had the same formula since 2011, and you're right; it is a big change! We have made these changes now because we felt it important to address significant weaknesses of our previous formula around access and inclusion for CSOs, transparency of dues calculations, fairness and administrative burdens to Cooperation Canada. We hope we've gotten it right and, barring the unforeseen, have no plans to revisit the formula for years to come. It may be another decade before this is reviewed again.

That being said, Cooperation Canada's Board of Directors will always review the status of membership contributions and reserves the right to consider modest increases in membership dues every 2-3 years to match rising costs of living. The Board welcomes member feedback on dues at all times.