

International Committee

Minutes of 9 February to 13 February Meetings

Held in Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Present in person:

Sun Teck Tan	President	tanst@comp.nus.edu.sg	Singapore	2024-2027
Azamat Seydaliyev	Host 2026	a.seydaliyev@digital.uz	Uzbekistan	2024-2027
Wolfgang Pohl	Host 2027	pohl@bwinf.de	Germany	2024-2028
Iliyan Yordanov	Host 2029	iliyan.yordanov98@gmail.com	Bulgaria	2025-2030
Fredrik Niemelä	Elected	fredrik@niemela.se	Sweden	2023-2026
Ágnes Erdősné Németh	Elected	erdosne@inf.elte.hu	Hungary	2024-2027
Arnar Bjarni Arnarson	Elected	arnar.b.arnarson@gmail.com	Iceland	2025-2026
Jacobo Vilella Vilahur	Elected	jacobo221+ioi@gmail.com	Spain	2025-2028
Michal Forišek	Elected	michal.forisek@algo.sk	Slovakia	2025-2028
Eljakim Schrijvers	Treasurer	eljakim+ioi@gmail.com	The Netherlands	non-voting
J.P. Pretti	Secretary	jpretti@uwaterloo.ca	Canada	non-voting
Rie Yamaguchi	Candidate Host 2028		Japan	

Not present:

Jhonatan Castro	Host 2025	jhtan@jhtan.com	Bolivia	2022-2026
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Welcome

Sun Teck welcomed everyone saying it was a pleasure to be in Tashkent. He thanked Azamat for the warm hospitality. Sun Teck said that IC plays a vital role in providing direction and integrity to the IOI, so its discussions are important. He said he looked forward to open and constructive discussion and thanked everyone present for their commitment.

Apologies

Jhonatan e-mailed IC a week earlier to say he was unable to attend these winter meetings.

Confirmation of Agenda and Outline of Winter Meetings

The IC agenda was unanimously approved.

Azamat noted that IC visited the IOI 2026 venues in the morning and will visit the Ministry of Digital Technologies in the evening. He outlined the planned meeting times and an excursion planned for Thursday.

Wolfgang asked if we could use some of the scheduled free time for meetings if we need it. Azamat said this time was not all entirely free time because some of it was needed for media events. J.P. added his concern that there may not be enough meeting time, and everyone agreed to extend the next meeting by starting one hour earlier.

Confirmation of IC Minutes and GA Minutes.

IC considered three small suggestions from Wolfgang to be friendly amendments to the IC minutes for meetings held during IOI 2025 which were then approved unanimously.

With no comments on the GA minutes for IOI 2025, they were also approved unanimously.

Report by President

Sun Teck began his report by saying that 21 medalists attended the IOI Gold Medalist camp in China in late January. He noted that two silver medalists were also invited in order to have more countries represented. Sun Teck observed that future camps are best if organized by people familiar with the IOI. He announced that next year's camp will be held in The Netherlands and may be combined with the International Mathematical Olympiad. Eljakim confirmed this emphasizing that next year's camp will be more academic with fewer IC members invited. He expressed gratitude to the sponsor lined up to fund the endeavour.

Moving to the new initiative of a Coach Training Camp, Sun Teck said two sponsors have agreed to support this. He also noted that perhaps the IOI foundation could fund any budget shortfall, if necessary, but he indicated coaches should pay some small fee to reflect their commitment to the event. Sun Teck said there will be more discussion about this idea later in the agenda with the need to talk about selection, necessary preparation, possible foundation funding.

As a third and final item, Sun Teck said there will be discussion about running an AI competition at IOI 2026 but run in a more proper and formal way than in 2025.

Report by Secretary

J.P. pointed IC to his report on Google Drive for a list of his regular responsibilities. He noted the communication with potential new countries highlighting three countries that seem the most likely to submit a promising application soon.

Reminding everyone of a concern often heard from less developed countries, J.P. said he again heard reports of a "chicken and egg paradox" wherein prospective new members feel they need an official relationship with the IOI before finding funding, but the IOI requires financial stability before accepting an organization as a member.

Finances

Eljakim said there was no formal report because the accountant could not meet the early-February deadline. He added that financial arrangements with the Government of Bolivia (IOI 2025) are being finalized. Eljakim said all but one country is within 50 Euros of being current. Finally, he noted that sponsor contracts are in the works – one signed and final versions being completed on two others.

Current Host Report: Updates on IOI 2026

Azamat referred to the presentation delivered at the Ministry the previous evening and noted it provided a comprehensive summary of planning for IOI 2026.

Discussion of IOI 2026 (venues, accommodations, guides, excursions, etc.)

Responding to Sun Teck asking about visas, Azamat said approximately 90 countries are visa-free for Uzbekistan.

Asked about the fact that not all the hotels to be used are yet open, Azamat said four hotels are currently open; two more are expected to open this month and two later in the year. J.P. requested an update to IC by May 1. Fredrik expressed concern that information provided this week about the readiness of hotels has varied.

The breakfast plan for contestants on contest days was discussed. Azamat said options include boxed breakfasts for everyone or dividing contestants into shifts by floor with prior notification. The IC agreed two breakfast shifts are problematic on contest days and stressed equality of conditions. It was suggested that overflow space (e.g., conference rooms) may be used as needed.

Fredrik noted that concerns about limited hotel space would extend beyond contest day breakfasts affecting quarantine, for example. This led to a request to walk through the schedule for IOI 2026 which was delayed as updates to the agenda are underway.

Arnar Bjarni noted that plans to handle different dietary needs are excellent but noted that things have not always been labelled carefully this week. He stressed the importance of this to avoid language barrier issues.

Wolfgang said the contest hall is large but an earlier visualization under-estimated seating. Azamat assured him that this was only a visualization. It was agreed that ITC should verify there is sufficient spacing between contestants.

Sun Teck asked about the plan for guides. Azamat said the plan is to recruit them and other volunteers from local universities. Related to this, Fredrik asked about communication methods. Discussion ensued with J.P. underscoring the importance of avoiding contradictions and the tendency of some hosts to underestimate how challenging it is to ensure information is accurate. Eljakim specifically noted that guides be trained to say when they don't know the answer to a question they are asked. IC agreed a clear concrete communications plan is needed which avoids relying on multi-layered message relays.

Noting that SIM cards were to be provided, Arnar Bjarni wondered if eSIMs would be possible. Azamat said they are exploring this. Eljakim noted that providing data to participants does not solve the communication problem because not everyone has phones, and contestants will have limited access to their devices on contest days.

Sun Teck asked how buses will be managed. Azamat said buses will be assigned by hotel, will wait until they fill, and then leave.

Sun Teck followed up with reminders to provide pigeonholes, find a secure room to store contestant backpacks during the contest, plan contest hall entrance security, provide medical care and ensure excursions are not dangerous. Azamat noted all of this.

Azamat note that there will not be a separate program for guests.

Report on IOI 2027

Wolfgang reported that an experienced agency has been hired to help organize IOI 2027. He added that a new logo and visual identity were created; the website ioi27.de is reserved; and hotels are confirmed. He reiterated that the organizational structure remains simple: HPI, BWINF, and the event agency, all with substantial related experience. Wolfgang said the HSC has expanded since IOI 2025, but even more HTC members are still needed. Finally, he said outreach to authorities has begun.

Agnes asked about public transportation between leaders' and contestants' hotels. Wolfgang expects good options and will provide details later. Visa challenges for some Members were discussed with Jacobo noting that it can sometimes be difficult to obtain a Schengen visa. He suggested that Germany consult with the Hungarian hosts of IOI 2023 to learn from their experience

The IC emphasized guide training, including acknowledging when answers are unknown. Operational reminders were recorded regarding bus logistics (wait–fill–go per hotel), pigeonholes, secure storage for contestant backpacks, contest-day security screening, medical care, and excursion safety. Wolfgang recommended distinct shirt colours for contestants and leaders. Misof suggested distinct badges.

IOI 2028 and other Future IOIs

Rie updated the IC explaining delays in confirming Japan as the Future Host of IOI 2028 bid. She said recent elections should not affect support, and the bid will proceed shortly expressing confidence that a full commitment from sponsors will be confirmed. J.P. noted formal commitment to hosting includes appointing ITC/ISC/IC representatives. Fredrik emphasized choosing representatives who can commit fully.

Sun Teck described a strong candidate for hosting IOI 2030. J.P. reminded him that no decision for IOI 2030 has been made yet and a bidding process is required. It was agreed that Sun Teck would soon update the community and make a call for bids for 2030 and beyond.

Sponsorship

Eljakim summarized sponsorship status consistent with his prior briefing. Sun Teck said he has directed some potential sponsors to the 2026 hosts. Eljakim asked to be kept in the loop to ensure coordination across hosts. He noted that two sponsors recently withdrew. Answering Fredrik, he said central IOI sponsorship totals roughly 300,000 Euros. The IC discussed balancing long-term sponsorships with host autonomy and agreed structure should not impede sponsorship development.

Sun Teck raised his past idea of a revenue-generating mirror contest. Wolfgang cautioned this could make IOI appear commercial, potentially affecting government support. To mitigate this, Misof suggested clearly directing proceeds from IOI n to IOI $n+1$.

Funded Projects

Agnes reported two ongoing projects. One project is in its final stage and will be trialed in a national competition next month; a link will be shared. A second project has been tested repeatedly, shared with 20 countries, and is expected to reach a final stage in early May. Agnes said code will be shared on GitHub. She observed that no new applications were received by the January deadline announced at the last IOI. The IC agreed a reminder with an extension is unnecessary and J.P. agreed to add presentations on these projects to the IOI 2026 GA agenda.

Regulation Changes

Fredrik introduced a set of proposed regulation changes; each linked to specific GitHub issues. The IC reviewed them sequentially and recorded comments and follow-ups as below.

Rename the Defined Term “Country” to “Member”

This updated definition recognizes a Member as a state or territory with a recognized relationship with the UN or UNESCO, or one that has participated in previous IOIs. Related edits include changing “National Delegation” to “Delegation” and updating approximately 100 references.

Wolfgang raised concerns about confusion between “Member”, “member” and “member of a committee”. He wondered whether organizations should be treated as the members representing geographic areas. Fredrik said this is effectively the intention. Jacobo supported alignment with UN/UNESCO usage. Misof agreed saying it emphasizes the objective of one Member per area.

Define a Member Organization

This new notion would mean that for each Member, the IC would recognize a single Member Organization as the official representative in IOI matters. The organization would designate the Leader and Deputy Leader, serve as the contact point if contact is lost, and be referenced where “Country representatives” are mentioned. The IC agreed this adds needed structure and may enable future clarifications.

GA Existing Outside of IOI

This change would mean that the GA is not a temporary body but convenes during each IOI and introduces provisions for urgent electronic votes between IOIs. Voting would be conducted via the Member Organization, with rules for representation, quorum, and reporting. The IC agreed with the intent noting that leaders from the previous IOI may not be the correct points of contact for this purpose.

Add Support for Sanctions

Fredrik explained that this introduces a statute enabling the GA to impose sanctions on a Member. Sanctioned Members would not display flag/name, vote, or host; contestants could still compete. J.P., Iliyan and Jacobo requested clarification and expressed concerns with the wording of this draft. Wolfgang noted that this would encode a single mechanism for sanctions. It was agreed that further drafting is required before GA consideration.

Simplify IC Minutes Requirements

Fredrik said this simply consolidates two items so that once approved, IC minutes, including individual vote records, must be made available to the IOI community.

Fix “Loose” Note

This change to remove an informal note and codify the collective term “Participants” by statute was viewed as non-controversial and an improvement.

Allow HSC to be from Outside the Host Member

By removing the requirement that HSC members be from the Host Member, Fredrik said the regulations would better reflect practice. Iliyan suggested expressing an expectation for mostly local members. Fredrik preferred not to include this. Others were unsure. In the end, the IC agreed to proceed and monitor its impacts.

Clarify GA Speaking Rights

Also reflecting current practice, Fredrik says this specifies that GA, IC, ISC, ITC, and Organizing Committee members have speaking rights, and other attendees may speak with the Chair’s permission. Iliyan and Jacobo cautioned about unlimited debate and preserving the Chair’s ability to manage discussion. The IC agreed that the wording needs refinement.

Clarify Participants

Fredrik said this broadens certificate-issuing to cover all contributors to the IOI, including Organizing Committee, HSC, task authors, and others as determined by the host. Agnes suggested explicitly including HTC.

Clarify ITC Election

Finally, Fredrik proposes that this clarifies that if the ISC proposes exactly the required number of candidates, approval is by simple majority, and if ISC proposes more candidates than required, or if the GA requests it, an election following the outlined procedure will occur.

Fredrik also said some grammar and spelling were noted.

Jacobo reminded everyone that he suggests we increase the number of nominations/endorsements needed to run for IC from 2 to 5. This received broad support.

No strong opposition was expressed to the proposals, but it was agreed that work is needed on the wording. J.P. suggested tabling votes to the start of IOI 2026 when IC next meets.

This led to IC discussing member workload and engagement between meetings, including potential working groups and preparation expectations. Different stylistic differences were noted with everyone agreeing there is a need to balance the volunteer nature of work on IC with the need to address some issues in a timely manner.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion

J.P. raised two items. First, Agnes volunteered to take over IOI Allies. Second, members were asked to suggest candidates to diversify IC representation with Agnes agreeing to follow up with potential candidates.

DSA Awards

The IC reviewed the nominations and agreed that the chosen recipients' contributions extend well beyond the national level. IC agreed that significant and lengthy contributions at the national level are to be commended and acknowledged (often via a long-term service award) but are not in themselves sufficient to receive a DSA. Arnar Bjarni noted that exceptions could be considered for retired or deceased contributors who were on a path to meeting award requirements.

Sanctions (Request from Israel)

Sun Teck noted the message by Israel requesting that IC reconsider Israel's participation status for IOI 2026 arguing that the primary context for the sanctions has fundamentally changed.

The IC considered whether it should act. The consensus was not to pre-empt the GA. However, IC was clear in its desire to have all participants attend IOI 2026 and asked J.P. to see if it can help facilitate this in any way.

Taiwan (Request from China)

Sun Teck continued with a request from China asking that the name "Taiwan" and flag of Taiwan not be used on IOI websites. IC discussed the request and decided not to make any corresponding changes because this maintains the IOI precedent of its members normally determining how they are referenced. It was noted, however, that proposed regulation changes are underway to largely replace use of the term "Country" with use of the term "Member".

Australian IOI 2024 Team

The IC unanimously voted to update the IOI statistics website reversing its earlier decision to have the Australian delegation participate under the IOI flag. It was acknowledged that this was being done upon request by Australia undoing the original request also made by Australia. IC emphasized that this clearly differentiates this situation from sanctions procedures.

Types of Guests

J.P. outlined issues raised by Australia regarding guest categories (Adjunct, Chaperone, Guest). Australian law requires that an adult chaperone be present with minors during travel. Discussion included varying access levels and accommodation rules. The IC agreed to support Australia's request, explore related regulation changes, and encourage hosts to accommodate such needs where capacity allows. Fredrik said he would draft regulation changes. Eljakim said he would update the registration system accordingly. Azamat said he would determine feasibility of the request for IOI 2026. J.P. said he would try to communicate the distinction between types of guests to future hosts.

IOI 2025 Final Report

The final report for IOI 2025 was noted. No questions were raised.

Continuity

Jacobo presented issues of continuity in IOI committees noting that IC, ISC and ITC have considerable turnover by design. He proposed institutional email accounts for President, Secretary, Treasurer, and hosts to avoid information gaps, maintain contacts and reduce impersonation risks. The IC supported addresses for the three officers, while opinions on host emails were mixed. J.P. noted the need to clarify next steps with hosts.

IOI Hosted Website and Services

Led by Jacobo, the IC also discussed preservation and archiving of past IOI websites. A proposal was made to host each edition under a unified format such as YYYY.ioinformatics.org, with ITC providing DNS delegation or static copies. The IC supported this as an optional framework, not a requirement.

A trial of GitHub for bug tracking was approved.

Schulze Voting UI/UX

Via Jacobo, Martin Mareš reported header clarifications to the voting interface. No further issues were raised.

Updates from ISC

Bartosz Kostka summarized progress: a high number of low-quality AI-generated task proposals (9 of 57); continued difficulty sourcing high-quality easy problems; no concerns regarding HSC; in-progress clarifications with ITC on rounding and last-minute contest-hall submissions; a request for clear requirements for any AI competition at IOI 2026; and a request for guidance on regulations regarding assistance to national Olympiads.

Sun Teck said the intention is to host an AI contest at IOI 2026. J.P. clarified that IC has not yet agreed to this.

Updates from ITC

Martin's report was submitted by email. J.P. highlighted ITC's concerns about HTC composition. Misof stressed careful framing to avoid implying a lack of national expertise but rather that there can be a gap in available IOI specific knowledge and experience. Room configuration and access control were discussed. J.P. promised to put related requests in writing to provide clarity to the IOI 2026 hosts.

Coach Training Camp

Sun Teck presented data identifying Members with few historic medals and proposed inviting coaches from those areas. J.P. questioned the methodology (e.g., not accounting for population). Discussion highlighted varied causes for lower performance (education systems, resources, population). Misof recommended an open-application model to frame the camp as support rather than a critique. Fredrik and others emphasized motivation. A working group consisting of Sun Teck, Jacobo, Misof, Fredrik, Arnar Bjarni and Eljakim (for budget purposes) was formed to prepare a written plan and consider a pilot.

AI at IOI

The IC discussed whether to run an AI competition at IOI 2026. J.P. suggested first gauging IC interest; if proceeding, a working group should act quickly given the timeline. Misof and Arnar Bjarni noted GA support for exploring the idea in 2025. Fredrik emphasized the need for a clear plan by June. Interest appeared to be cautious but open. A working group consisting of Sun Teck, Fredrik, Wolfgang and Arnar Bjarni was formed with the addition of Luca Versari (ITC) and Ali Sharifi-Zarchi (ISC) once their previously expressed interest is confirmed. Eljakim will be kept in the loop because he must deal with the sponsor arrangements and potential extra costs charged to AI contestants.

IOI 2026 Schedule

The schedule for IOI 2026 was discussed briefly with a few questions raised but an acknowledgement that it is still a work in progress. Eljakim volunteered to sit down and comb through the timetable with the hosts this afternoon. Then, once a firmer draft was in place, Azamat promised to circulate it to IC for its feedback.

Other Business

Sun Teck invited final comments. J.P. thanked Azamat and colleagues sincerely for their hospitality and hard work throughout the meetings.