



INTERAMERICAN NETWORK OF FOOD ANALYSIS LABORATORIES



INFAL

*PAN AMERICAN HEALTH ORGANIZATION – PAHO
WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION - WHO – OMS*

FOOD AND AGRICULTURE ORGANIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS – FAO

BYLAWS OF THE INTERAMERICAN NETWORK OF FOOD ANALYSIS LABORATORIES

English Version

Approved by the Fourth Assembly of the INFAL

Panama City, Panama, October 28 – 30, 2008



**BYLAWS
OF THE INTER AMERICAN NETWORK OF FOOD ANALYSIS
LABORATORIES (INFAL)**

**CHAPTER I
GENERAL DISPOSITIONS**

Name

ART. 1 The present organization, which will be governed by the present Statutes and the applicable provisions of the International Law, will be identified under the name Inter-American Network of Food Analysis Laboratories – INFAL, also RILAA (acronym in Spanish).

Mission

ART. 2 INFAL will have the mission of promoting food safety and quality assurance in the region of the Americas in order to prevent foodborne diseases, protect the consumer's health and facilitate trade, fostering and strengthening analytical laboratory development and interaction within the framework of integrated national programs for food protection.

Objectives

ART. 3 INFAL will have the following objectives:

- a) achieve the methodological harmonization of food analysis laboratories,
- b) promote the implementation of equivalent quality management systems in INFAL laboratories,
- c) strengthen the technical and scientific cooperation among the countries involved in the Network.

ART. 4 The specific objectives will be the following:

- a) Develop an information system among INFAL laboratories.
- b) Facilitate the availability of reference materials and the participation in inter-laboratory tests.
- c) Organize and promote training programs and continuous education, fostering the interchange of experiences and available resources in the region.
- d) Promote and strengthen the inter-sectoral participation for the formation and operation of national networks of food laboratories.
- e) Promote and strengthen the integration of INFAL laboratories to the programs for food protection and epidemiological surveillance.

CHAPTER II MEMBERS

ART. 5 INFAL will be conformed by officially appointed national laboratories involved in the control of food quality in the countries of the region of the Americas. Each country may participate with a maximum of three laboratories.

ART. 6 The incorporation of the country to INFAL will be voluntary. Agreement to participate in any activity commits the laboratories and institutions to comply with the relevant program.

ART. 7 The continuance in RILAA will be condition to the active participation in its programs.

CHAPTER III ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

ART. 8 INFAL organization structure will be conformed by:

- a) The Assembly
- b) The Executive Committee
- c) The Technical Groups
- d) The *ex officio* Secretariat
- e) The Advisory Group
- f) The National Networks

The Assembly

ART. 9 The Assembly will be INFAL highest authority within the limits of its competence and will be formed by the member laboratories. The delegation will be chaired by an official representative by country, responsible for the food analysis laboratories at the highest level, and who will exercise the right to vote for his/her country.

ART. 10 The resolutions of the Assembly are binding for all present and absent members provided that they have been made in compliance with the rules set forth in the present Statute and whether they do not oppose the laws and regulations in force in each country.

ART. 11 The Assembly may be Ordinary or Extraordinary.

ART. 12 The Ordinary Assembly will meet at least once every two years in one of the venues of the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) or Regional Office of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), or in one of INFAL member country.

ART. 13 The Extraordinary Assembly will be convened in emergency situations by the Executive Committee or upon request of half of INFAL member countries plus one and will deal with the issues included in the agenda and those suggested by member countries.

ART. 14 The goals of the Ordinary Assembly will be:

- a) To define INFAL strategies and priorities.
- b) To designate the members of the Executive Committee.
- c) To appoint the Facilitators for each Technical Group.
- d) To establish the number and areas of competence of the Technical Groups.
- e) To evaluate the activities performed by the Executive Committee, the Technical Groups, the *ad hoc* Groups and the *ex officio* Secretariat.
- f) To approve the plans of action for the following two-year period.

ART. 15 Assemblies will be called for at least 90 days prior to the holding thereof and will be made by the *ex officio* Secretariat. Calls for Assemblies will include: date, place, time and suggested agenda.

The Executive Committee

ART. 16 The Executive Committee will be formed by seven INFAL member countries which will be designated by the Assembly. They will hold office for four years, without possibilities of being re-elected for the following period and with partial renewal every two years.

ART. 17 The Executive Committee will meet at least once a year in some of INFAL member countries, or through electronic or telephone meetings. The designation will be of institutional, not personal, nature.

ART. 18 During the first meeting of the Executive Committee, the members will define their internal organizational structure.

ART. 19 The goals of the Executive Committee will be:

- a) To act on behalf of the Assembly as its executive organ in the period between meetings.
- b) To guarantee the execution of the resolutions that may arise from the Assembly.
- c) To promote the interaction of INFAL with other organizations.
- d) To submit the report of activities carried out to the Assembly.
- e) To submit proposals to the Assembly for the plan of action for the next two years.
- f) To organize *ad hoc* groups when it deems it necessary.
- g) To appoint *ad hoc* Facilitators when it deems necessary.
- h) To suggest the number and areas of competence of the Technical Groups.
- i) To define the reference terms and the duration of the *ad hoc* groups.
- j) To follow up the activities of the Technical and the *ad hoc* groups.

- k) To investigate and manage possible sources of financing for INFAL operation as well as formalize agreements.
- l) To receive and channel the proposals and concerns submitted by INFAL member countries or laboratories.
- m) To convene the Extraordinary Assembly.

Technical Groups

ART. 20 The Assembly will decide on the number and areas of competence, according to the proposal of the Executive Committee. Each Technical Group will be formed by all INFAL member laboratories with competence on the topic, and they will appoint a Regular Representative and at least one Alternate Representative. Designation will be of institutional, not personal, nature. They will be coordinated by one member of the Executive Committee who will be supported by the Facilitators.

ART. 21 The goals of the Technical Groups will be:

- a) To execute the plans of action that may arise from the Assembly.
- b) To elaborate specific technical criteria.
- c) To give direct advice through experts.

In their first meeting, each Technical Group will define its internal organization and will designate the tasks for the Facilitators. This organization may be modified if required.

The Technical Groups will be in force until the end of their reference terms.

The *ex officio* Secretariat

ART. 22 The Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) will jointly act as *ex officio* Secretariat, as part of the technical cooperation regarding the food protection given to the countries.

ART. 23 The goals of the *ex officio* Secretariat will be:

- a) To receive, file and distribute the documents, resolutions, recommendations and reports coming from INFAL organs.
- b) To prepare the reports of the Assemblies.
- c) To provide technical cooperation to INFAL works.
- d) To perform, within its physical and budgetary possibilities, other activities required by INFAL.
- e) To support the Executive Committee in the management of financial and technical resources for INFAL operation.

The Advisory Group

Art. 24 INFAL will have an Advisory Group formed by the technical and financial cooperation organisms chosen by the Executive Committee.

Art. 25 The function of the Advisory Group will be to participate in INFAL activities in order to obtain technical and financial resources to facilitate the implementation of the plan of action. Therefore, the commitments of the parties will be formalized through agreements.

The National Networks

Art. 26 INFAL member laboratories will promote the conformation of National Networks with officially recognized laboratories which participate in the framework of national programs or activities for food safety and quality.

CHAPTER IV THE DECISIONS

ART. 27 The decisions of the Ordinary Assemblies will be made by simple majority of total INFAL member countries present at the Assembly, except for what is set in article 29 herein.

ART. 28 The decisions of the Executive Committee will be made by consensus of its members. If consensus is not reached, the decision of the Assembly will be accepted.

CHAPTER V AMENDMENTS TO THE STATUTE

ART. 29 Total or partial amendment to this Statute will be made by the Assembly convened for the fulfillment thereof. Any modification suggested shall be approved by two thirds of total votes from INFAL member countries present at the Assembly.

CHAPTER VI FUNDING

ART. 30 INFAL activities shall be exclusively funded through:

- a) Resources from member countries.
- b) Technical cooperation funds from the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO/WHO) and the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO).
- c) Funds requested to technical and financial cooperation national or international organisms, which will be formalized by means of agreements.

Approved by the IV INFAL Assembly, City of Panama, Panama, October 28 – 30, 2008.