BRICS Membership Expansion
Guiding Principles, Standards, Criteria and Procedures

BRICS is the name of the partnership founded by Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. BRICS is an equal partnership of diverse countries with independent views. Since inception at Foreign Minister's level in 2006, the first BRIC Summit in 2009 and expansion in 2010, BRICS has developed and evolved in the spirit of mutual respect and understanding, equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness, and consensus, mutually beneficial cooperation and closer people-to-people exchanges. BRICS members states have developed shared values and common interests that underlie mutually beneficial cooperation and a shared vision for a better world. All decisions are taken by BRICS member states in full consultation and consensus. BRICS member states agreed on the guiding principles, standards, criteria and procedures for BRICS membership expansion during the XV BRICS Summit in Johannesburg, South Africa, from 22 to 24 August 2023.

Guiding Principles for BRICS membership expansion:

- The BRICS spirit of mutual respect and understanding, equality, solidarity, openness, inclusiveness and consensus,
- The BRICS practice of full consultation and promoting concrete cooperation based on consensus,
- The BRICS vision of strengthening multilateralism, strengthening and reforming the multilateral system and upholding international law,
- The BRICS objective of strengthening cooperation under the three pillars of political and security, economic and financial, and cultural and people-to-people cooperation,
- A resolve to maintain the identity, coherence and consensus-based nature of BRICS by consolidation of cooperation and promoting institutional development,

- Acceptance of the purposes and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations as an indispensable cornerstone of multilateralism and international law,
- Support for increased representation of, and a more significant role for, emerging and developing countries in the international system, including geographical balance,
- Support for a comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more democratic, representative, effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of developing countries in the Council's memberships so that it can adequately respond to prevailing global challenges and support the legitimate aspirations of emerging and developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, including Brazil, India and South Africa, to play a greater role in international affairs, in particular in the United Nations, including its Security Council,
- The commitment to the central role of the United Nations in an international system in which sovereign states cooperate to maintain peace and security, advance sustainable development, ensure the promotion and protection of democracy, human rights and fundamental freedoms for all.

Standards and Criteria for BRICS membership expansion:

A new BRICS member state should:

- align with the guiding principles of BRICS,
- contribute to the strengthening of BRICS,
- be an emerging or developing country with regional and strategic global influence,
- align with the founding values and principles of BRICS including the spirit of solidarity, equality, mutual respect and understanding, openness, inclusiveness, mutually beneficial cooperation and consensus,
- have diplomatic and friendly relations with all existing BRICS member states and should not impose non-United Nations Security Council authorised sanctions on existing BRICS member states,
- be committed to promoting international and regional peace and security, social and economic sustainable development, and global economic growth through enhanced trade, commercial and investment linkages,

- be a member state of the United Nations supporting multilateralism, committed to global governance reform and upholding international law,
- support comprehensive reform of the United Nations, including its Security Council, with a view to making it more democratic, representative, effective and efficient, and to increase the representation of developing countries in the Council's memberships so that it can adequately respond to prevailing global challenges and support the legitimate aspirations of emerging and developing countries from Africa, Asia and Latin America, including Brazil, India and South Africa, to play a greater role in international affairs, in particular in the United Nations, including its Security Council.
- be committed to the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals,
- have strong economic standing and influence regionally as well as globally,
- have substantial trade relations with existing BRICS member states,
- support an open, transparent, inclusive, non-discriminatory and rules-based multilateral trading system, as embodied in the World Trade Organization,
- accept BRICS statements and declarations as an expression of the BRICS vision, principles and objectives,
- accept BRICS cooperation memoranda of understanding, frameworks, letters of intent, agreements, mechanisms and work cycles, and
- accept the working methods of BRICS as outlined in the Terms of Reference adopted by BRICS Sherpas and endorsed by BRICS Leaders.

Procedure for BRICS membership expansion:

- BRICS adopts the following terminology for the BRICS membership expansion process: 1) an interested country; 2) a prospective BRICS member state; 3) an invited BRICS member state; and 4) a BRICS member state,
- A country is considered interested when its Leader or Foreign Minister formally communicates its interest in becoming a new BRICS member state to the BRICS Chair,
- The BRICS Chair will circulate the communication of the interested country to existing BRICS member states,
- The BRICS Chair will share the agreed guiding principles, standards, criteria and procedure for BRICS membership expansion with the interested country,

- All communication with interested countries will be kept confidential,
- BRICS Sherpas will consider an interested country in line with the guiding principles, standards and criteria for BRICS membership expansion and make a recommendation for consideration by BRICS Foreign Ministers,
- An interested country becomes a prospective BRICS member state when Sherpas recommend it positively for consideration by BRICS Foreign Ministers,
- BRICS Foreign Ministers will consider a prospective BRICS member state and make a recommendation for consideration by BRICS Leaders,
- BRICS Leaders will decide on BRICS membership expansion on the basis of full consultation and consensus,
- A prospective BRICS member state becomes an invited BRICS member state when the BRICS Chair announces the consensus of BRICS Leaders on countries to be invited to become full members of BRICS,
- The BRICS Chair will inform an invited BRICS member state of the decision of BRICS Leaders and request the appointment of a Sherpa,
- An invited BRICS member state becomes a BRICS member state when its Leader or Foreign Minister formally conveys to the BRICS Chair its decision to accept the invitation for BRICS membership.

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