

Governance in MSF

A close-up photograph of a white fabric, likely a t-shirt, featuring the MSF logo and text. The logo consists of a red and white stylized figure. The text "MEDECINS SANS FRONTIERES" is printed in black, bold, sans-serif capital letters. The fabric is slightly wrinkled and the background is blurred.

MEDECINS
SANS FRONTIERES

Operational Centres (OC)

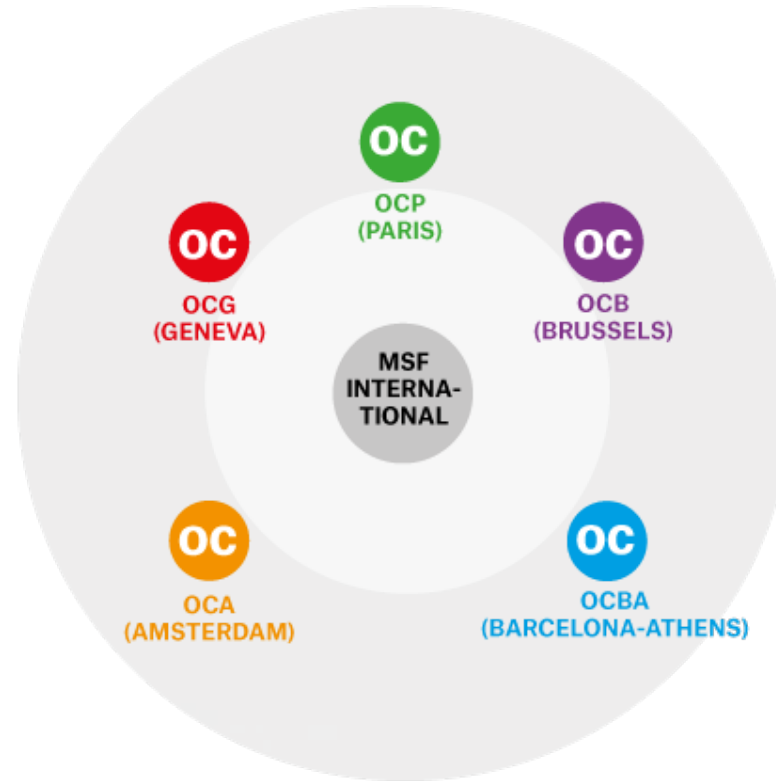
MSF has five **Operational Centres (OC)**. An Operational Centre is a group of sections that provide guidance and support to the operations in the field. These OCs have their headquarters in Amsterdam (OCA), Barcelona-Athens (OCBA), Brussels (OCB), Geneva (OCG) and Paris (OCP). There is also an **International Office (IO)** in charge of international coordination and institutional representation, which is headquartered in Geneva.

Each OC works in an independent but coordinated way. All the OCs have a very similar structure:

**Operational Centre =
Operational Section + Partner Sections + Branch Offices**

Each OC is governed by an association which has its own Board of Directors, formed by representatives of the different sections that work with that OC. Its main task is monitoring the Annual Plan, Review and Strategic Plan of its OC. So, following this same structure, we have the following Boards: **OCA Council, OCB Board, OCB Congress, OCBA Agora and OCP Group Committee.**

Note: the first Regional Association with the right to run operations has been approved by the IGA in 2019: WaCA (West and Central Africa Regional Association) . More information in page 10.



The Agora is our OC Board. There is more information about the OCBA Agora in the Annex (page 20).

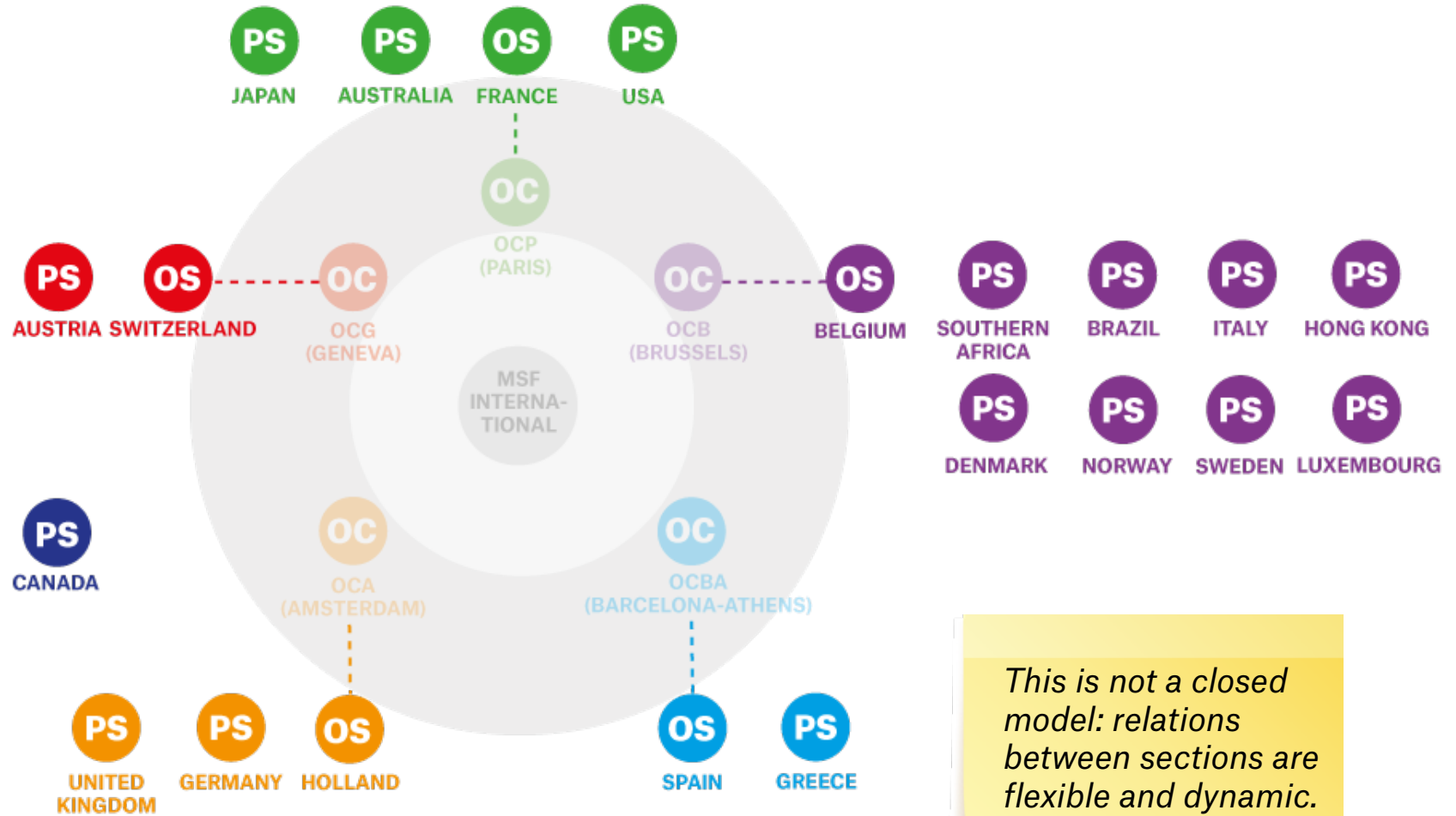
Operational (OS) and Partner (PS) Sections

Both the **Operational Sections (OS)** and the **Partner Sections (PS)** contribute strategically to operations through human resources recruitment, fundraising, external communications, advocacy and civil society awareness, as well as through units that provide technical support to operations and/or decentralised operational cells. The only difference between them is that Operational Sections are where the headquarters of the Operational Centres are located.

All MSF sections are **Associations** that have their own executive team for everyday management of the organisation. At the annual General Assembly, the association members of each section vote to approve the accounts of the previous year, the Annual Plan, the budget for the coming year and the Strategic Plan for their section (if applicable), as well as motions and new candidates to the Board of Directors. The Board oversees MSF's identity and compliance with MSF principles, appoints the general director and supports and supervises the executive team.

MSF Canada is a special case as it has established formal collaboration ties with several sections, namely OCBA, OCG and OCA (see Annex, page 20).

- OC** Operational Centre
- OS** Operational Section
- PS** Partner Section



This is not a closed model: relations between sections are flexible and dynamic.

Branch Offices (BO)

Branch Offices (BO) are another type of MSF entity. These offices not only help to guarantee an inflow of human resources and funds, but also do external communications and advocacy. In some cases, they can also support operations and/or host an operational cell.

Some Branch Offices are only dedicated to fundraising, such as Uruguay. Others are mainly dedicated to managing institutional relations, such as Moscow.

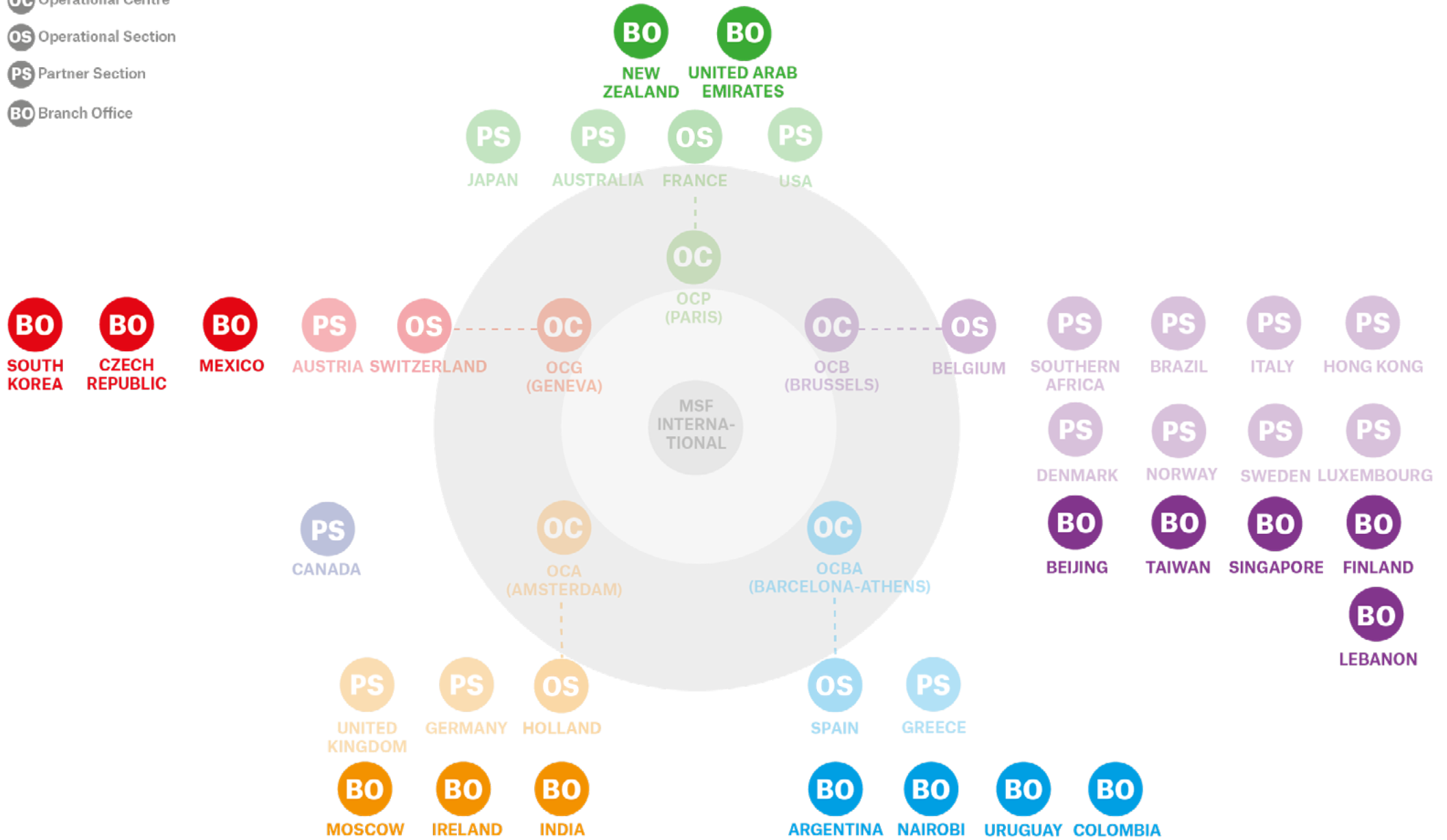
Branch Offices are not associations and so it is the section they are attached to that is responsible for establishing their annual plans and budgets and also for appointing their general managers.

In 2017, the IGA decided to open BOs in Moscow (by OCA) and Beijing (by OCB) with the objective of boosting MSF's institutional relations in those countries and OCBA's Nairobi Unit was promoted to Branch Office.

In 2018, OCB office in Lebanon was also promoted to Branch Office by the IGA. Nairobi and Lebanon offer operational support, amongst other services.

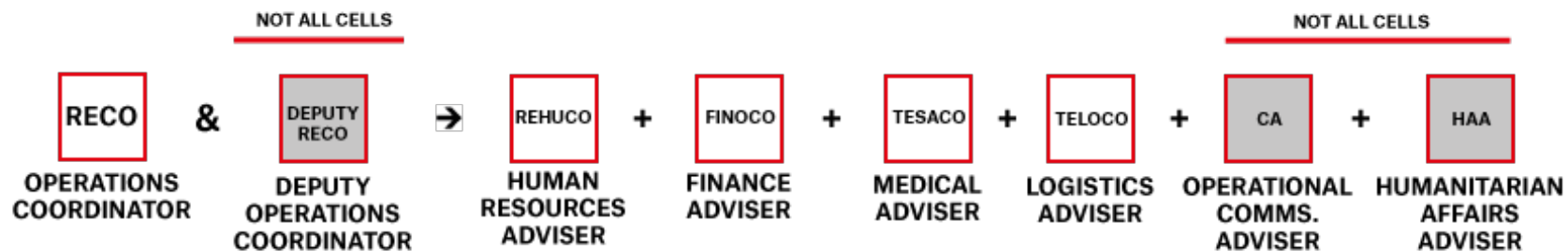
In 2019, Colombia (OCBA) was endorsed unanimously by the IGA.

- OC** Operational Centre
- OS** Operational Section
- PS** Partner Section
- BO** Branch Office



Decentralised Operational Cells

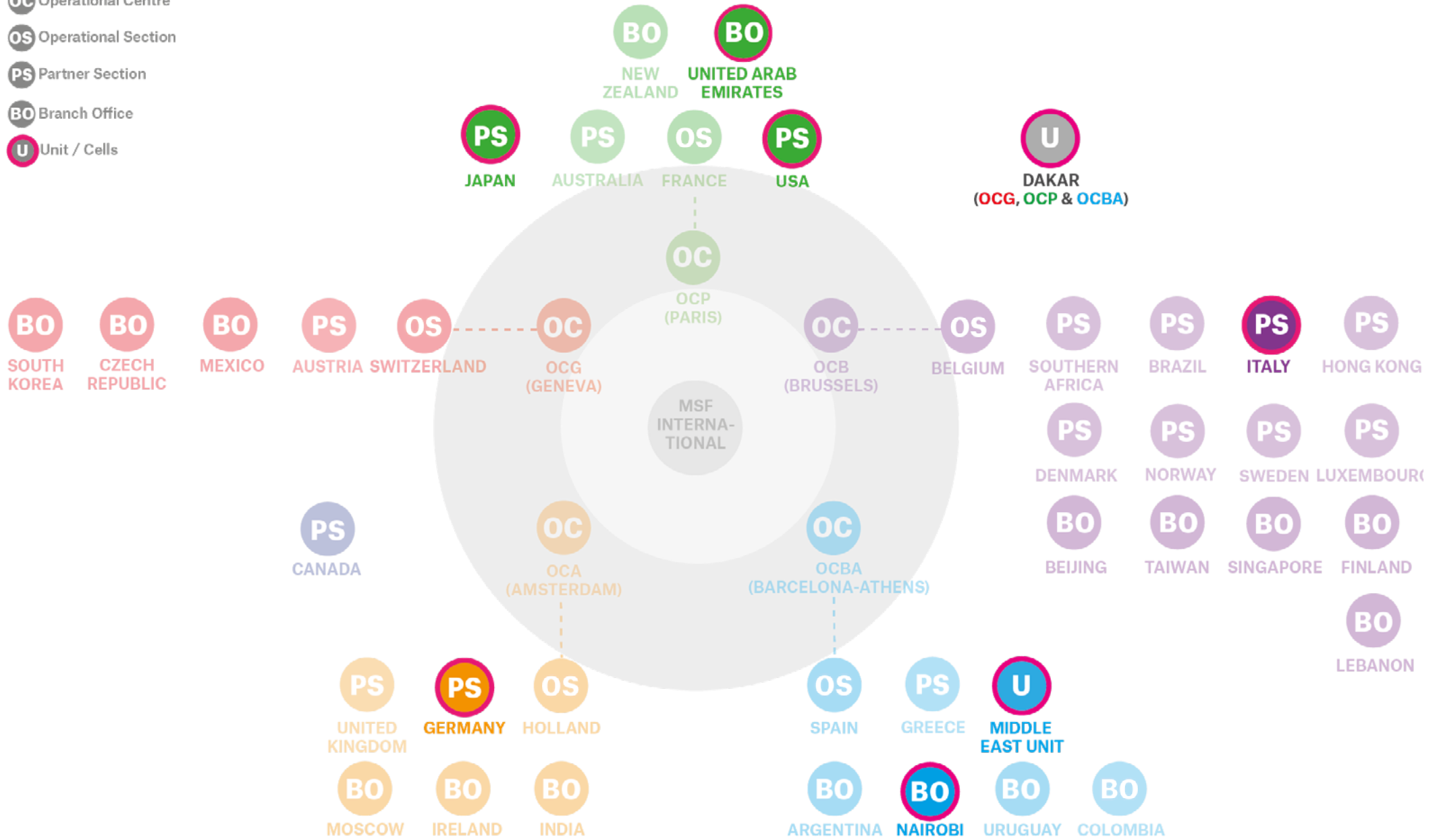
All Operational Sections (OS) manage their operations through **operational cells**, which are responsible for managing a certain number of missions. The cells and each OS's Emergency Unit are made up of:



In order to share operationality, some cells were decentralised to Partner Sections. There are now decentralised cells from OCP in the USA and Japan, from OCA in Germany, from OCB in Italy and from OCG, OCP and OCBA in Dakar. Some cells have also been moved to BOs, for instance one OCP cell was moved to the UAE Branch Office.

OCBA was the first OC to place operational cells in regional hubs so as to improve their operational support: Cell 5 was moved from Barcelona to the then Nairobi Unit (Kenya) in 2012. Cell 1 was moved to Amman (Jordan) at the end of 2016.

- OC** Operational Centre
- OS** Operational Section
- PS** Partner Section
- BO** Branch Office
- U** Unit / Cells




25 MSF associations

Since it was first created, MSF has been an **association** with an international vocation. Its members subscribe to the principles and values established in the MSF Charter. The commitment of each of its members to the MSF movement is not just limited to complying with their individual role in a mission, but also implies their active participation in the association life of the organisation.

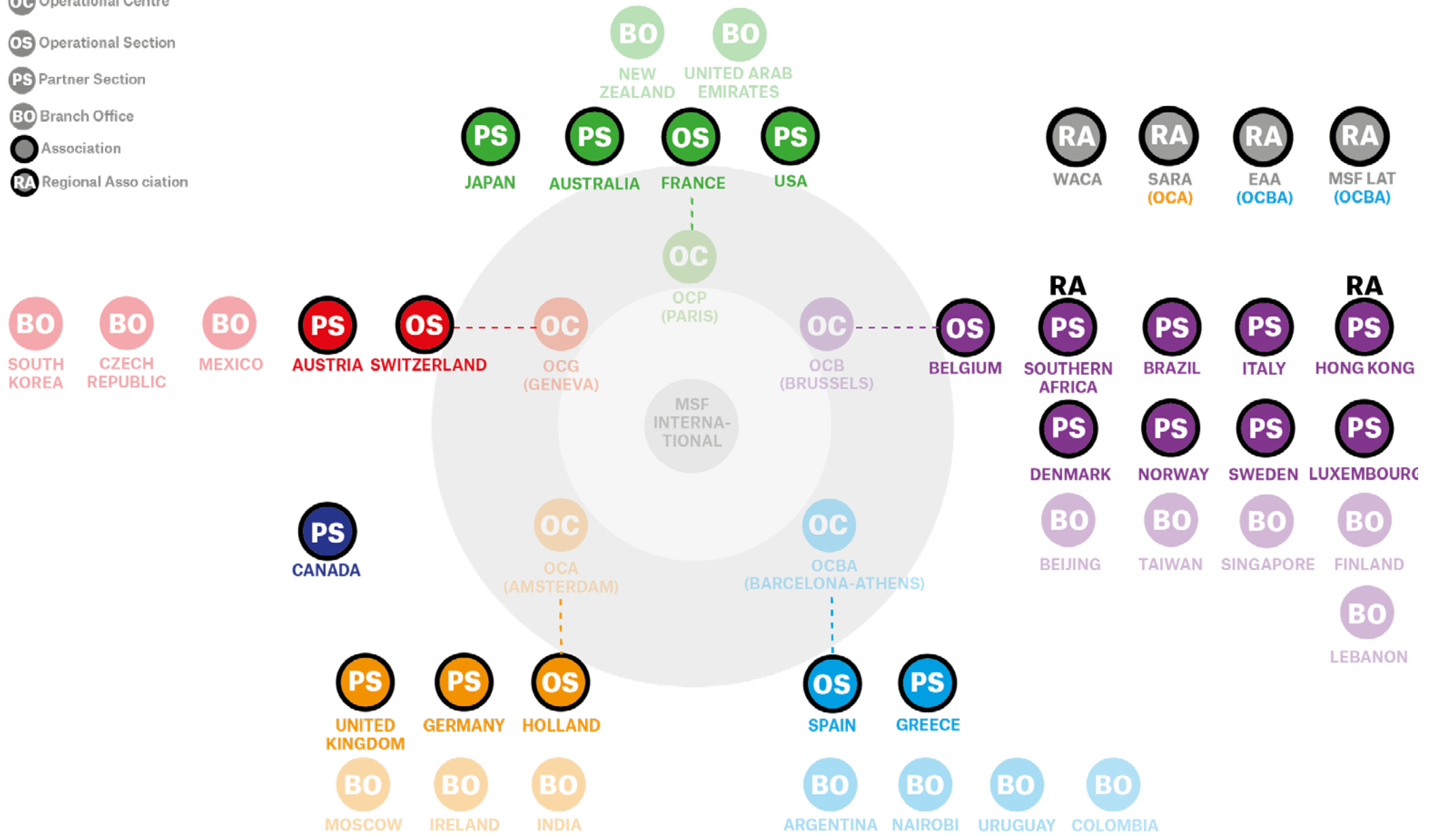
Following the La Mancha process of reflection, MSF decided to open itself up to the voices of those of our colleagues that were not represented in the original associations. As a result, in 2011 the association of Brazil was approved and more **regional associations** were created (Hong Kong was the first, born in 1994): the working area of a regional association is not limited to a country, but includes a whole region.

That same year 2011 were created the regional associations of Latin America (MSF LAT), East Africa (EAA) and Southern Africa (SAA). In 2014 South Asia (SARA) was created and in 2019 the regional association of West and Central Africa (WaCA) was born, with the right to run operations from 2020.



The MSF Spain association was created in 1986 and now has more than 700 members.

- OC** Operational Centre
- OS** Operational Section
- PS** Partner Section
- BO** Branch Office
- Association
- RA** Regional Association



The International General Assembly (IGA)

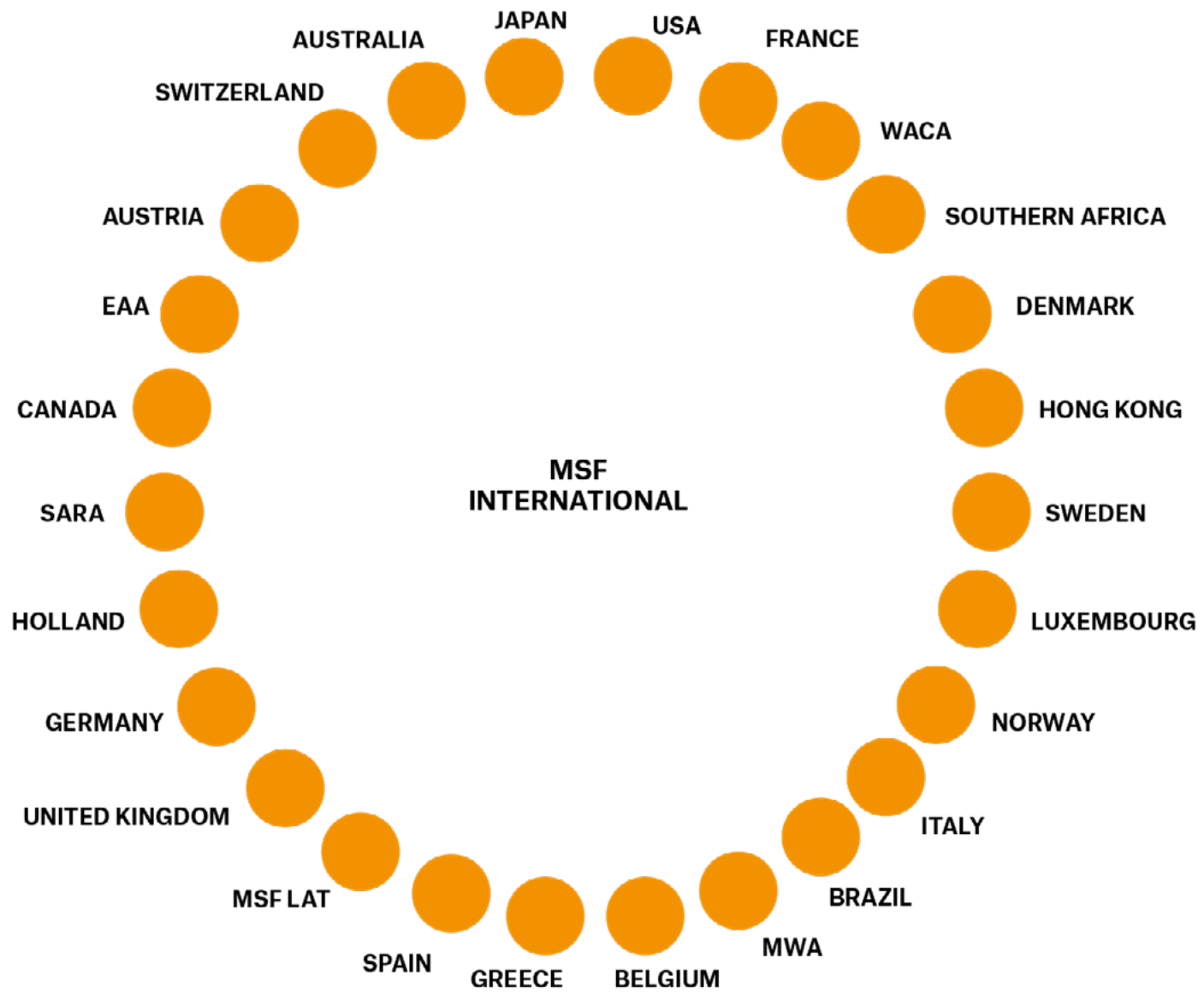
At the international governance level, the OC logic disappears and all associations participate as individual **Institutional Members** of **MSF International**, the association that brings together all the MSF associations and that was created to coordinate the global activities of MSF.

Once a year, all MSF associations gather at the **International General Assembly (IGA)**, the highest governance body of the MSF movement. Each association has two representatives (one medical, one non-medical) at the IGA.

The International General Assembly has the power to:

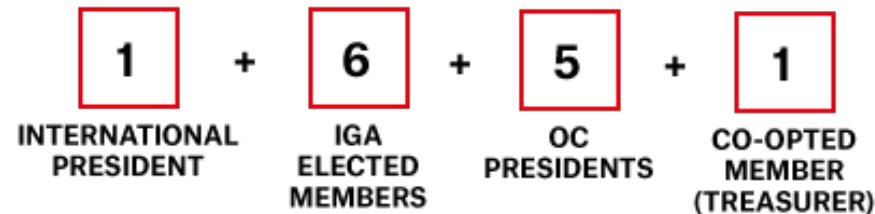
- Amend the Statutes and Internal Rules
- Admit or expel Institutional Members (MSF associations)
- Grant or withdraw the right to run operational projects
- Elect and remove members of the International Board, including the International President

The International President and six members of the International Board are elected by vote at the IGA.



International Board of Directors (IB)

The **International Board of Directors** (IB) is the body designated by the IGA to oversee the activities of the MSF movement. A majority of its members must have a medical profile. Its composition is as follows:



The IB's mandate is to:

- Resolve issues or conflicts within the MSF movement
- Open and close executive entities
- Make specific recommendations to the IGA (e.g. whether to admit or expel Institutional members)
- Be accountable for implementing IGA decisions
- Supervise the executive team in the implementation of the MSF Vision

The IB oversees the **Executive Committee (ExCom)** and the International Office.

Executive Committee (ExCom)

The **Executive Committee (ExCom)** is the highest executive body and the counterpart of the International Board. The objective of the ExCom platform is to provide international executive leadership of the MSF movement in accordance with the MSF vision and to coordinate the implementation of an international work plan, ensuring reactivity, efficiency, relevance and consistency in MSF's social mission and support activities. One body, multiple formations:

- **Core ExCom:** formed by the five OC general directors (GDs), the International Medical Secretary (IMS), the International Secretary General (SG) and two sections GDs selected for their particular experience and skills.
- **Full ExCom:** formed by all GDs of the movement, the IMS, the SG and selected GDs invited according to the circumstances.
- **Core + ExCom:** formed by the Core ExCom, selected GDs and the SG.

The **International Office (IO)** has its headquarters in Geneva, and the coordinators of the different executive platforms (RIOD, DirMed, DirCom, ESCC, MedOp, DirLog, DirFund, FinDir, IDHR and ISM. See glossary for more information) are based in several locations around the world.

The **International Secretary General** is in charge of the IO and also represents the ExCom at the IB.

Glossary

Agora: OCBA governance body. Responsible for setting the strategic direction of our Operational Centre and for supervising the fulfilment of the social mission. The Agora also ensures adherence to the Charter and to MSF principles and values.

Association: MSF was founded by a group of individuals with common goals and ideas regarding how humanitarian action should be. Several decades later, this associative identity still continues. The association is responsible for defining the general direction of the movement. The members of the association represent the highest authority of MSF when they gather at the General Assembly.

Board of Directors: composed of members of the association elected at the General Assembly. The Board represents members and its task is to ensure that MSF respects the principles of the MSF Charter in its work and decision-making.

Branch Office: support office for fundraising or recruitment purposes. It also can do communications or provide operational support. It reports to a Section.

Decentralised Cell, Med / Log Unit: operational cell located away from its operational section. Can be located in a partner section or in a regional hub.

Executive Committee: highest executive body.

Executive Team: puts into practice in the field operations the ideals and guidelines expressed by the association members. It is made up of MSF workers and is structured in different departments.

General Assembly: highest governance body of an association. Each association approves at its General Assembly the previous year's accounts, the Annual Plan, and the next year's Budget and Strategic Plan. The members of the association's Board of Directors and its President are also elected.

International Board of Directors: highest governance body of MSF International.

International Office: coordination and institutional representation office headquartered in Geneva.

OCA Council: MSF OCA governance body.

OCB Board: MSF OCB governance body.

OCBA Agora: see Agora.

OCG Congress: MSF OCG governance body.

OCP Group Committee: MSF OCP governance body.

Operational Cell: Team in charge of managing the missions in a certain group of countries.

Operational Centre: group of sections that guide and support operations in the field.

Partner Section: section attached to an MSF Operational Centre, which provides support in human resources, communications, fundraising and so on.

Regional Association: association whose field of action is not limited by a country but represents a whole region.

Acronyms

BO: Branch Office

DirCom: executive platform formed by the directors of the Communications departments

DirFund: executive platform formed by the directors of the Fundraising departments

DirLog: executive platform formed by the directors of the Logistics departments

DirMed: executive platform formed by the directors of the Medical departments

EAA: East Africa Association

ESCC: Executive Supply Chain Committee

ExCom: Executive Committee

FinDir: executive platform formed by the directors of the Finance departments

GA: General Assembly

GD: General Director

IDHR: executive platform formed by the directors of the HR departments

IGA: International General Assembly

IMS: International Medical Secretary

IO: International Office

ISM: executive platform formed by the directors of the Management Systems departments

MedOp: executive platform formed by the DirMed + RIOD. Chaired by the International Medical Secretary

MWA: Movement-Wide Association

OC: Operational Centre

OCA: Operational Centre Amsterdam

OCB: Operational Centre Brussels

OCBA: Operational Centre Barcelona-Athens

OCG: Operational Centre Geneva

OCP: Operational Centre Paris

OS: Operational Section

PS: Partner Section

RA: Regional Association

RIOD: executive platform formed by the directors of the Operations departments

SAA: Southern Africa Association

SARA: South Asia Regional Association

SG: International Secretary General

WaCA: West and Central Africa Regional Association

Annex 1. OCBA Board of Directors: Agora

The **Agora** is the governance body of OCBA. It is responsible for establishing the strategic direction of our Operational Centre and for overseeing the fulfilment of the social mission. It also ensures adherence to the Charter and the principles and values of MSF.

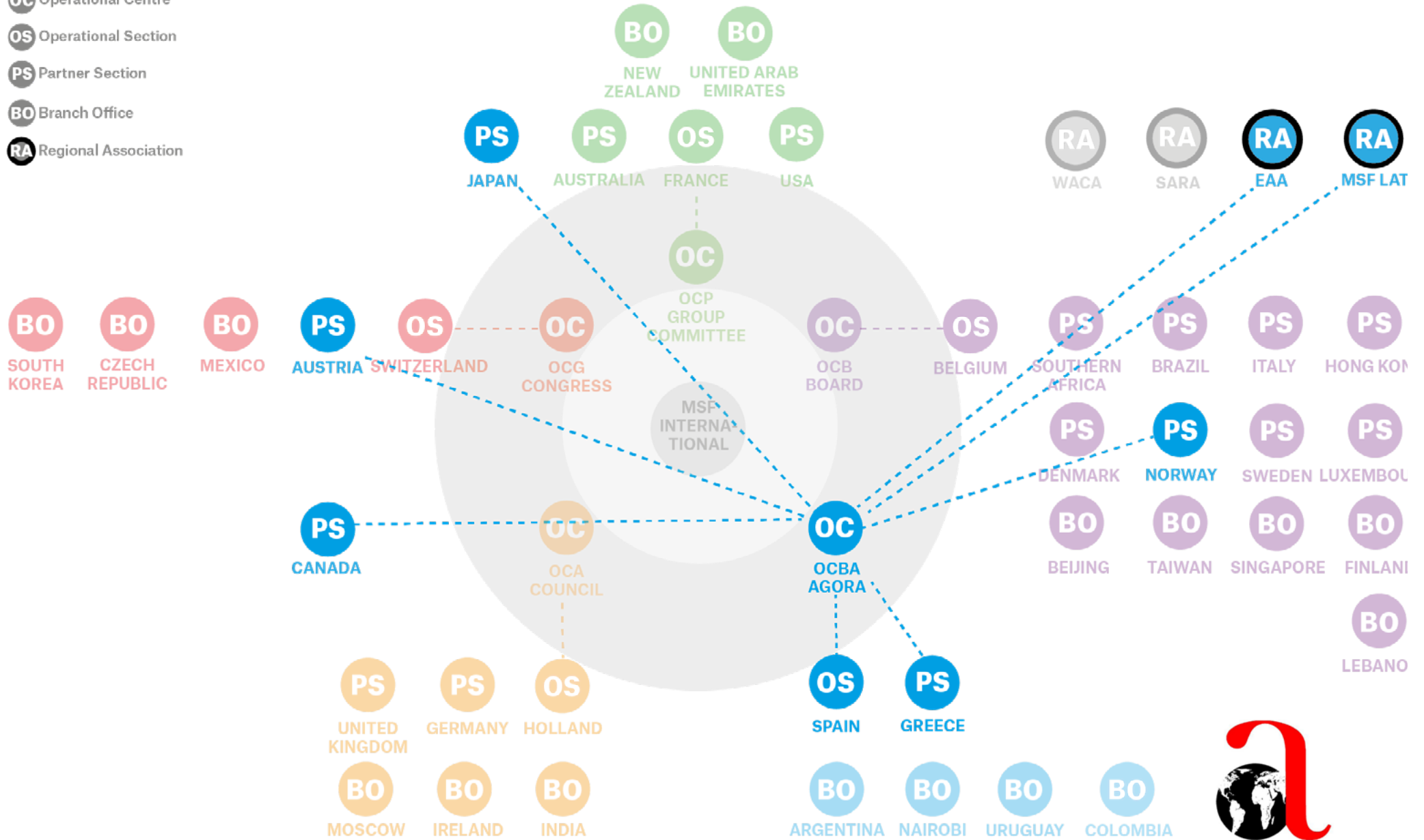
The Agora is formed by the members of the Board of MSF Spain, plus two members from MSF Greece (designated by their own Board) and members of other associations chosen according to specific agreements (one representative per association). The Agora can also choose other members for their particular knowledge or skills. Its president is the president of MSF Spain.

The majority of the members of the Agora must have a medical profile.

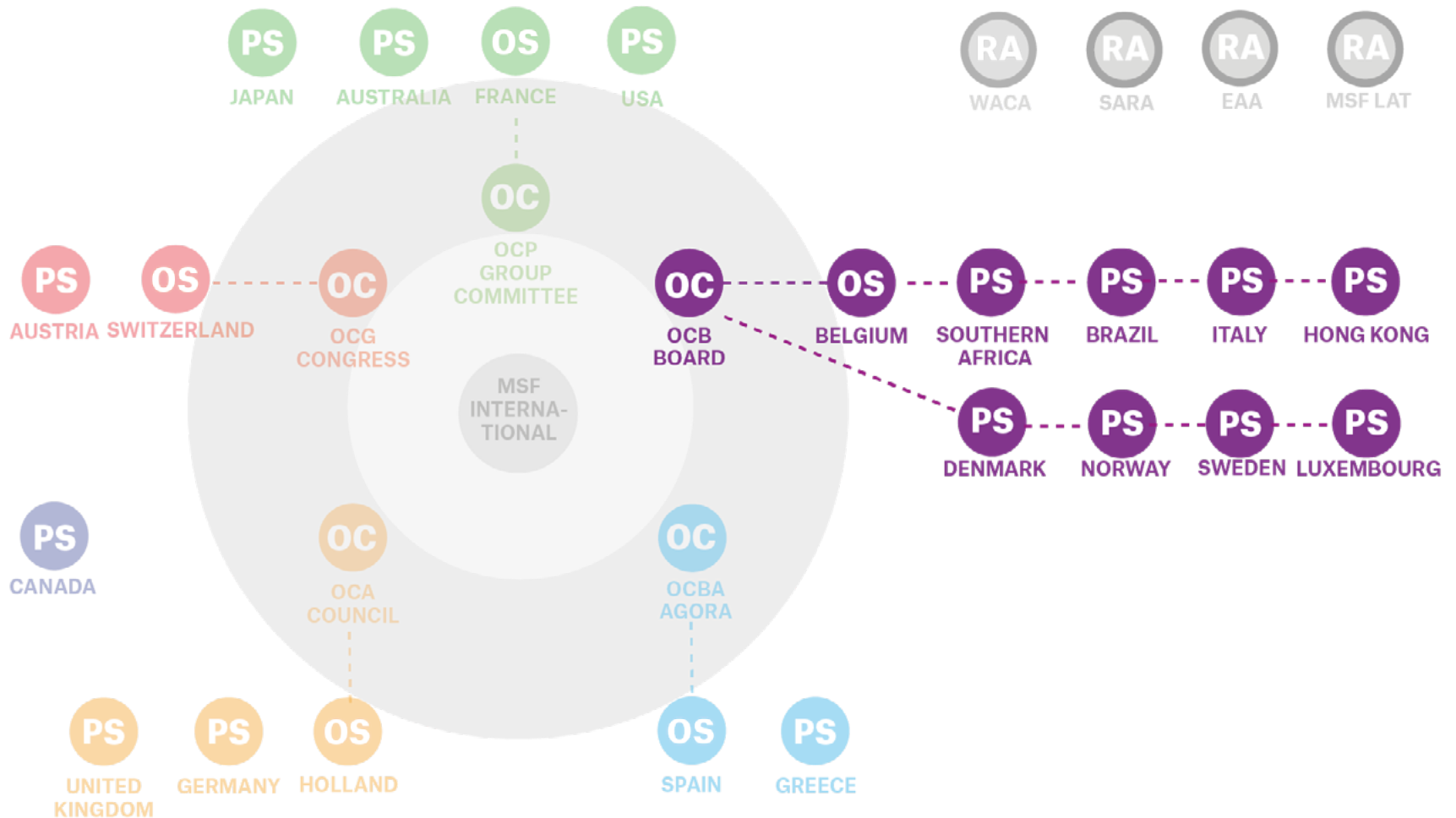
INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS



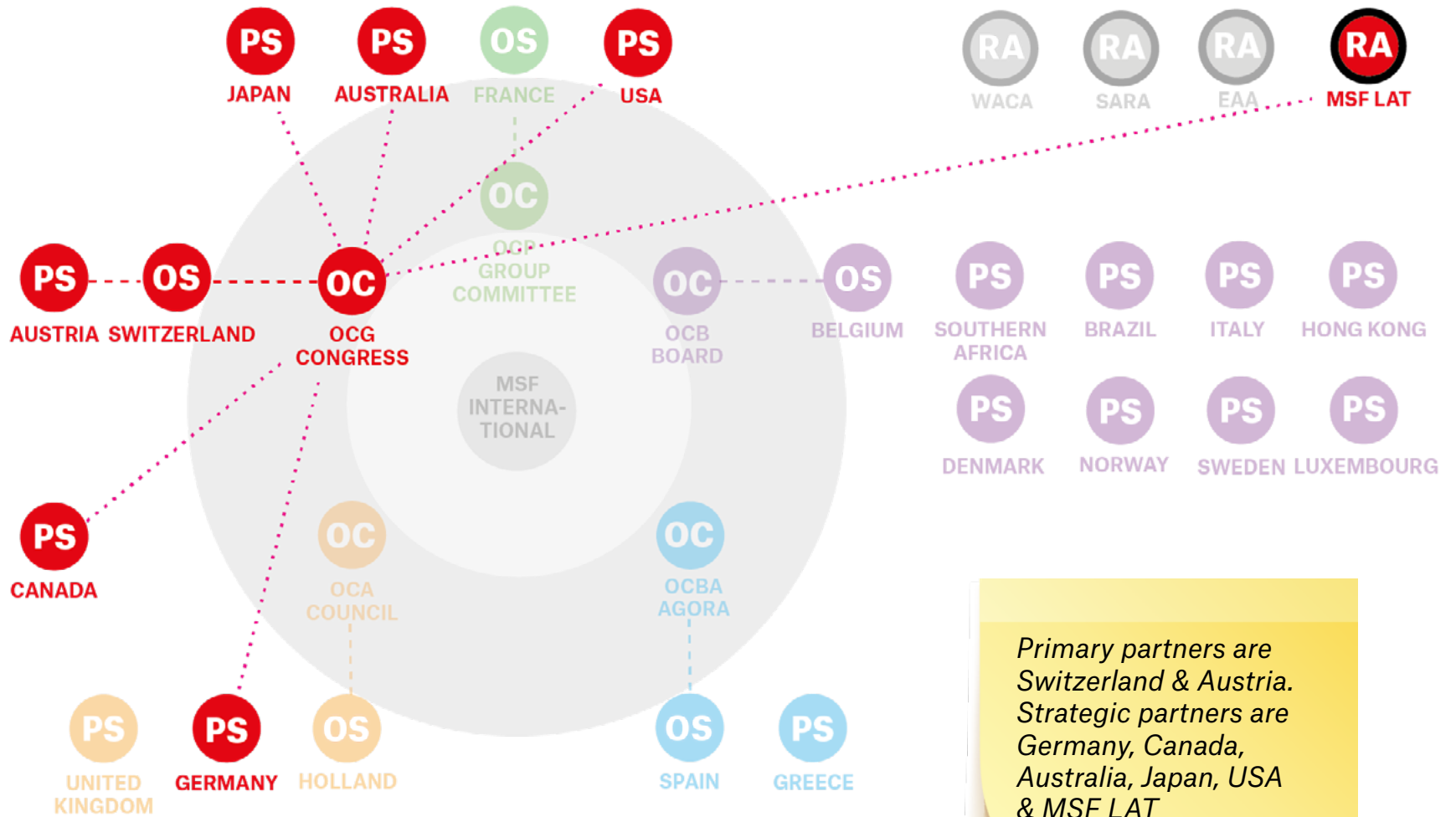
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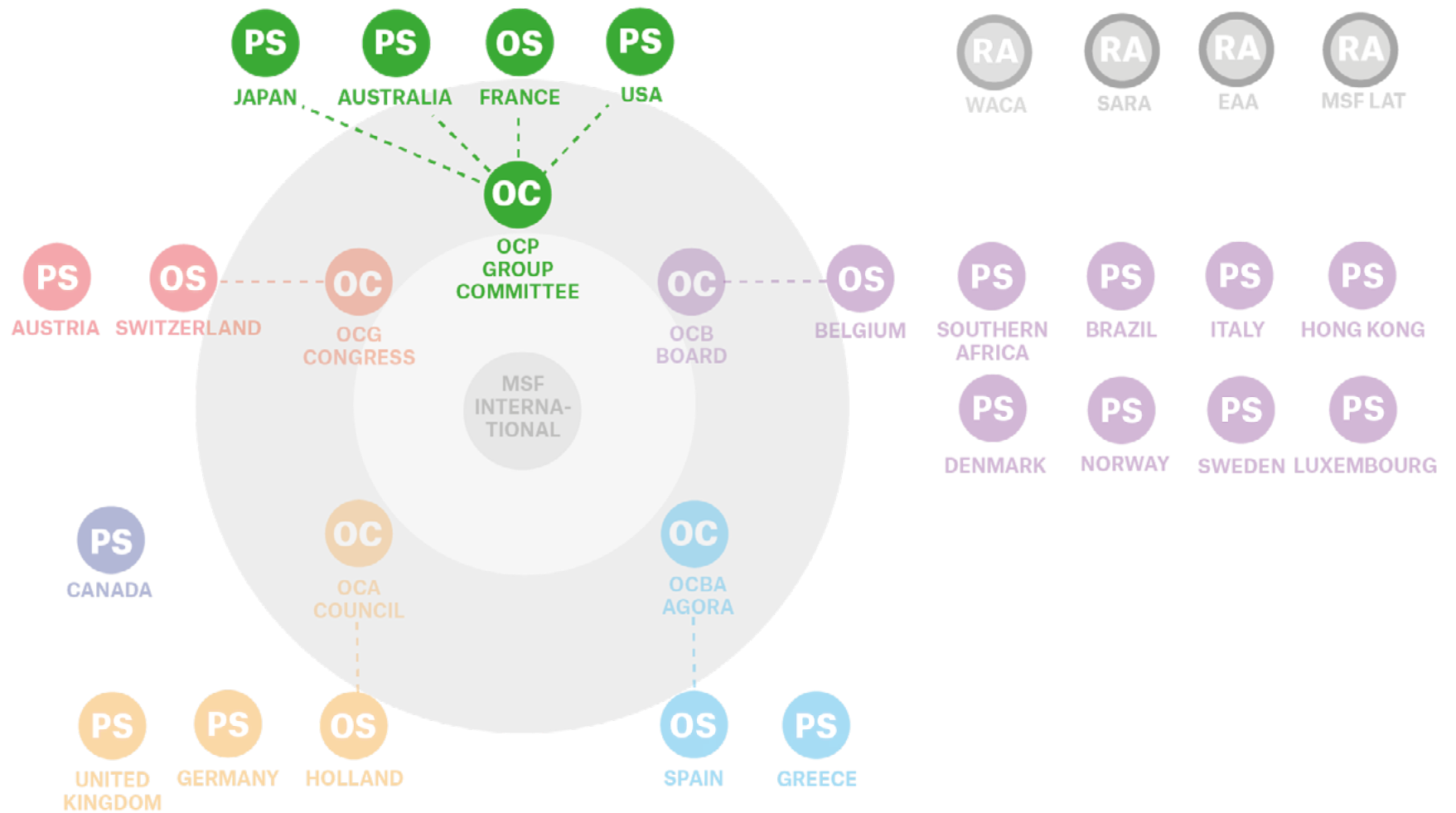
Annex 3. OCB Board of Directors: Board



Annex 4. OCG Board of Directors: Congress



Annex 5. OCP Board of Directors: Group Committee



MSF Spain / OCBA Association

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