Candidate Name

Thierry Casademont

Candidate Title

Senior Informal Conflict Management Practitioner

Organization

Parks Canada

Candidate Statement

My interest in serving on the IOA Board of Directors stems from a genuine commitment to the organizational Ombuds profession and a desire to contribute to its continued growth, recognition, and relevance.

Throughout my career, I have seen the difference Ombuds services can make, not only for individuals navigating difficult workplace situations, but also for organizations seeking to better understand themselves, address systemic challenges, and foster healthier working environments. These experiences have reinforced my belief in the profession and its potential to help organizations better care for their people.

I have seen IOA play an important role in shaping the future of the profession through its standards, professional development, networking, and international reach. Serving on the Board would be an opportunity to contribute to that work beyond the organizations and communities I have served.

I would bring a collaborative, thoughtful, and pragmatic approach to Board discussions. I value different perspectives, welcome constructive challenges to established thinking, and believe good governance requires balancing strategic vision with practical realities. I would be equally interested in learning from fellow Board members as in sharing my own experiences and ideas.

Ultimately, my motivation is simple: I believe in the profession, I value the community IOA has created, and I would welcome the opportunity to contribute to its future.

Pathway to the Profession

One of the most significant opportunities and challenges facing the organizational Ombuds profession over the next five years will be its ability to evolve alongside changing organizational realities while maintaining the principles that define its practice. I believe the profession is entering a defining period, with an opportunity to move beyond being perceived as a "nice-to-have" resource toward becoming a more formally recognized and integral part of organizational governance and health.

Organizations are navigating increasingly complex environments shaped by technological change, evolving workforce expectations, financial pressures, organizational restructuring, and heightened attention to workplace culture and psychological health. These developments are likely to influence not only the types of issues brought to Ombuds offices, but also how Ombuds practitioners respond to them and what organizations expect from the function itself. This presents an important opportunity for IOA to

explore how the profession can remain responsive to different organizational contexts without compromising its foundational principles.

In my own professional experience, I have observed that organizations do not always seek the same outcomes from their Ombuds functions. Some place greater emphasis on individual conflict resolution, while others increasingly look to Ombuds offices for systemic insights, organizational learning, and support during periods of significant change. These expectations can create opportunities for the profession, but also tensions regarding the role, mandate, and boundaries of Ombuds practice.

How organizations define and position their Ombuds functions is an area I have explored through my manuscript submitted to the Journal of the International Ombuds Association (JIOA), which proposes a conceptual framework for understanding how organizational conditions and desired outcomes may shape expectations of the Ombuds function.

I believe IOA has an opportunity to lead broader conversations about these evolving expectations, drawing on the experiences of practitioners across sectors, countries, and organizational contexts. This could include examining different models of Ombuds practice, identifying how organizational expectations influence the function, and developing practical guidance to help organizations establish and sustain effective Ombuds services while remaining grounded in IOA's Standards of Practice.

I would bring to the Board a combination of frontline Ombuds experience, executive leadership, systemic analysis, and an interest in advancing conceptual understanding of the profession. My perspective is grounded in the belief that the strength of the Ombuds profession lies not in remaining static, but in understanding how it can continue to provide meaningful value while preserving the principles that make it distinct.

IOA Values

What brings value to one IOA member may be quite different from what matters to another. However, I believe that membership value generally rests on three pillars: professional development, networking, and access to information and professional standards. Building on these pillars, I would encourage the Board to consider the following opportunities:

1. Professional Development - Extending IOA's Reach Beyond the Profession

One opportunity worth exploring is offering learning events that are not exclusively designed for Ombuds practitioners, but that Ombuds offices could promote within their own organizations. While this may seem unconventional for a professional association, it could provide several benefits: increasing awareness of the Ombuds profession, strengthening the visibility and credibility of individual Ombuds offices, generating potential new revenue streams for IOA, and reducing the need for practitioners to independently develop similar learning opportunities.

Topics such as organizational health, workplace conflict, psychological safety, and leadership could appeal to a broader audience. IOA could draw on external presenters as well as the considerable expertise of its own membership, including experienced practitioners and organizational leaders.

2. Networking - Creating Opportunities to Showcase Our Practices

Networking is often centred on seeking advice, sharing challenges, and building professional relationships. I believe there is an opportunity to complement this by creating more structured ways for members to showcase their work and learn from one another. For example, IOA could introduce an *Ombuds Office Showcase* at its in-person conferences, where participating offices host small booths or kiosks highlighting their services, approaches, tools, innovations, and lessons learned. A rotating selection of offices could be featured each year, depending on available space. This would create an informal, interactive environment for exchanging ideas, recognizing members' contributions, and exposing practitioners to different approaches across sectors, regions, and organizational contexts.

3. Information and Standards - Encouraging the Exchange of Practical Resources

I would propose an annual *Share-a-Tool* initiative, inviting members to contribute practical resources they have developed or found particularly valuable in their work. These might include guides, templates, frameworks, communication materials, or other tools that could benefit fellow practitioners. IOA's existing CommUnity platform could serve as a central space for sharing these resources, encouraging greater engagement with the platform while building a practical, member-generated knowledge base. Selected contributions could also be highlighted through webinars, conferences, or other IOA communications. An annual recognition, such as a *Tool of the Year*, could further encourage participation and celebrate innovation within the profession.

Ultimately, I believe membership engagement and membership value are closely connected. Members should not only benefit from what IOA offers, but also have meaningful opportunities to contribute their knowledge, experiences, and perspectives. The Board can help foster this by creating accessible avenues for participation, recognizing member contributions, and ensuring that opportunities reflect the diversity of the association. A strong professional association is one where members see value in belonging, feel that their contributions matter, and recognize that they are helping shape the future of their profession.

Volunteer or Leadership Experience

Throughout my career in the Canadian federal public service, I have held several leadership roles that have prepared me to contribute effectively to the IOA Board of Directors.

As Associate Ombuds and Acting Ombuds for Health Canada and the Public Health Agency of Canada, I contributed to the strategic direction, management, and delivery of Ombuds services across two federal organizations. This included advising senior executives on organizational health, workplace culture, leadership, and systemic issues, while supporting strategic planning, resource management, and organizational reporting. Previously, as Acting Director of Conflict Resolution at Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, I was responsible for program operations, service delivery, resource allocation, and organizational initiatives, including reporting on organizational health and workplace trends to senior leadership.

Beyond these formal leadership roles, I have contributed to interdepartmental initiatives involving multiple federal organizations. Through my involvement with the Federal Organizational Ombuds Council, I participated in initiatives related to strategic planning, common approaches to data collection,

case management, and systemic reporting. These experiences required collaboration, consensus-building, and consideration of different organizational mandates, priorities, and operational realities.

I have also helped develop, organize, and deliver professional events through the Federal Informal Conflict Management System Network and have served as a recurring panelist on topics including neurodiversity, workplace conflict, and emotional intelligence. In addition, I have designed and delivered Ombuds-related and conflict resolution training and presentations for employees, managers, and senior leaders across Canada and within Canadian diplomatic missions internationally. These experiences have strengthened my ability to engage diverse audiences, facilitate constructive dialogue, and translate complex issues into practical recommendations.

I believe these experiences would allow me to contribute to the IOA Board through strategic thinking, sound judgment, collaborative decision-making, and an understanding of the opportunities and challenges facing the organizational Ombuds profession. I would approach the role with a commitment to the association's mission, its members, and the continued advancement of the profession internationally.

Professional Expertise

I believe my experience would be particularly relevant in three areas identified by the Nominations Committee: strategic partnerships, research, and business development.

Strategic Partnerships

Throughout my career, I have worked extensively across organizational boundaries to build relationships, establish common objectives, and advance collaborative initiatives. Through my involvement with the Federal Organizational Ombuds Council and the Federal Informal Conflict Management System Network, I have contributed to initiatives involving multiple federal departments and agencies, including strategic planning, common approaches to data collection, case management, and systemic reporting.

These experiences have strengthened my ability to identify shared interests, navigate different organizational priorities, and build consensus among stakeholders with differing mandates and operational realities. I believe these skills could support IOA in identifying and cultivating strategic partnerships with other professional associations, educational institutions, and organizations whose interests intersect with the Ombuds profession.

Research and Data Analysis

As Associate Ombuds, I led initiatives involving systemic trends analysis, data collection, and organizational reporting. This included examining information from confidential casework, identifying emerging organizational issues, and translating findings into strategic observations and recommendations for senior executives. My experience has reinforced the importance of using both qualitative and quantitative information to understand organizational realities and inform decision-making.

I have also contributed to conceptual research within the Ombuds profession. In January 2026, I submitted a manuscript to the Journal of the International Ombuds Association (JIOA) entitled When

Systems Drift: Rethinking Fluidity in the Ombuds Role Through a Functional–Outcomes Framework of Organizational Contexts. The manuscript proposes a conceptual framework examining how organizational conditions and desired outcomes may shape expectations of the Ombuds function and its role within an organization.

I believe this combination of applied analysis and conceptual research could support IOA in better understanding its membership, identifying emerging needs and trends within the profession, evaluating the impact of its initiatives, and strengthening evidence-informed strategic planning.

Business Development

In 2026, I established Truth Arc Workplace Ombuds Consulting Services, an independent practice focused on organizational Ombuds services, workplace conflict resolution, and organizational development. Developing this practice has involved building a professional brand, establishing an online presence, creating educational resources, identifying target audiences, and exploring opportunities to communicate the value of Ombuds services to prospective clients.

This experience has provided practical exposure to business positioning, audience engagement, and service development. I believe these skills could contribute to discussions about expanding IOA's reach, communicating the value of membership, and exploring opportunities for sustainable revenue generation.

Contribution to the Board

Beyond these specific areas, I would bring experience in executive leadership, strategic planning, organizational development, and the practical realities of delivering Ombuds services within complex organizations. I believe my greatest contribution would be the ability to connect strategic objectives with practical opportunities, encourage collaboration across different perspectives, and support decisions informed by evidence, member needs, and the long-term interests of the profession.

Candidate Bio

I have 19 years of experience in the Canadian federal public service, including extensive experience in organizational Ombuds services, informal conflict management, organizational culture, and workplace conflict resolution. My career has been based primarily in Ottawa, Ontario, with responsibilities extending across national and international operations. My experience ranges from direct service delivery and program management to executive leadership, systemic analysis, and reporting on organizational health to senior executives and heads of organizations.

PUBLIC SECTOR CAREER

Parks Canada Agency

- Senior Conflict Resolution Practitioner (2026–Present)

Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada

- Acting Assistant Director, Conflict Resolution (2025–2026)

- Acting Director, Conflict Resolution (2020)
- Senior Conflict Resolution Practitioner (2017–2020; 2020–2022; 2025)
- Conflict Resolution Advisor (2016–2017)

Health Canada / Public Health Agency of Canada

- Associate Ombuds (2022–2024), including period as Acting Ombuds

Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada

- Conflict Prevention and Resolution Practitioner (2007–2016)

PRIVATE SECTOR

In 2026, I established Truth Arc Workplace Ombuds Consulting Services, an Ontario-based independent practice focused on organizational Ombuds services, workplace conflict resolution, training, and organizational development.