

## UNFCCC standard admission process for non-governmental organizations (NGOs)

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## I. Application process

### Why do I need to get observer status?

In order to attend any sessions or meetings of the UNFCCC, non-governmental organizations (NGOs) have to be admitted by the Conference of the Parties (COP) as observer organizations to the UNFCCC process.

### How long does the process take?

The process to obtain observer status takes approximately one and a half years (an indicative timeline is available [here](#)). The application **deadline is 31 August each year** for admission at the COP the following year.

### Do I have to apply for observer status for each UNFCCC session?

Admission as observer organization to the UNFCCC is a one-off process and does not need to be repeated once observer status has been granted. However, in order for representatives to **attend any sessions of the UNFCCC**, the Designated Contact Point (DCP) of the organization has to **register its representatives** through the Online Registration System ([ORS](#)) for the session they wish to attend.

### My organization has observer status with ECOSOC and/or other UN agency, do I still need to apply for admission?

Yes, the UNFCCC admission process is independent from any other admission process under ECOSOC, or other UN organizations and agencies.

### Where should I check if my organization is already admitted?

Please check whether your organization has **already been admitted** at the following links:

- [List of admitted NGOs](#)
- [List of admitted IGOs](#)

### What are the eligibility criteria?

Please note the following established practice on eligibility (see section II. "Mandate and legal provisions" for more details on eligibility criteria):

- **Regional or national offices or affiliates** of an international organization are in principle not eligible. Their representatives are advised to come under the umbrella of their international parent organization. In case the international organization is not admitted, a national or regional entity can be admitted as observer with the understanding that the moment the international entity applies, it will be replaced by the international one.
- Organizations have to furnish proof of **independent juridical personality**, therefore:

- Universities can only apply as a whole, affiliate schools or departments of a university are not eligible for admission.
- Networks and initiatives can apply only if independent juridical personality is given.
- Your organization must have completed at least one full accounting year.
- For-profit companies and individuals are not eligible for admission.

### How do I apply for admission?

All applications for admission must be received through the UNFCCC [Online Admission System](#) (OAS), no applications by email or post will be accepted.

### What do I need to know before applying for admission?

- Take a look at the [OAS User Manual](#) and contact [service.desk@unfccc.int](mailto:service.desk@unfccc.int) for any technical problems.
- Please ensure that you do not submit your application more than once.
- Applications must be **complete**, including all required official documents and information and have to be submitted **within the deadline**. Incomplete applications as at the deadline will be automatically deferred to the following review cycle.

### Can I submit my documents in any language?

Applications are accepted in **one of the six official UN languages** (Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish). Some of the required documents (items 2-4 and the financial statement in Item 5) must be submitted in the original language along with a **full translation** in one of the official UN languages. Translation does not need to be certified or notarized.

## What documents do I need to apply for admission?

1.	<p>Letter of application from the head of the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The letter has to be signed by the head of organization, i.e. the highest ranking official. If your organization is a university, the letter of application must come from the President/Chancellor/Rector of the university.</li> <li>b) The letter has to include a paragraph confirming compliance with the UNFCCC guidelines and policies by representatives of the organization. A template for the letter is available under item 1 in the upload documents section of your OAS account.</li> <li>c) It is encouraged to include a paragraph on your organization’s anti-discrimination policy, e.g.: I confirm that my organization does not tolerate any form of discrimination whatsoever on the basis of race, age, religion, gender, sexual orientation or national origin</li> </ul>
2.	<p>Copies of certified articles of association, bylaws, statutes, or constitution detailing the mandate, scope and governing structure of the organization.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) The documents should include information on the handling of assets in case of dissolution of the organization and amendments to those documents.</li> <li>b) If the statutory objectives of these documents do not relate to matters covered by the UN Climate Change Convention, please submit another official document to that effect (e.g. strategic plans, decisions or resolutions) endorsed by the governing body of the organization (board of directors, general assembly, executive committee, etc.).</li> </ul>
3.	<p>Certificate of incorporation/registration/establishment of the organization issued by a government authority in the country where your organization’s headquarters is located.</p>
4.	<p>Certificate of the non-profit and/or tax-exempt status of the organization issued by a government authority in the country where your organization headquarters are located. Alternatively, an organization may prove its non-profit status by providing a copy of the relevant law/regulation certifying the non-profit status of the organization due to its legal nature.</p>
5.	<p>A financial statement of the organization of the most recent accounting year, including income and expenditure breakdowns.</p>
6.	<p>List of the names of all donors and other funding sources in the last two years. The treatment of the information is strictly confidential.</p>
7.	<p>Two most recent annual reports or any other evidence of your organization in matters relating to the UNFCCC in the last 24 months;</p>
8.	<p>List of networks your organization is part of and/or affiliations with other organizations involved in climate change activities.</p>
9.	<p>In the case of research institutes, including universities, evidence of academic independence or academic freedom of your organization (e.g. relevant sections of state law, certificate from a 3rd party institution that certify independence, etc.).</p>

## **I have submitted my application for admission, what is next?**

Your organization's application will be reviewed by the secretariat for eligibility against the criteria set by the Convention. During the review the secretariat may contact the organization to request more information or clarification. The names of the organizations whose applications are deemed eligible will be further submitted to the Bureau of the COP and the CMP for its attention.

Eligible applicant organizations, following the view expressed by the Bureau of the COP and the CMP, may then be granted provisional admission in order that they may make arrangements to attend the conference on the understanding that the final authority for the admission of observers rests with the COP. Please see the indicative timeline available [here](#).

## **How can I communicate with the secretariat during the application process?**

If you have any further questions, please address them through the **communication log in the OAS**.

## **II. Mandate and legal provisions**

### **Mandate for admission**

EXTRACT FROM THE UNITED NATIONS FRAMEWORK CONVENTION ON CLIMATE CHANGE

#### [Article 7, paragraph 6](#)

"The United Nations, its specialized agencies and the International Atomic Energy Agency, as well as any State member thereof or observers thereto not Party to the Convention, may be represented at sessions of the Conference of the Parties as observers. Any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, which is qualified in matters covered by the Convention, and which has informed the secretariat of its wish to be represented at a session of the Conference of the Parties as an observer, may be so admitted unless at least one third of the Parties present object. The admission and participation of observers shall be subject to the rules of procedure adopted by the Conference of the Parties."

### **Eligibility procedures**

The secretariat informed SBI 20 of its procedures concerning eligibility, which SBI duly noted (see [FCCC/SBI/2004/10](#), paragraph 100). These procedures provide, inter alia, that applicant organizations are required to furnish proof of their independent juridical personality and non-profit and/or tax-exempt status in a State Member of the United Nations, of one of its specialized agencies or of the International Atomic Energy Agency, or in a State Party to the International Court of Justice Organizations. Please see chapter II. "Admission of observer organizations" of [FCCC/SBI/2004/5](#).

### **Single admission process for COP, CMP and CMA**

In accordance with decision [36/CMP.1](#), which provides that a single process would be used for the admission of observer organizations to sessions of the COP and of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol (CMP), with decisions on admission of observer organizations being taken by the COP, admitted observer organizations may be represented at sessions of both COP and CMP as well as their subsidiary bodies in the Convention process.

Furthermore, in accordance with decision 2/CMA.1, the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement (CMA) decided that when applying the draft rules of procedure of the Conference of the Parties, pursuant to Article 16, paragraph 5, of the Paris Agreement, with respect to draft rules 6 and 7, a single process would be used for the admission of observer organizations to sessions of the COP and the CMA, with decisions on the admission of observer organizations being taken by the COP.

### **Deadlines for admission**

The [information note](#) on revised deadlines for admission stipulates that the deadline for applications for admission is 31 August of the previous year.