



Modalities for accreditation of civil-society organizations to the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum of the United Nations Environment Programme

UNEP owes a great deal to non-governmental organizations. Its creation in 1972 following the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment (Stockholm Conference) can largely be attributed to the commitment and influence of civil society comprising the major groups as defined by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (Earth Summit) held in Rio de Janeiro in 1992. Most of the well-known multilateral environmental agreements, such as the Basel Convention on the Control of Transboundary Movements of Hazardous Wastes and their Disposal, the Montreal Protocol on Substances that Deplete the Ozone Layer, the Kyoto Protocol to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety to the Convention on Biological Diversity, exist because of the hard work of your organizations. As you know, the current priority is the implementation of intergovernmental agreements, bearing in mind the need and the right of developing countries to enjoy a significantly larger share in the distribution of the world's wealth.

The purpose of accreditation is to provide non-governmental organizations with observer status at sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in accordance with rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council.

In its chapter XIII on observers of international non-governmental organizations, rule 69 stipulates that:

ö1. International non-governmental organizations having an interest in the field of the environment, referred to in section IV, paragraph 5, of General Assembly resolution 2997 (XXVII), may designate representatives to sit as observers at public meetings of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, if any. The Governing Council shall from time to time adopt and revise when necessary a list of such organizations. Upon the invitation of the President or chairman, as the case may be, and subject to the approval of the Governing Council or the subsidiary organ concerned, international non-governmental organizations may make oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities.

ö2. Written statements provided by international non-governmental organizations referred to in paragraph 1 above, related to items on the agenda of the Governing Council or of its subsidiary organs, shall be circulated by the secretariat to members of the Governing Council or of the subsidiary organ concerned in the quantities and in the languages in which the statements were made available to the secretariat for distribution.ö

Accreditation is the main entry point for civil-society organizations to UNEP policy dialogue.

Section 1: Submitting your accreditation request

UNEP recognizes that there is an imbalance of power in international governance, which is detrimental to environmental concerns and needs to be corrected. Whatever the future of the intergovernmental institutional architecture in the wake of United Nations reform, the sooner we work to correct these imbalances the better it will be for the collective well-being of humankind.

In order to attain that goal, renewed and strengthened cooperation between UNEP and civil-society organizations at the governance level is needed. To tackle environmental concerns in an adequate manner, the participation of civil-society organizations is required, especially in the intergovernmental decision-making process during which UNEP develops its operational policies and work programme. The re-launch of this productive cooperation is fully in line with Governing Council decision SS.VII/5, which invites the Executive Director of UNEP to consider the best way to include the views of civil society in the proceedings of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environmental Forum.

We strongly encourage you to apply for accreditation to the UNEP Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum. Accreditation will grant your organization consultative status at UNEP, within the rules of procedure of the Council/Forum. UNEP will implement the goal of closer cooperation with civil-society organizations on an incremental basis, bearing in mind that UNEP is an intergovernmental organization whose member States bear the final decision-making role.

Submission of an accreditation request

Civil-society organizations seeking accreditation should forward a set of documents to the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch of UNEP. A complete application form for accreditation can be found at http://www.unep.org/civil_society/PDF_docs/UNEP-Application-Form-for-%20Accreditation.pdf and includes the following:

1.	Letter requesting accreditation
2.	Copy of constitution, charter, statutes or by-laws and amendments to those documents, and list of affiliates
3.	Copy or certificate of registration
4.	Proof of interest in the environment: annual reports; conference and seminar reports; recent press releases and copies of media statements; newsletters and other periodicals. The organization should submit an account of at least two years of activities in the field of environment
5.	Detailed account of the international scope of the organization's activities (such as headquarters and regional offices in different countries; projects or programmes that are under way in different countries; activities with international implications, for example, on international water management, desertification in transboundary areas, waste management of estuaries affecting a region; activities that are international in scope, for example, coordinating regional or international position or work on a specific area)

Please note that proof of participation in intergovernmental meetings is worthy of mention but is insufficient to demonstrate an international scope of work. Similarly, agreements with other organizations or membership of international networks are worthy of mention but are insufficient proof of an international scope of work.

In addition, civil-society organizations may send a copy of their accreditation to other United Nations bodies and agencies, including the United Nations Economic and Social Council. In the latter case, civil-society organizations should provide a letter requesting accreditation, proof of interest in the environment and details of the international scope of its activities.

The documents can be sent in hard copy or electronic version to the following address:

**Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch
United Nations Environment Programme
P.O. Box 30552 Nairobi, Kenya
E-mail: civil.society@unep.org**

Accreditation review by UNEP

The accreditation review process comprises the following steps:

(a) The Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch of the Division of Regional Cooperation shall review the documents submitted by each organization. If any documents required for an application are missing or need clarification, the Branch shall notify the civil-society organization concerned and request further information;

(b) When the review of submitted documentation is complete, the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch shall send the documentation together with its recommendation to the office of the Secretariat for Governing Bodies for its consideration and decision;

(c) The Secretariat for Governing Bodies shall notify the civil-society organization of its decision;

(d) The Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch shall revise its database to include the name and contact details of newly accredited organizations. An e-mail notification will be sent to the accredited organization;

(e) The accreditation review process will take approximately three (3) months.

Section 2: Rights and obligations of the accredited organizations

Immediate advantages of accreditation

In the lead-up to sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum, accredited civil-society organizations may:

(a) Receive unedited working documents of the Council/Forum at the same time as the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP;

(b) Submit to the UNEP secretariat written comments on the unedited working documents of the Council/Forum for its consideration and distribution to the members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives for their information;

During sessions of the Council/Forum, accredited civil-society organizations may:

(a) Attend meetings of the plenary, the Committee of the Whole and ministerial consultations as observers;

(b) Circulate written statements to members of the Committee of Permanent Representatives to UNEP for their information through the UNEP secretariat;

(c) Make oral statements during plenary discussions of the Council/Forum at the invitation of the President.

Quadrennial report

All accredited organizations shall submit a quadrennial report of their activities, specifically with regard to the support that they have given to the work of UNEP, the United Nations and major institutions or conferences in the environment field at the international level in line with the UNEP format for submission of quadrennial reports as outlined in section 3, below.

Suspension or withdrawal of accreditation

Organizations granted accreditation shall conform at all times to the principles governing the establishment and nature of their observer relations with the Council/Forum. In periodically reviewing the activities of non-governmental organizations on the basis of the quadrennial reports and other relevant information, the Secretariat of Governing Bodies shall determine the extent to which the organizations have complied with the principles governing observer status and have contributed to the work of UNEP, the United Nations and major institutions or conferences in the environment field at the international level and may recommend the suspension of up to three years or the withdrawal of accreditation of organizations that have not met the requirements for observer status as set forth in rule 69 of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council.

In cases where the Secretariat of Governing Bodies has decided to recommend that the accreditation of a non-governmental organization should be suspended or withdrawn, the non-governmental organization concerned shall be given reasons for that decision in writing and shall have an opportunity to present its response for appropriate consideration by the Secretariat of Governing Bodies as expeditiously as possible.

The accreditation of non-governmental organizations to the Council/Forum shall be suspended for up to three years or withdrawn in the following circumstances:

(a) If an organization, either directly or through its affiliates or representatives acting on its behalf, clearly abuses its status by engaging in a pattern of acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, including unsubstantiated or politically motivated acts against States Members of the United Nations that are incompatible with those purposes and principles;

(b) If there exists substantiated evidence of influence from proceeds resulting from internationally recognized criminal activities such as the illicit drugs trade, money-laundering or the illegal arms trade;

(c) If, within the preceding three years, an organization has not made any positive or effective contribution to the work of UNEP, the United Nations or major institutions or conferences in the environment field at the international level.

The observer status of organizations shall be suspended or withdrawn by decision of the Secretariat of Governing Bodies on the recommendation of the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch. An organization whose observer status is withdrawn may reapply for accreditation no sooner than three years after the effective date of such suspension or withdrawal.

Section 3: Guidelines for submission of quadrennial reports for organizations accredited to the Council/Forum

The purpose of accreditation is to provide non-governmental organizations with observer status at sessions of the Governing Council/Global Ministerial Environment Forum in accordance with rule 69 of chapter XIII on observers of international non-governmental organizations of the rules of procedure of the Governing Council.

The relationship between UNEP and accredited non-governmental organizations is reciprocal. Organizations are granted the privilege of participating in a wide variety of UNEP-sponsored meetings and activities and in return they are expected to contribute in some way to furthering the development aims of UNEP and the United Nations at large.

The quadrennial review presents the opportunity for accredited organizations to make their activities in support of UNEP and the United Nations more widely known to member States and at the same time to receive valuable feedback on their programmes of work and official acknowledgement of their contribution as partners to global development.

The quadrennial review serves as an important management tool in monitoring the increasingly complex relationship between UNEP and the steadily growing number of organizations seeking and being granted observer status with UNEP.

The present guidelines were developed on the basis of the "Guidelines for submission of quadrennial reports for non-governmental organizations in general and special consultative status with the Economic and Social Council".

Report submission

Reports should be submitted to the Major Groups and Stakeholders Branch, Division of Regional Cooperation, UNEP.

Organizations that are accredited to the Economic and Social Council may submit the same quadrennial report to UNEP and the Economic and Social Council.

If a report does not include sufficient evidence of and information on UNEP-related activities, UNEP reserves the right to request the organization to provide that information.

The completed report must be submitted electronically. It should be sent by e-mail to civil.society@unep.org.

Format

A cover letter should be attached to the report setting out the following information:

- Name of the organization and its acronym, if any
- Year in which accreditation was granted
- Reporting period
- Updated contact information: headquarters address, including both postal and street address (if different); telephone; telefax; e-mail; website; name, title and contact information of the person submitting the report or UNEP contact person

The printed report must not exceed five pages.

Contents of the report

The report should contain a brief introduction on:

- (a) The aims and purposes of the organization and its main course of action;
- (b) Any change that may have had a significant impact on the organization's vision or its functions, including in terms of its orientation, its programme, the scope of its work, and how it has affected the organization. Such changes might include, but are not limited to:
 - (i) An amendment to the constitution or by-laws;
 - (ii) A substantial increase or significant change in the geographical distribution of its membership;
 - (iii) Any new organizational affiliations or mergers with programmatic or other implications;
 - (iv) Any affiliation or accreditation with other United Nations bodies.

The substantive and most important part of the report should present the contribution of the organization to the work of UNEP, the United Nations and major institutions or conferences in the environment field at the international level. Organizations are encouraged to participate in the appropriate intergovernmental forums to enable UNEP to benefit from their specialized input. Moreover, organizations are expected to undertake specific activities to advance the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. Your report should, therefore, present such activities as:

- (a) Participation in the work of UNEP, the United Nations or major institutions and conferences: organizations are requested to present the nature of their participation and contributions, e.g., oral or written statements; proposal of agenda items; organization of parallel meetings, side events, etc. (indicate the venue, city and country, date, official title and session);
- (b) Cooperation with UNEP divisions and outposted offices: organizations should specify the type of cooperation or partnership, which might include: preparation of, or contribution to, research papers and studies; joint sponsorship of meetings; environmental activities; financial assistance received from or given to UNEP; and technical assistance to countries.

The report should also provide a detailed account of the international scope of activities and should, in conclusion, provide an overview of the impacts of the organization's work in the environment field.