



FAO policy concerning relations with International Non-governmental Organizations

The policy concerning relations with International Non-governmental Organizations is in FAO Basic Texts, Section M. It establishes the criteria applied for **establishment of formal relations** with such non-governmental entities, specifies the forms of relation, as well as privileges (see: <http://www.fao.org/docrep/meeting/022/K8024E.pdf>).

According to the Basic Texts, formal relations can be established only with NGOs which meet the following criteria:

- be international in structure and scope of activity, and be sufficiently representative of the field of interest in which the NGO operates;
- be concerned with matters covering a portion of FAO's field of activity, and be in a position to give practical assistance in that field;
- have aims and purposes in conformity with the general principles embodied in the Constitution of FAO; and
- have a permanent directing body, authorized representatives and systematic procedures and machinery for communicating with its membership in various countries.

Before establishing formal relations with an International Non-Governmental Organization, it is requested that cooperation at the technical level be conducted during an extended period (which normally is interpreted as at least 2 years). Such cooperation has to be conducted with relevant technical unit(s) and/or field offices of the Organization.

Only after cooperation has been established and conducted (with or without a Memorandum of Understanding, which is not an obligatory step), does the issue of formal relations arise. Any request for the establishment of "formal status" shall be forwarded to TCDS that coordinates required internal procedures. Technical units with which the NGO has been cooperating have to substantiate the request.

If the NGO meets the above-mentioned criteria, we kindly ask them to fill a questionnaire and return it to this office with any additional information that may help FAO to appraise their request.

On the other end, if the organization does not meet the above criteria, or if it has not cooperated with FAO over an extended period of time, this does not preclude/limit in any way the possibility for the organization to establish and/or enhance its collaboration with FAO or to participate as observer to FAO technical meetings.

FAO's renewed *Strategy on Partnerships with Civil Society*, currently under consideration of the Council for approval in its next session, provides a solid framework for the effective involvement of civil society in the work of the Organization and will be accessible on the FAO web-site.

For any further information and/or clarification contact the Partnerships and Advocacy Branch, OCPP, FAO Rome.

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