

Accreditation of Civil Society Organizations to the UNCCD Conference of the Parties

The Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) recognizes that the participation of the civil society is vital to the successful implementation of this Convention. It therefore welcomes the involvement and the contribution of civil society organizations (CSOs), with particular regard to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and including private sector entities, in the official meetings of the UNCCD.

In accordance with Article 22, paragraph 7 of the UNCCD and Rule 7 of the rules of procedure of the COP, representatives from any body or agency, whether national or international, governmental or non-governmental, may be admitted to participate in the proceedings of the Convention's bodies under the conditions that the organization:

- is qualified in matters covered by the Convention;
- has informed the UNCCD secretariat of its wish to participate (through a letter of application to the Executive Secretary of the UNCCD Secretariat).

Organizations complying with the above-mentioned requirements may be admitted to participate in the sessions of the COP and its Subsidiary bodies as observers, unless at least one third of the Parties present at the session object. Only accredited organizations may designate representatives to attend sessions of the Convention bodies, or may apply to hold a side event and/or an exhibit at these sessions.

Organizations wishing to be accredited as an observer to the sessions of the Convention bodies, should submit to the secretariat the documents and information listed according to the following requirements:

1. Letter of application on letterhead from the organization, addressed to the Executive Secretary, stating the motivation of the organization to apply as an accredited entity, and its engagement towards desertification issues.
2. Completed "Accreditation Form" with contact information of the organization and of a designated contact point for official communication with the secretariat (see Accreditation Form). No other forms or summary documents will be considered valid.
3. Official documents detailing the mandate and scope of the organization, such as the approved statute of establishment, registration certificate, charter or constitution of the association, and any other official document that explains the organization's purpose, aims and initiatives.
4. Official documents detailing the governing body of the organization (organigramme or similar, stating full name and country of nationality of its members).
5. Evidence of the status of the organization (governmental/non-governmental; public/private; profit/ non-profit) in the country in which it is based. If this evidence assumes the status to be inherent but not explicitly mentioned, reference to the appropriate legislation should be provided.
6. Information on the affiliation of the organization with non-governmental organizations or institutions involved in activities relating to the UNCCD, including being part of networks, consortia, fora and similar.

7. Should the applicant be a network or similar membership entity, a description of the membership system, indicating the total number of members, the type and their geographical distribution.
8. Information on the programmes and activities undertaken by the organization that indicate its competence in matters relating to the UNCCD, and in which country/countries they are carried out, including brochures, newsletters and other publications. Web or e-versions are most welcome in this case rather than printed materials.
9. Copies of a recent annual report including a financial statement, or other project reports produced for donor entities or governments, and information on funding sources. Since these should normally be officially approved, any electronic copy should be scanned in order to show any stamps and signatures.

Please note that all documents should be submitted in one of the three working languages of the UNCCD secretariat (English – French – Spanish). Translation of originals requiring it does not need to be certified or notarized.

Upon receipt of the complete above documentation, the organization's application will be screened by the UNCCD secretariat in accordance with the above-mentioned requirements and with reference to the legal framework. Those organizations complying with all criteria will be considered for admission at the following session of the COP, provided the deadlines are respected, and the UNCCD secretariat will notify the organization of the outcome of such pre-evaluation.

Once accredited by the COP, the organization will be notified through a letter. The official document of the COP approving the accreditation requests constitutes the legal reference.

Applicant organizations fulfilling the above-referred requirements may be provisionally admitted to participate in the intersessional sessions of the subsidiary bodies of the COP or to the COP itself while still being applicant to the accreditation status, without prejudice to the COP's final decision.

The organization is expected to regularly keep the secretariat informed of any change of address or contact person, or other significant change in the information provided at the time of the request of accreditation.

For further information on the accreditation process, please contact:

Marcos Montoiro
NGO and Civil Society Liaison Officer
Facilitation, Capacity Building and Monitoring of Implementation Unit
UNCCD Secretariat
P.O. Box 260129
D-53153 Bonn, Germany
Tel: (49-228) 815 2832
Fax: (49-228) 815 2898/99
E-mail: cso@unccd.int