

## BECOMING AN NGO, OFFICIAL PARTNER OF UNESCO

UNESCO relies on a broad and diverse set of collaborative relationships and partnerships in all parts of the world to pursue its mission and implement its programmes.

### Basic principles of partnership

In establishing all partnership UNESCO is guided by the following principles:

- any partnership shall be determined by common purpose with mutual benefits;
- partners should have equal status within the partnership;
- partners should have an established legal status;
- each party's responsibilities, roles and contributions should be clearly defined;
- both parties must be able to raise issues concerning the quality of the working relationship in a spirit of transparency;
- provide no unfair advantage to any individual partner;
- partnerships must be action-oriented in order to produce concrete measurable results, sustained beyond partnership duration.

UNESCO does not cooperate with entities that:

- are involved in any product, services or activities that conflict with the Organization's mandate or undermine UNESCO's work and reputation;
- are complicit in human rights abuses, tolerate forced or compulsory labour or the use of child labour;
- are directly involved in the sale or manufacture of antipersonnel landmines or cluster bombs, or otherwise do not meet relevant obligations or responsibilities required by the United Nations;
- are violating sanctions approved by the United Nations Security Council.

### Partnership with NGOs

UNESCO aims to partner with civil society organizations to ensure greater efficiency in its actions, in accordance with the aspirations of citizenship and with a view to building democratic and equitable global governance.

Non-governmental organizations (NGOs), as platforms for strong civil engagement, are crucial partners for an intergovernmental organization like UNESCO. They help to focus resources in relation to its mandate and comparative advantages, and to act globally whilst at the same time linking the global to the local.

Combining expertise and resources with NGOs allows the Organization to:

- create strategic alliances;
- enhance efficiency and effectiveness of programme/activity implementation;
- strengthen visibility and impact of its action and presence, globally, regionally and at country level;
- reinforce the implementation and monitoring of its normative frameworks;
- enhance its capacity to reach all segments of societies which should be beneficiaries of its action;
- multiply the effects of UNESCO's actions.

## Statutory Framework for partnership with NGOs

The current statutory framework for cooperation with NGOs is defined in the **new Directives concerning UNESCO's partnership with non-governmental organizations**, adopted by the General Conference of UNESCO at its 36th session in 2011 (36 C/Res. 108).

These Directives offer a simplified policy framework for engaging, managing and maintaining partnership, which will allow to:

- further integrate partnerships with NGOs in programme planning and implementation, at both global and local levels;
- promote a genuine culture of partnership with NGOs within the Organization;
- revitalize, renew and widen the network of NGOs in official partnership with UNESCO;
- promote partnership with new organizations that are representative of civil society in those regions of the world where such organizations, for historical, cultural or geographical reasons, are isolated or weak.

## Types of official partnership

Two categories of partnership may be established with NGOs:

- the **consultative partnership**, designed to enable UNESCO to establish and maintain flexible and dynamic partnerships with any organization of civil society that is active in UNESCO's fields of competence at whatever level, and
- the **associate partnership**, open to international or regional organizations having maintained a continuous and effective partnership with UNESCO for at least two years.

## Who may become an official partner?

Any **international, regional, national or local NGO** may become an official partner, whenever its purposes, functions, structure and operation are non-governmental, democratic and non-profit-making in character. Generally speaking, the NGO shall fulfil the following conditions:

- it shall be engaged in activities in one or more specific fields of UNESCO's competence, in a spirit of cooperation, tolerance and solidarity, in the interests of humankind and with respect for cultural identities;

- it shall have a recognized legal status, an established headquarters and be governed by democratically adopted statutes;
- it shall have been in existence and have been carrying out activities for at least two years at the time it requests the establishment of a partnership.

## Why become an NGO, official partner?

Official partnership with UNESCO is more than just an accreditation. It consists in a mutual engagement to cooperate and work together in the Organization's fields of competence.

### ✓ **A more sustained cooperation**

The involvement of NGOs in programme implementation does not necessarily hinge on their official partnership with the Organization, but rather on their expertise in one or more of UNESCO's fields of competence. However, **official partnership is the privileged way of cooperation with the Organization.**

Official partnership arrangements include bilateral modalities of cooperation as well as collective modalities of collaboration.

**Bilateral cooperation** is essentially thematic and can intervene at different functional areas of activity (e.g. capacity-building, advocacy, technical support; standard-setting, etc.). It is managed through various modalities: implementation of certain elements of UNESCO's regular programmes, execution of projects and joint initiatives, consultation mechanisms and/or memoranda of understanding may be established; etc.

**Collective cooperation**, only for NGOs in official partnership in order to promote coordinated action, is sought through different mechanisms:

- ❖ the **International Conference of NGOs**, which brings together all NGOs in official partnership every two years (at UNESCO Headquarters or in any of its Member States) to review the state of cooperation with UNESCO and to conduct collective consultation on the main lines of UNESCO's programme;
- ❖ the **NGO-UNESCO Liaison Committee**, elected by the International Conference of NGOs, who represents the interests of all the NGOs partners with regard to UNESCO;
- ❖ collective consultations on specific subjects, organized regularly in accordance with UNESCO's programme implementation needs;
- ❖ the Executive Board's **Committee on Non-Governmental Partners (NGP)** to which all NGO official partners are invited to participate.

In addition, NGOs in official partnership contribute individually and collectively to the programming cycle of the Organization through specific procedures for **consultation with NGOs on the UNESCO's Medium-Term Strategy (C/4) and its Draft Programme and Budget (C/5).**

### ✓ **Visibility of partnership and privileged exchanges**

Strengthening communication between the Secretariat, Member States and NGOs, official partners, and increasing the visibility of our cooperation towards news media and general public is a priority for UNESCO. In this regard, UNESCO employs, inter alia, the following tools:

- ✓ the **database** of NGOs, foundations and similar institutions enjoying official partnership with UNESCO, publicly available on UNESCO website ([www.unesco.org](http://www.unesco.org));
- ✓ a regular **written monthly communication targeted specifically for NGOs** to be extended as far as possible to their national branches, aiming at sharing information on major activities and events of the Organization and better involving NGOs in their elaboration and implementation;
- ✓ a **forum on the UNESCO website** is specifically devoted to NGOs activities, publications and any other relevant information concerning partner organizations ([www.unesco.int](http://www.unesco.int)).

Official partnership increases the visibility of bilateral cooperation:

- ✓ For information and promotion purposes, an NGO official partner is invited to use a standard sentences next to its own logo, depending on the nature of its partnership with UNESCO: « **[NGO] in official partnership with UNESCO (consultative status or associative status)** ».
- ✓ NGOs may request UNESCO's authorization to use the name, acronym and logo of UNESCO on a temporary basis in connection with:
  - ❖ **patronage** from UNESCO for events that the NGO organizes,
  - ❖ **implementation of projects** in cooperation with, or with the support of, UNESCO.

## How to become an NGO, official partner?

The Director-General decides on the establishment of official partnership with UNESCO (consultative status). These requests for partnership may be submitted **at any time by NGOs to the Director-General, together with complete documentation concerning the NGO**. An application form is available on line.

Requests are **processed through an internal evaluation** guided by the following considerations:

- A **rigorous** admission process:
  - ❖ Who is consulted?
    - all sectors and services of UNESCO as well as relevant field offices concerned and, when necessary, the Office of Legal Affairs;
    - relevant National Commissions for those UNESCO for NGOs that are national or local in scope.
  - ❖ Which evaluation criteria?
    - the real impact of the NGO's action in the field;
    - the potential for future cooperation and synergy;
    - the extent of the activities implemented jointly by the NGO and UNESCO in recent years;

- the existing cooperation with National Commissions for UNESCO, other organizations of the United Nations system or other intergovernmental organizations.
- A **transparent** admission process: for each request a file is constituted reflecting all opinions/recommendations expressed by different services/sectors/bureaus consulted as well as a final recommendation thereon.

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**For additional information:**

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