



Members at the Centre

Membership Policy, Terms and Conditions

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1. Membership Goal

CIVICUS' ability to amplify and strengthen the voices and opinions of ordinary people goes hand in hand with growth in the scale and scope of its membership. Therefore, CIVICUS aims to recruit a diverse and globally representative alliance of civil society organisations (CSOs - see *definition in the box*) and individuals who support CIVICUS' Mission, Vision and Values and promote the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

2. Why join CIVICUS?

CIVICUS Membership is a **solidarity-based membership**, and to a lesser extent, also a benefits-based one.

Organisations and individuals join in solidarity with like-minded people/groups mainly as a show of support and desire to join an alliance that helps to:

- **Influence.** We want to ensure that civil society is taken seriously and is able to have a stronger influence on the making of decisions that matter to people's lives.
- **Connect.** We want to connect the different sources and forces of citizen action so that citizen action as a whole becomes more robust and effective.
- **Enable.** We want to promote better conditions for civil society to do its work, and to enhance and protect optimal standards for all civil society.

[*\(CIVICUS 2013-2017 Strategic Priorities\)*](#)

However, the members that wish to be more actively engaged in the governance of the alliance can apply for an **upgraded status** that brings voting rights along with an exclusive set of benefits, as illustrated later in this document.

3. Membership Eligibility Criteria

1. **For Associate membership:**
 - a. Any civil society organisation (CSO - see definition in the box) including but not limited to non-profit, non-governmental, socially responsible and/or voluntary organisations and movements that takes an interest in the affairs of civil society
 - b. Any individual that takes an interest in the affairs of civil society.
2. **For Voting membership:**
 - a. Any foundation, civil society organisation (CSO - see definition in the box) or a legitimate national CSO platform or network, that represents or advocates the interests of citizen participation in their country/region/globally
 - b. Any individual who has attained an outstanding rank among citizens representing or advocating the interest of citizen participation in their country/region/globally
3. Membership is currently not open to for-profit corporate entities.
4. All Members will sign up in writing to CIVICUS' Vision, Mission and Values.
5. Membership will be denied to those who do not respect and observe the principles and fundamental freedoms as defined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR).
6. CIVICUS Membership Office will review all documentation submitted in support of an initial application for Membership (or renewal of an existing voting Membership) to assess adherence to the requirements in 3) and 4) above.

4. Categories of Membership and other affiliations

4.1 NON VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Type	Requirements
Individual Associate Member	<p><u>Youth</u>: Be an individual, up to 30 years old that takes an interest in the affairs of civil society, abides by and promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and signs up in writing to CIVICUS Vision, Mission and Values</p> <p><u>Standard</u>: Be an individual, over 30 years old that takes an interest in the affairs of civil society, abides by and promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and signs up in writing to CIVICUS Vision, Mission and Values</p>
Associate Member Organisation	Be a foundation and/or CSO (non-profit, non-governmental, socially responsible and/or voluntary organisations) that takes an interest in the affairs of civil society, abides by and promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and signs up in writing to CIVICUS' Vision, Mission and Values

4.2 VOTING MEMBERSHIP

Type	Requirements
Individual Voting Member	Be an individual who has attained an outstanding rank among citizens representing or advocating the interest of citizen participation in their country/region or globally. Applicants shall include their CV, 3 references, and a disclaimer stipulating that upon cross-checks CIVICUS has the right to deny membership if they do not qualify.
Voting Member Organisation	Be a foundation, a CSO (non-profit, non-governmental, socially responsible and/or voluntary organisations) or a legitimate national CSO platform or network that represents or advocates the interests of citizen participation in their country/region, abides by and promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and signs up in writing to CIVICUS' Vision, Mission and Values

4.3 FRIENDS, ALLIES AND SUPPORTERS OF CIVICUS

Type	Requirements
Supporting affiliates	Be any of the above organisational categories, an alliance or movement that takes an interest in the affairs of civil society, abides by and promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and provides sufficient evidence that the entity is not allowed to join as a full member
Corporate affiliates	Be a profit-making organisation that abides by and promotes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and signs up in writing to CIVICUS' Vision, Mission and Values
Donors	Be an individual, a public entity, or a private foundation that supports CIVICUS' work through a monetary contribution or grant

5. Membership Categories and related characteristics

Category name	Type	Voting powers	Fees	Duration	Restrictions	Benefits
1. Individual Associate Member	Basic for individuals	(non-voting)	Free	Lifetime (opt-out)	Open	Basic
2. Associate Member Organisations	Basic for organisations	(non-voting)	Free	Lifetime (opt-out)	Open	Basic
3. Individual Voting Member	Premium for individuals	(voting)	Paid	Annual	Verified	Exclusive
4. Voting Member Organisations	Premium for organisations	(voting)	Paid	Annual	Verified	Exclusive
5. Friends and Allies	Basic for organisations	(non-voting)	Free	Lifetime (opt-out)	Open	Limited

5.1 CIVICUS' Added Value and Benefits

CIVICUS, its programmes and activities provide added value for all members and for civil society more widely in the following ways:

- 1. We are a global alliance.** At our heart, we are a network of civil society actors who work in every part of the world and cover every imaginable issue. We work in partnership with our constituents in everything we do. We take pride in being headquartered in the global south and bring a southern sensibility to our work. This enhances our legitimacy and allows us to draw on the expertise of a global network of civil society practitioners. When institutions partner with CIVICUS, they are tapping into the knowledge and wisdom of the many who make up the alliance, and not just the relatively few of us based at CIVICUS House in Johannesburg.
- 2. We care about civil society writ large.** Our purpose is to strengthen civil society as a whole rather than to focus on thematic issues. We work on the infrastructure that helps civil society actors to be more effective; we promote civil society participation in decision making forums; and we speak up when the civic space is under threat. We have twenty years' experience providing cost-effective, timely and global civil society strengthening initiatives that make civil society more effective.
- 3. We know the international arena.** CIVICUS is a recognised actor in the global arena. We are widely considered as a credible voice and trusted/experienced convener on civil society issues in key international processes, and work with several international agencies. We use this positioning to protect and grow the civic space where people can express and organise themselves, speak up for civil society when it is threatened and win it more recognition and influence.
- 4. We know what's going on in civil society.** Because of our network and our hub of specialist knowledge on the state of civil society, we are uniquely positioned to stay on top of the latest emerging trends, threats and opportunities for civil society as they happen.

In terms of **benefits**, all members will be part of CIVICUS network and will gain more visibility in CIVICUS' website, social media and in the weekly newsletter e-CIVICUS. Moreover, all members will receive **priority information** about **opportunities** such as conferences, grants, bursaries, and training.

In addition, the following **exclusive benefits** will be offered to paid-up voting members:

- **Increased visibility within and outside the alliance** by having members' profiles and content featured in CIVICUS' communication platforms
- **Active involvement in the governance** of CIVICUS through the nomination and election of the Board of Directors and decision-making powers at CIVICUS Annual General Meetings
- **Better representation at the United Nations and opportunities to engage in United Nations processes** through CIVICUS' accreditation with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and through CIVICUS' permanent presence in Geneva and New York
- **Priority access** to learning opportunities and discounts for services, conferences and more

6. Paid Membership Annual Fee Structure

Individual Voting Membership costs \$50 per year.

Organisational Voting Membership fees are paid in proportion to the organisation's annual income, as follows:

<u>Group 1</u>	Up to \$80.000	\$50 per year
<u>Group 2</u>	\$80.001-\$250.000	\$80 per year
<u>Group 3</u>	\$250.0001-\$500.000	\$130 per year
<u>Group 4</u>	\$500.0001-\$1.000.000	\$250 per year
<u>Group 5</u>	\$1.000.001-\$3.500.000	\$500 per year
<u>Group 6</u>	\$3.500.000-\$5.000.000	\$1000 per year
<u>Group 7</u>	\$5.000.001-over	\$4000 per year

Annual fees are valid for 12 months from the date of received payment.

6.1 Discounts

Members applying under all categories will receive a discount when applying and paying in advance for multiple years' membership. By applying for a 24 or 36 months membership, the fees receive respectively a 5% and 10% discount. This feature will be initially available only through the offline forms; it will be available online starting from the second quarter of 2014.

Moreover, a tailored discount may be negotiated for bulk membership subscriptions with a parent body or international secretariat overseeing/co-ordinating multiple affiliates, networks or coalitions and/or country-based offices.

6.2 Membership renewal

All paid Members will receive automated emails to notify them about their Membership renewals. The Membership Team will use the following schedule to send reminders:

- 1st reminder:** 2 months prior to the renewal date.
- 2nd reminder:** 1 month prior to the renewal date.
- 3rd (and final) reminder:** 1 month after the renewal date.

Definition of Civil Society Organisation (CSO)

Civil Society Organisations (CSO) are principally defined as per the **CIVICUS Civil Society Index** categories as follows (with the exclusion of political parties):

- Faith-based organisations
- Trade unions
- Women's organisations
- Student or youth organisations
- Developmental CSOs (e.g. NGOs working on literacy, health, social services)
- Advocacy CSOs (e.g. civic action, social justice, human rights, consumers' groups)
- CSOs active in research, information dissemination, education and training (e.g. think tanks, resource centres, non-profit schools)
- Non-profit media groups
- Associations of socio-economically marginalised groups (e.g. poor people, homeless, landless, immigrants, refugees)
- Social service and health associations (e.g. charities raising funds for health research and services, mental health associations, associations of people with physical disabilities)
- Other fund-raising bodies and organisations
- Professional and business organisations (e.g. chambers of commerce, professional associations) but not the for-profit entities run by members of the professional and business organisations
- Those who promote ethical business practices and space (e.g. social investors, socially responsible enterprises)
- Community organisations (e.g. village associations, neighbourhood committees)
- Community-level groups or associations (e.g. burial societies, self-help groups, parents' associations, village associations, indigenous peoples' associations)
- Waqfs, monasteries, and mosque-based associations
- Economic interest CSOs (e.g. cooperatives, credit unions, mutual saving associations)
- Ethnic, traditional or indigenous associations or organisations
- Environmental CSOs
- Culture and arts and social and recreational CSOs
- CSO networks, federations, support organisations
- Others

All paid Members will receive **ninety (90) days of grace** period from the day of their membership expiry date. If membership fees have not been received after these ninety days, members will be classified as Associate Members with no voting rights.

7. Membership Fee Waiver for Voting Categories

CIVICUS aims to involve a broad range of civil society organisations and individuals in its work. We recognise that smaller, under-resourced organisations are keen to support our work as fully affiliated voting members, but may be unable to pay the required membership fees. Similarly, some individuals who greatly qualify for individual voting members may have financial constraints and hence be unable to pay the full membership dues.

1. All requests for membership fee waiver from applicants will be considered on the basis of the provisions of the policy outlined in this section.
2. CIVICUS staff will be allowed to give prospective members information about this policy but cannot grant a waiver of membership fees to an organisation.
3. All requests for waiver of membership fees must come directly from the organisation and must go through the process outlined below. Staff must therefore ask organisations to direct their requests for membership fee waiver to the Membership team.
4. The organisation must complete a membership application form and provide the membership documents required. This may include organisational information such as an annual report, financial accounts and mission statement where it is a registered legal entity or media clippings and/or manifesto where it is not.
5. The organisation making the request will be contacted by the Membership team, acknowledging receipt of the request and entering into negotiations to establish whether the organisation is able to pay part of the required membership fee. If the organisation is unable to offer any payment, the possibility of the organisation providing 'in kind' assistance to CIVICUS will be explored.

Examples of acceptable assistance, in lieu of membership fee payment, include:

- Tangible help with CIVICUS programme work, such as significant involvement in a Civil Society Watch intervention or assistance with convening a Civil Society Index meeting;
 - Translation of key CIVICUS materials into one of the six official United Nations languages;
 - Organisation of a local event to share CIVICUS information and to help recruit new members; and
 - Referral of Civil Society Organisations who are not current CIVICUS members.
6. The Membership officer will liaise with the relevant CIVICUS staff members to ensure assistance offered by members in lieu of membership fee payment is made possible and is achieved.
 7. Membership fees will **be waived for one year only** and a waiver will only be afforded once to a particular organisation or movement. A note will be made of the waiver on the member's database record.

8. Membership Application Requirements

All applicants are required to:

1. Fully meet the eligibility criteria for membership in Section 3 above to the satisfaction of CIVICUS Membership Unit.
2. Complete the CIVICUS Membership application form.
3. Express their solidarity with CIVICUS by signing up in writing to CIVICUS' Mission, Vision and Values.
4. Manifest their agreement with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
5. Give an indication (or denial) of consent to receive notices by electronic mail and to share contacts within CIVICUS network.

In addition, **prospective members applying to voting categories** should also:

Registered organisations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Include in the application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Copy of certificate of registration issued by a government authority as a proof of the non-profit and/or tax-exempt status of the organisation • Official documents detailing the mandate and scope of the organisation, such as the latest organisation's annual report, the approved statute of establishment, charter or constitution of the association, and any other official document that explains the organisation's purpose, aims and initiatives • One of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Last 2 years' audited financial statements ○ Last 2 years' annual tax reports or equivalent government lodgements ○ History of grants received with reports of distribution and financial expenditure (no detail to be more than five years old) • References: Any one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reference from an international NGO or UN agency
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reference from local government leader ○ Reference from the membership entity or network (if any) that the applicant belongs to ○ List of board members with full contact information for each <p>b) Pay the annual membership fees determined by CIVICUS unless specifically given a fee waiver under the Fee Waiver provisions.</p> <p>c) Should the applicant be a network or membership entity, provide a description of the membership system, indicating the total number of members, the type and their geographical distribution.</p> <p>d) Designate a representative to act and speak on behalf of the organisation in dealings with CIVICUS such as voting for the Board of Directors of CIVICUS.</p>
Non registered organisations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Include in the application: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● a profile and or brief organisational history of their organisation, society or movement; ● media clippings, and/or the movement's manifesto. ● One of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ List of grants or other income received in the last year ○ Copy of latest annual budget available ○ Bank Statements of the last three months ● References: Any one of the following <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reference from a peer organisation, International NGO or UN agency ○ Reference from local government or traditional leader ○ Reference from the membership entity or network (if any) that the applicant belongs to ○ List of board members or Senior Management with full contact information for each ● Pay the annual membership fees determined by CIVICUS unless specifically given a fee waiver under the Fee Waiver provisions. ● Designate a representative to act and speak on behalf of the organisation in dealings with CIVICUS such as voting for the Board of Directors of CIVICUS.
Individual voting members	<p>a) Submit their CV and 3 references.</p> <p>b) Pay the annual membership fees determined by CIVICUS unless specifically given a fee waiver under the Fee Waiver provisions.</p>

It shall be the responsibility of the Member to notify CIVICUS of any change in the designated representative and/or their contact information and indication of consent, or revocation of consent to receive notices by electronic mail.

On application for renewal of membership of CIVICUS, members shall submit any documents that have been changed in last application and a send the latest annual accounts, if applicable. If there is a change of designated representative in the organisation at any point in time, it is the responsibility of the organisation to contact CIVICUS at membership@civicus.org with the latest contact details of the new designated representative.

9. Admission of Members

The Membership Unit will review applications received for voting membership and follow up with referees and perform other due diligence as necessary to evaluate the applicant. When CIVICUS considers the organisation fully verified its status is changed on the system. Associate Membership shall commence upon submission of the application.

Voting Membership shall commence upon payment of fees.

Standard procedure of the voting membership is illustrated in the following steps:

Step 1: Complete an online application form on the CIVICUS website and upload (or send by email) the supporting documents/information required for verification. Only in cases where the member is not able to access internet, an offline form will be made available

Step 2: Receive confirmation of receipt of the application and, if needed, request for submission of additional supporting documents

Step 3: Undergo review by CIVICUS (entire screening process usually takes about 3 weeks)

Step 4: Receive notification of CIVICUS' decision through an email from the Membership Unit

Step 5: If accepted as voting member, complete the payment of the membership fee online or offline

Step 6: Have application status changed on the online system and a confirmation email sent

In case a member is found not to qualify for the voting membership it will be registered as an associate member.

10. Voting

10.1 Voting Requirements

- Only Members from the voting membership categories will be permitted to cast a vote on any matter submitted to the Membership for a vote.
- A voting member who has been suspended for lack of payment of fees will be downgraded to "associate member" (non-voting) status as indicate in Section 6.2 above, and may only be reinstated as voting member if all outstanding and current fees are paid and received **30 days prior to any vote.**

10.2 Voting rights

- a) Each Voting Member shall be entitled to cast one vote on any matter submitted to the Membership for a vote.
- b) Members may vote by any method permitted by the Bylaws or that the Board of Directors approves.

11. Nominations to and election of the Board of Directors

- CIVICUS voting members shall elect a group of Directors every three years. The number of consecutive three-year terms which a Director may serve shall be limited to two.
- Only designated representatives from a voting membership category can stand for elections in the Board.
- Each voting member shall cast one ballot and Directors shall be elected by a plurality of the votes cast.

12. Termination of Membership

Membership will terminate in the following situations:

- a) *Resignation*: Membership will be terminated upon receipt of notice of resignation in writing addressed to the Membership Office.
- b) *Dissolution or death*: Membership is terminated on the dissolution of a Member Organisation or death of an Individual Member.
- c) *Expulsion*: Membership will be terminated by a majority vote on a special resolution for expulsion at any meeting of the Board of Directors at which there is a quorum, following a recommendation from the Governance & Membership Committee that said membership be terminated for non-compliance with the universal human rights principles of gender equality, non-discrimination and peace as laid out in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Moreover, **for the voting membership** categories membership status will change in the following situation:

- d) *Non-payment of Dues*: Voting Members will automatically be downgraded to associate (non-voting) membership if fees have not been paid ninety (90) days after they are due. A Member may avoid such downgrade by paying all outstanding fees and resuming payment on the agreed schedule.

12.1 Termination Procedures

In the case of expulsion of a membership, the following procedures shall apply:

- a) *Notice*: The Membership Office will send a written notice of the special resolution for expulsion to the Member, setting forth the reasons for the proposed termination, the date on which the proposed termination will become effective, and the date, time, and place (if any) of the hearing described in the next subsection.

Such notice shall be sent at least fifteen days before the proposed date of termination, and at least ten days before the date set for the hearing, by electronic mail, to the last email address provided by the Member to the Membership Office.

- b) *Hearing*: The Member, who is the subject of the proposed special resolution for expulsion, will be given an opportunity to respond to the proposed resolution in writing. The Board or person or committee authorized by the Board will deliberate on the matter on a date not less than five days before the effective date of the proposed termination.
- c) *Determination*: Following the hearing date, the Board or person or committee authorized by the Board to decide whether the proposed termination will take place, will make its decision. That decision will be final and the Member will be promptly notified of it.
- d) *Refund*: The Board will determine whether a Member whose membership has been terminated or suspended is to receive a refund of any dues already paid. Any refund granted will be pro-rated to return only the balance accruing to the remaining part of the original membership period.

Appendix: CIVICUS Mission, Vision, Values and Guiding Principles

Mission: CIVICUS is an international alliance dedicated to strengthening citizen action and civil society throughout the world.

Vision: A worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity.

CIVICUS seeks to amplify the voices and opinions of ordinary people. It recognizes that for effective and sustainable civic participation to occur, citizens must enjoy rights of free association and be able to engage all sectors of society.

CIVICUS's guiding principles for 2013-2017:

Working as an alliance - We're stronger when we work together towards the same goal. CIVICUS is diverse, and we won't always agree. But as a unique global alliance and an impartial and inclusive convenor, we'll always aim to broker consensus and look for points of intersection. It will be our membership that drives and leads our interventions over the next five years. We commit to enacting this principle in everything that we do, from programmatic interventions to planning, and from fundraising to expanding our membership to bring in a greater and more diverse range of voices.

Working as a network with multiple hubs and connections - CIVICUS is a network, and our members told us they value connecting with each other; this doesn't always have to be through the secretariat. We'll make it easier to exchange learning on good practice, to connect with other CIVICUS members, and to stand in solidarity with other network members.

A rights-based approach to citizen participation - We balance our commitment to being member-driven with a commitment to working with those quieter voices that are marginalised or muted. We do this because the politics of unity and inclusiveness means that we all have a right to participate. We'll help our under-represented constituents realise this right.

Working in partnership with others - Not everyone shares the vision or values of the CIVICUS alliance. But our world is too small to go it alone. We recognise we're only a part of efforts to make the world a better place, and we commit to forging partnerships for change where we can find common cause. We'll work hard to make sure we don't compete with or displace our members.

Connecting the local with the global - Constituents told us again and again that we have to get the balance right between our local, national and regional work, and our global work. Our added value as a global alliance is being able to transcend these boundaries and operate at multiple levels, making connections that wouldn't otherwise exist. At the same time, we'll plan every year around achieving impact in focus countries, where we believe there are potential tipping points for civil society globally.

Impact - Civil society strengthening can be a fuzzy area of work, and it isn't always easy to show what difference we make. But it's never been more important that we commit as an alliance to achieving, measuring and demonstrating the impact of what we do. For CIVICUS, this means that during the next five years we'll commit to continuous improvement through rigorous monitoring, analysing and deliberating with our constituents. Our efforts to report back to our members and other constituents will be second to none. We understand that it is our members' prerogative to say what we have and have not achieved, not ours.