

Non-governmental Organizations Guide

*to Apply for the United Nations ECOSOC
Consultative Status*

July 2024



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About the guide

While looking at the global power dynamics, it's not new that the **global south** is **under-represented** in the international arenas, including the **United Nations** which was developed after WWII, and it is only one of many dilemmas the UN system has. However, the United Nations is still the largest and **most important hub** for international **policy-making**. It has to be a core **target** for any **civil society organization** that aims to have an **impact** not only on the **global** level, but also on the **local**. These policies are not only about managing state relations, but also cover topics that **touch** our **lives daily**, like health policies by the World Health Organization, education policies by the UNICEF, or food security by WFP and FAO.

Why did I prepare this guide?

The short answer is: To present the benefits of the Consultative Status granted by the United Nations Economic and Social Council “ECOSOC” for Non-governmental organizations “NGOs”, and explain the application process to obtain it.

This guide is aimed to support NGO's with **practical information** to **engage** with the United Nations mechanisms. The main focus is the Economic and Social Council “ECOSOC” and its **Consultative Status**, and explaining the **application process**.

The Consultative Status is an **accreditation framework** that benefits both the United Nations and the NGOs. The status gives the NGOs valuable **benefits** like **accessing** the UN offices in New York, Geneva, and Vienna, **participating** in UN events, and **organizing** side events during these events, in addition to many other benefits ways which will be explained in detail later in this guide. The consultative status requires a special **application process** to be obtained, and this **guide** will hopefully help you with it.

The guide is a result of personal voluntary, and non-funded efforts. It came out of the need for an **updated** source of information about the application process for the ECOSOC Consultative Status, as by the publishing date of this document, the available official Guide [“Working with ECOSOC: an NGOs Guide to Consultative Status”](#) was last updated in 2018 and included outdated information, like the websites of the DESA NGO Branch and the status application.

The guide is not a legal document, was not reviewed by the UN, does not reflect the official position of the UN, nor does it claim to be comprehensive or genuine. It was developed based on the existing official UN ECOSOC guides, the ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31, and the ECOSOC website, in addition to other resources detailed by the end of this document.

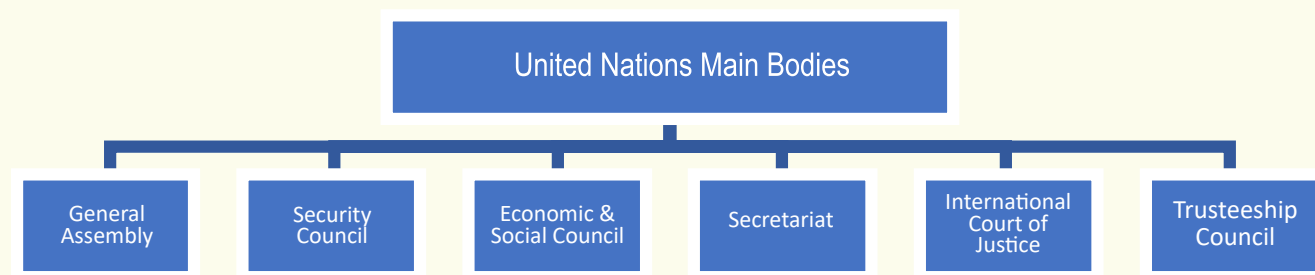
How can you use this guide?

The guide is divided into six sections:

- The first section is about the **ECOSOC**, its position in the UN Bodies, and its **mandate**;
- The second is about the ECOSOC system, the **structure**, the subsidiary bodies, and the non-subsidiary bodies like UN Funds and programs and specialized agencies, and the ECOSOC **relations** with each of them.
- The Third is about the **consultative status**, explaining it, its types, **eligibility** criteria, and most importantly its **benefits** and **obligations**;
- The fourth explains in as much detail as possible the **application process** and provides **practical** resources for it.
- The fifth tackles the **challenges** of the application process and the **ways forward to start the interaction** from today while waiting to get the status.
- The sixth includes additional **resources** for further details.

1. The Economic and Social Council

The Economic and Social Council was created by the United Nations Charter in 1945 as **one of the six principal organs** (or main bodies) of the United Nations. It has **54 members**; eighteen members are elected each year by the General Assembly for overlapping three-year terms.



ECOSOC Mandate

The Economic and Social Council is the **central mechanism** for the **coordination** of the activities of the **United Nations System** and its specialized agencies, and **supervision of subsidiary bodies** in the economic, social, environmental, and other related fields. It lies at the heart of the UN system with the goal of coordination, policy review, policy dialogue, and recommendations on issues of economic and social development, and for implementation of the **Sustainable Development Goals**.

ECOSOC is **tasked** with:

- Serving as the central forum for discussing international economic, social, and environmental issues, and for **formulating policy recommendations** addressed to member states and the United Nations system;
- Making **studies** and reports and making recommendations on international economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and other related matters;

- Assisting in **organizing major international conferences** in the economic, social, and related fields, and promoting a coordinated follow-up to these conferences;
- **Coordinating** the activities of the **specialized agencies** through consultations with and recommendations to them, as well as to the General Assembly.
- **Promoting** universal respect for, and observance of, **human rights** and fundamental **freedoms** for all without distinction as to race, sex, language, or religion.

2. ECOSOC System

ECOSOC **oversees** a complex **ecosystem** of bodies in the economic, social, cultural, educational, health, and related fields. This includes the Council's [subsidiary bodies](#), including the functional commissions, regional commissions, and other bodies, in addition to the United Nations **specialized agencies**, the **programs and funds**, and **other** related bodies. The Council is entrusted to guide and **coordinate** the work of all these bodies within its mandate of providing integrated policy guidance to Member States.

ECOSOC System

ECOSOC Subsidiary Bodies

Regional Commissions:

- Economic Commission for Africa (ECA)
- Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP)
- Economic Commission for Europe (ECE)
- Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC)
- Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia (ESCWA)

Functional Committees:

- Commission on the Status of Women
- Commission for Social Development
- Commission on Population and Development
- Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice
- Commission on Narcotic Drugs
- Commission on Science and Technology for Development
- Statistical Commission
- United Nations Forum on Forests

Programs and Funds, and related bodies:

- United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)
- United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)
- United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA)
- United Nations Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT)
- Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)
- United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC)
- United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA)
- United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women)
- World Food Programme (WFP)

Other Committees and Bodies:

- Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations
- Committee for Development Policy
- Committee of Experts on Public Administration
- Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues
- UNAIDS Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
- UNGEGN United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names
- UNGGIM Committee of Experts on Global Geospatial Information Management
- UNICRI United Nations Interregional Crime and Justice Research Institute
- UNRISD United Nations Research Institute for Social Development
- Sessional and standing committees
- Expert, ad hoc and related bodies

UN Specialized Agencies:

- FAO Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
- ICAO International Civil Aviation Organization
- IFAD International Fund for Agricultural Development
- ILO International Labour Organization
- IMF International Monetary Fund
- IMO International Maritime Organization
- ITU International Telecommunication Union
- UNESCO United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
- UNIDO United Nations Industrial Development Organization
- UNWTO World Tourism Organization
- UPU Universal Postal Union
- WHO World Health Organization
- WIPO World Intellectual Property Organization
- WMO World Meteorological Organization
- WORLD BANK GROUP

2.1. ECOSOC Subsidiary bodies

2.1.1 The Functional Commissions:

ECOSOC has **eight functional commissions**, headquartered in New York, Geneva, and Vienna. They carry out the technical work of the Council, providing guidance and advice in specific fields. They hold sessions regularly (the majority, annually), according to their mandates. The commissions are composed of **government representatives** and are **elected by ECOSOC**, usually for four-year terms. While some are focused on specialized communities of technical experts, others attract large numbers of interested global public. Their annual meetings are accompanied by many side events. Prominent examples include the annual sessions of the Commission on the Status of Women.

Commission on the Status of Women (CSW): it is the principal global policymaking body dedicated to gender equality and the empowerment of women. The Commission meets annually in New York to evaluate progress on gender equality, identify challenges, set global standards, and formulate concrete policies to promote gender equality and empowerment of women worldwide.

Commission for Social Development (CSocD): it is the follow-up body to the 1995 World Summit for Social Development, which resulted in the Copenhagen Declaration for Social Development and Program of Action.

Commission on Population and Development (CPD): it assists and advises ECOSOC on population issues and trends, population and development strategies, policies and programs, and provides population assistance to developing countries.

Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice (CCPCJ): It is the central body within the United Nations system providing policy guidance on crime prevention and criminal justice. The Commission formulates international

policies and recommendations on criminal justice issues, including trafficking in persons, transnational crime, and aspects of terrorism prevention.

Commission on Narcotic Drugs (CND): It is the central policymaking body of the United Nations in drug-related matters. The Commission analyses the world drug situation and develops proposals to strengthen the international drug control system to combat the drug problem worldwide.

Commission on Science and Technology for Development (CSTD): it advises the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and acts as a forum for: The examination of science and technology questions and their implications for development; The advancement of understanding on science and technology policies; and the formulation of recommendations and guidelines on science and technology matters within the United Nations system.

Statistical Commission (UN StatCom): it assists ECOSOC in promoting the development of national statistics, the coordination of the statistical work of specialized agencies, the development of the central statistical services of the UN Secretariat, and advising the organs of the United Nations on general questions relating to the collection, analysis, and dissemination of statistical information.

United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF): its main objectives are to promote the management, conservation, and sustainable development of all types of forests and to strengthen long-term political commitment to this end.

2.1.2. The Regional Commissions:

The ECOSOC has **five regional commissions** that represent the United Nations in Africa, Asia and the Pacific, Western Asia, Europe and Latin America, and the Caribbean. They do extensive technical work. They promote regional economic integration and establish connections with regional intergovernmental bodies. They produce economic and statistical information, set norms, and make direct policy recommendations to Governments in their respective regions.

- [ESCWA](#) Economic and Social Commission for Western Asia: 21 Members, mostly from the Arab world, based in Beirut, Lebanon.
- [ECA](#) Economic Commission for Africa: 54 Members, based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia.
- [ESCAP](#) Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific: 53 Members, 9 associate Members*, based in Bangkok, Thailand.
- [ECE](#) Economic Commission for Europe: 56 Members, based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- [ECLAC](#) Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean: 46 Members, 13 associate Members*, based in Santiago, Chile.

* Not members of the United Nations

2.1.3. Other Committees and Bodies

In addition to the previously mentioned commissions, ECOSOC works through **expert bodies** and **standing committees**, like “[the Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations](#)” which **manages** the relationship between the ECOSOC and the NGOs through the **consultative status**.

2.2. Non-subsidiary bodies

A number of UN system entities are **connected** to ECOSOC but not as subsidiary bodies. They have their own governance structure, **independent** from the Council. They include specialized agencies, funds, and programs.

2.2.1 Funds and Programs

The funds and programs are UN bodies **set up** by resolution of the **General Assembly**. They **report** to ECOSOC and through it to the General Assembly. ECOSOC **elects** the Members of the boards, who decide on the program and budget of the respective funds and programs. Furthermore, the General Assembly assigned ECOSOC a role to provide evidence-based political **guidance** and overall **coordination** in line with its policies. They include:

- [WFP](#) World Food Programme, based in Rome, Italy.
- [UNHCR](#) Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, based in Geneva, Switzerland
- [UNICEF](#) United Nations Children's Fund, based in New York, United States of America.
- [UN-Women](#) United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women, based in based in New York, United States of America.
- [UNDP](#) United Nations Development Programme, based in New York, United States of America.
- [UN-HABITAT](#) United Nations Human Settlements Programme, based in Nairobi, Kenya.
- [UNRWA](#) United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East, based in Jerusalem Palestinian Territory.
- [UNFPA](#) United Nations Population Fund, based in New York, United States of America.
- [UNEP](#) United Nations Environment Programme, based in Nairobi, Kenya.
- [UNODC](#) United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, based in Vienna, Austria.

2.2.2. Specialized agencies

The specialized agencies are active in the field and set **global standards** in their areas of competence. They have been established **independently**, many of them long **before** the United Nations was founded. As defined by the Charter, they were brought under the UN umbrella through ECOSOC by concluding “**relationship agreements**” with the Council.

Under these agreements, the specialized agencies have the right to be **represented** at ECOSOC meetings, to **participate** in deliberations, to submit proposals, and to consult on agenda items, but they do not have voting rights. They do not send formal reports to ECOSOC, but the Council can request reports on specific issues on its agenda.

The specialized agencies have their **own** governance structure. They follow their **own** rules and make their **own** decisions, guided by their **own** institutions. The specialized agencies **do not** take direction from the UN Secretariat or from the General Assembly. However, the UN Charter mandates the **coordination** of their “policies and activities” and assigns ECOSOC a role therein.

The following specialized agencies have concluded relationship agreements with ECOSOC:

- [WHO](#) World Health Organization: based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- [UNESCO](#) United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization: based in Paris, France.
- [WBG](#) World Bank Group: based in Washington, United States of America.
- [IMF](#) International Monetary Fund: based in Washington, D.C, United States of America.
- [ILO](#) International Labour Organization: based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- [FAO](#) Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations: based
- [ICAO](#) International Civil Aviation Organization: based in Montreal, Canada.

- [IFAD](#) International Fund for Agricultural Development: based in Rome, Italy.
- [IMO](#) International Maritime Organization: based in London, United Kingdom.
- [ITU](#) (International Telecommunication Union), based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- [UNIDO](#) (United Nations Industrial Development Organization), based in Vienna, Austria.
- [UNWTO](#) (World Tourism Organization), based in Madrid, Spain.
- [UPU](#) (Universal Postal Union), based in Bern, Switzerland.
- [WIPO](#) (World Intellectual Property Organization), based in Geneva, Switzerland.
- [WMO](#) (World Meteorological Organization), based in Geneva, Switzerland.

3. ECOSOC Consultative Status

Non-governmental organizations have been actively **engaged** with the United Nations UN since its inception in **1945**. They work with the United Nations Secretariat, programs, funds and agencies in various ways, including in consultation with Member States. From the beginning, ECOSOC has been the main **entry point** into the UN system for NGOs. **ECOSOC** remains the **only** main UN body with a **formal framework** for NGO **participation**. Article 71 of the United Nations Charter, which established the ECOSOC, states the following:

The Economic and Social Council may make suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations which are concerned with matters within its competence. Such arrangements may be made with international organizations and, where appropriate, with national organizations after consultation with the Member of the United Nations concerned.

United Nations Charter, Chapter X, Article 71

This Article opened the door to provide suitable arrangements for consultation with non-governmental organizations. Today, the consultative relationship with ECOSOC is governed by **ECOSOC resolution [1996/31](#)**, which outlines the **eligibility** requirements for consultative status, **rights and obligations** of NGOs, **procedures** for its withdrawal or suspension, the **role** and functions of the ECOSOC **Committee on NGOs**, and the responsibilities of the UN Secretariat in supporting the consultative relationship.

In 1945, 41 NGOs were granted consultative status by the Council; by 1992 more than 700 NGOs had attained consultative status and the number has been steadily increasing ever since with **more than 6,000** organizations today.

The consultative status **benefits** both the United Nations and the NGOs. As stated by resolution 1996/31 on the “Consultative relationship between the United Nations and non-governmental organizations,”

“... Consultative arrangements are to be made, on the one hand, for the purpose of enabling the Council or one of its bodies to secure expert information or advice from organizations having special competence in the subjects for which consultative arrangements are made, and, on the other hand, to enable international, regional, sub-regional and national organizations that represent important elements of public opinion to express their views.”

ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, part II, paragraph 20

While **ECOSOC** has the opportunity to **gain** valuable and expert **advice from NGOs**, the **NGOs** in turn have the opportunity to express their views and **influence** the work of the Council. NGOs have specialized competence, hands-on experience, and flexibility that is of great value to the UN. For instance, by having consultative status, an NGO could:

- **Enter** United Nations premises;
- **Attend** international conferences and events;
- Make written and oral **statements** at these events;
- Organize **side events**; and
- Have opportunities to **network** and **advocate** for their causes.

3.1. Types of Consultative Status

There are three types of consultative status for NGOs:

General status, which is given to NGOs whose area of work covers **most of the fields** of activity covered by ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies. These tend to be fairly large, well-established **international NGOs** with a broad geographical reach.

Special status, which is reserved for NGOs that have a **special competence** in, and are concerned specifically with a **few of the fields** of activity covered by ECOSOC. These NGOs tend to be **smaller** and more recently established.

Roster status, which is conferred on NGOs that have a **more narrow** and/or technical focus and make occasional and useful contributions to the work of ECOSOC or its subsidiary bodies.

Over the last years, in practice, the council has been granting **only** special consultative status to organizations applying. General status has been granted upon request for reclassification only.

3.2. Eligibility Criteria

Consultative status from ECOSOC may be given to international, regional, sub-regional, and national non-governmental, non-profit, public, or voluntary organizations. Main **requirements** to determine eligibility for consultative status with ECOSOC include, among others:

- The work of the NGO must be relevant to the work of ECOSOC;
- It must have a transparent and democratic decision-making mechanism and a democratically adopted constitution;
- It must have an established headquarters with an executive officer;
- It must have been in existence for at least 2 years in order to apply;
- It should have a representative structure;
- It must have appropriate mechanisms for accountability; and
- It must provide to the Committee certificate of registration, bylaws, and financial statements, including contributions and other support, and expenses, direct or indirect.

3.3. Benefits and Obligations of the Consultative Status

The benefits of the consultative status include, but are not limited to:

3.3.1. United Nations grounds pass

Each NGO in consultative status with ECOSOC can designate representatives to obtain either:

- **Annual passes** granting access to UN premises. Each NGO can request up to a maximum of **seven** annual passes for its representatives in New York, seven for Geneva, and seven for Vienna. Out of these 7, two are reserved for the President/Chief Executive Officer and Chief Administrative Officer.
- **Short-term passes** for up to three months are also available for specific events for a maximum of **nine** temporary passes at a time. (This might be different in each UN Office).

3.3.2. Events participation

NGOs that are accredited with ECOSOC can **participate** in a wide range of events, including, but not limited to, the **sessions/meetings** of ECOSOC, its functional commissions, and its other subsidiary bodies. In addition, **other** bodies in the **UN System** have different modalities for NGO participation, but common to many of them is that **only** NGOs holding ECOSOC consultative status are **allowed** to participate in their sessions, like Human Rights Council.

At these events, NGOs may:

Submit written statements:

ECOSOC **needs** and wants expert opinions, ideas, and suggestions from civil society. For this reason, NGOs are often encouraged to **submit** written statements to address subjects under the different areas of work of the Council. Resolution 1996/31 states the following about written statements:

“Written statements relevant to the work of the Council may be submitted by organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status on subjects in which these organizations have a special competence. Such statements shall be circulated by the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the members of the Council ...”

ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, part IV, paragraph 30

Written statements by NGOs with general or special consultative status can also be submitted to ECOSOC commissions and subsidiary bodies, including the functional committees, on subjects in which the NGOs have specialized knowledge. The word count for statements is limited to a maximum of 2,000 for organizations with general consultative status, and 1500 for the ones with Special consultative status:

Make oral statements:

As stated in resolution 1996/31, organizations with general or special consultative status have the option of **presenting** an oral statement to the Council. Presentations can be made directly to the Council or to one of its subsidiary bodies, in addition to many other UN system bodies.

Organize and attend side events

NGOs have the possibility of doing a **parallel event** on the **side of a main event** organized by an ECOSOC functional commission. If approved by the organizers, the **side events** can be organized in the **UN premises** and usually **get listed** on the side events schedule prepared and shared by the organizers.

Examples for events participation:

As mentioned earlier, the consultative status gives the organization **access** to a **wide range** of events to participate in, including the ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies. In the following, you can find some examples of different

UN system bodies and their accessible events for organizations with ECOSOC consultative status:

Commission on the Status of Women: NGOs in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) may submit written statements on the thematic issues considered by CSW. In addition, the organizations may deliver oral statements during the general discussion, and also intervene from the floor during an interactive dialogue.

UN-Women: The Executive Board may invite, when appropriate, NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC to participate in deliberations for questions relating to their activities.

UNHCR: NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status can attend the annual plenary session of the Executive Committee as observers on condition of receiving a standing invitation, and can also participate in the UNHCR Global Consultations. Furthermore, they can submit statements to the UNHCR Executive Committee.

UNICEF: The consultative status allows NGOs and other civil society organizations the opportunity to interact with the UNICEF secretariat as well as the right to present their views to the Executive Board. NGOs are then granted observer status to the Executive Board and can submit statements in accordance with ECOSOC resolution or if asked by the Board.

UNDP: NGOs with consultative status within ECOSOC can participate as observers in UNDP's governing bodies upon invitation from the Executive Board.

UNOPS: The Executive Board may invite when considered appropriate, NGOs in consultative status with ECOSOC to participate in its deliberations for questions that relate to their activities.

UNFPA: Like UNDP and UNOPS, NGOs with consultative status within ECOSOC can participate as observers in UNFPA's governing bodies upon invitation from the Executive Board.

UN-HABITAT: UN-HABITAT's Governing Council provides accreditation upon request to any organization in consultative status with ECOSOC. They may sit as observers in UN-HABITAT's governing bodies, without the right to vote or make proposals. NGOs may make oral statements upon the invitation of the president and with the approval of the Governing Council.

3.3.3. The Human Rights Council “HRC”

The Human Rights Council “HRC” is the principal UN intergovernmental body responsible for **strengthening** the promotion and protection of **human rights**. It is composed of **47 Member States** and meets for at least three sessions each year in Geneva. Its role includes **addressing** violations of human rights, **promoting** respect for human rights for all, and **mainstreaming** human rights within the UN system.

During regular sessions, the Council considers the activities of its subsidiary human rights procedures and mechanisms and may organize panel discussions and special events to enhance dialogue and mutual understanding on specific issues. Outside its normal sessions, the Council may also hold special sessions related to country-specific or thematic issues.

Even though this body is not a subsidiary of ECOSOC, **ONLY** NGOs in consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council **can** be accredited to **participate** in the Human Rights Council's sessions as observers.

As observers, NGOs are able, among other things, to:

- Attend and observe all proceedings of the Council with the exception of the Council deliberations under the Complaints Procedure;
- Submit written statements to the Human Rights Council;
- Make oral interventions to the Human Rights Council;

- Participate in the Universal Periodic Review (UPR) which involves a review of the human rights records of all 192 United Nations Member States once every four years;
- Participate in debates, interactive dialogues, panel discussions, and informal meetings;
- Organize side events on issues relevant to the work of the Human Rights Council.

3.4. Quadrennial reports

In addition to these benefits, the consultative comes with a reporting **obligation**. Once an NGO has obtained consultative status, the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs monitors the contributions made by the NGOs to the work of ECOSOC. A major requirement for NGO status is the **submission** of a **report** to the Committee, through the NGO Branch, every **four years** that includes a brief description of the organization's activities, particularly highlighting their contribution to the work of the United Nations.

Organizations in general consultative status and special consultative status shall submit to the Council Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations through the Secretary-General every fourth year a brief report of their activities, specifically as regards the support they have given to the work of the United Nations.

ECOSOC resolution 1996/31, part IX, paragraph 61(c)

4. The Application Process

To get the consultative status, the process passes through six steps:

1. Profile registration: Creating a profile for the organization;
2. Complete the online application: Submitting the online application which includes a questionnaire and supporting documentation;
3. NGO Branch screening of applications: Initial screening of the application by the NGO Branch to ensure that your application is complete;
4. The Committee on Non-Governmental Organizations Application review: Review of the application by the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs at its regular session in January or at its resumed session in May every year;
5. The Committee recommendation: The Committee recommends consultative status, or defer the application for the next session for more review.
6. ECOSOC Final Decision: Decision taken by ECOSOC on the application in July every year.

Application timeline and deadline

The application is a long process that takes at least one year and might extend to several years. Therefore, if your organization is interested in the consultative status, consider starting the application process at your earliest convenience, and avoid a last-minute application.

The application is open all year round. The **deadline** for the application is the **1st of June** of each year. Therefore, complete applications must be received by June 1st of the year before the NGO wishes to be considered for recommendation by the Committee. **For example**, applications submitted by 1 June 2025 will be taken up by the Committee on NGOs in 2026. Applications received between 2 June 2025 and 1 June 2026 will be taken up in the year 2027.

4.1. Profile registration: Creating a profile for the organization;

- Go to the website of the [NGO Branch of the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs DESA](http://www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo);

The screenshot shows the 'Add organizational Profile' page on the NGO Branch website. The page includes a navigation menu on the left with links to 'About us', 'Contact us', 'ECOSOC Status', 'NGO Participation', and 'Quadrennial Reports'. The main content area contains a title 'Add organizational Profile' and a sub-header 'All Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), including Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Institutions, Foundations and Associations that would like to establish a relationship with the Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA) are invited to add their organizational profile.' Below this, there is a paragraph explaining that registered organizations can share their profile with more than 24,000 CSOs, specify their areas of activities, the scope of their work and their involvement in development issues, including sustainable development, social development and advancement of women. A small image of a building is also present. The page also includes a 'LOGIN' button and a 'Contact NGO Branch' button. The footer contains the URL 'www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo'.

- If you're not sure if your organization already has a profile, [check here](#)

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search' page on the NGO Branch website. The page includes a navigation menu on the left with links to 'About us', 'Contact us', 'ECOSOC Status', 'NGO Participation', and 'Quadrennial Reports'. The main content area contains a title 'Advanced search for Civil Society Organizations' and a sub-header 'Please use any of the search combinations below to find organizations in our database. You can also expand the headings "Areas of Expertise & Fields of activity", "Meeting participation" and "Additional search options" for more combinations.' Below this, there is a paragraph explaining that if you select the search type "All of the criteria above" at the bottom of the page, only organizations that match all of the selected combinations will be displayed. For the search type "Any of the criteria above", all organizations that match one or more of the selected combinations will be listed. The page also includes a 'LOGIN' button and a 'Contact NGO Branch' button. The footer contains the URL 'www.un.org/ecosoc/ngo'.

- c. If you don't have a profile, [create one](#). Fill in the new profile form carefully. All items marked with a red asterisk (*) must be filled in. Under “Main objective and login details”, select “Applying for consultative status” as “Main objective”

- d. Once you have completed this step, the NGO branch will review the request. Once your profile has been approved by the NGO Branch, you will be notified and will receive your login information to the website. Please note that the approval of a profile takes a few days.
- e. After receiving the approval, you may continue to submit an online application for consultative status with ECOSOC.

IMPORTANT

Please make sure that:

- The organization's name matches the one in the certificate of registration provided;
- If the organization is registered in different countries, choose one and apply

for, and then clarify the relationships between the different organizations in the application; and

- The e-mail address you provide is working and one that you check often since it will be used for all future communication regarding your application.

4.2. Complete the online application

Once you have been notified that your profile registration was accepted, your organization has to fill out the online application form that comprises 22 questions. The online application form can only be accepted in the two UN Secretariat working languages: English and French. All required documents should be submitted in their original language and translated into either of the two above languages if applicable.


I. You start a new consultative status application

Profile

Consultative Status

Documents

Correspondence



Welcome to the homepage of your organization!

You can now update your organizational **profile**, manage your **consultative status** with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC), and **upload documents**.

Please keep your **profile** up-to-date. It will facilitate our communication with your organization and ensure that you will be informed about events that are in the area of your expertise. It will also assist other CSOs to share their knowledge with you.

If your organization is in consultative status with ECOSOC, you can check your **current status**, submit your **quadrennial report** or apply for a **re-classification**. If your organization has not yet applied for consultative status, please follow the instructions by clicking on the "Consultative Status" tab.

If your organization is accredited with a UN entity which permits it, you can also designate representatives to international conferences convened by the United Nations.

In addition, please add as well all **documentation** that your organization would like to share with DESA. Especially, please upload all required supporting documents for an application for consultative status.

Clicking on the "Meeting Participation" tab, your organization can pre-register to United Nations Conferences and review all meetings where your organization has pre-registered and participated.

You can change your username and password in **My account** and come back to your homepage by clicking on "Home" on the left menu.


II. You answer the 22 questions of the application. For your reference, you can find the questionnaire with notes and recommendations about how to answer them on this [link](#), in case you prefer to prepare all your answers and upload them once.

The application is divided into three main sections:

- General: deals with the general information about the organization, its mandate, previous and ongoing work, and then its aims from the

consultative status; what would this partnership bring to the table for the ECOSOC too.

- The Registration and Structure: deals mostly with bureaucratic questions related to the governance of the organization, its leadership, structure, and relations with other entities, including the government.
- The Income and Expenditure: deals with the financial status of the organization.

Documents New document

If the organization is applying for consultative status with ECOSOC, the following documents are mandatory: **Certificate of Registration**, **Constitution/Charter/Statutes/By-laws**, and **Financial Statements**.

These documents must be translated into English or French if submitted in another language.

Certificate of registration

- The document(s) presented as proof of existence of the organization must be issued by a governmental authority and must attest that the organization has been in existence for more than two years at the time the application is received by the NGO Branch.
- If the country where the NGO operates does not require registration, please upload any other government-issued proof of existence (ex.: tax exemption certificate)
- Such document(s) must be submitted both in the original language and in its English or French translation.
- Please ensure that the document(s) uploaded match the information provided in your answers to Question 8, 9 and 10 of the application.

Constitution/Charter/Statutes/By-laws

- Please note that the document(s) provided must indicate the operational rules of the organization, its decision-making structure, and functions and responsibilities of its authorities (including the way they are elected).

III. Under the section “Documents”, upload the following requested documents:

- Copy of constitution/charter and/or statutes/by-laws and amendments to those documents (pursuant to paragraph 10 of ECOSOC resolution 1996/31).
- Copy of certificate of registration. According to resolution 1996/31 an organization “should attest that it has been in existence for at least two years as of the date of receipt of the application by the Secretariat”. Please provide a copy of the registration paper or, if your country does not require registration, please provide other proof of existence.
- Copy of most recent financial statements.

All required documents submitted must also be translated into English or French


In case you had any questions while preparing the application, you can contact the DESA NGO branch team through the correspondence tab in the application:

Profile

Consultative Status

Documents

Correspondence



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You can change your username and password in **My account** and come back to your homepage by clicking on "Home" on the left menu.

IMPORTANT:

Please check the following videos prepared by the DESA NGO branch to explain about the application. They can be really helpful in understanding it and answering the questions properly.

[Webinar on applying for ECOSOC consultative status – 3 May 2022](#)

[Webinar on Applying for ECOSOC consultative status - 5 May 2021](#)

[Webinar on Applying for ECOSOC consultative status - 3 May 2019](#)

[Webinar on Applying for ECOSOC consultative status - 2 May 2018](#)

[Webinar on Applying for ECOSOC consultative status - 5 May 2017](#)

4.3. NGO Branch screening of applications:

- The period between 2 June and the date the Committee meets is dedicated to an internal review process of all applications received. During this time, the NGO Branch may contact organizations to request further information or clarifications.
- Once the review is completed, the application is scheduled to be sent to the NGO Committee. The applicant is notified accordingly before the corresponding session begins.
- When an application becomes part of the agenda of the NGO Committee a letter is sent to the NGO informing them of the upcoming session and inviting them to send no more than two representatives to be present during the session. The presence of NGO representatives is not mandatory nor implies any advantages, they simply have the right to be present when their applications will be considered and are responsible for all costs involved.

4.4. Application review by the Committee on NGOs

The Committee on NGOs is a subsidiary body of ECOSOC, comprised of 19 Member States. The Committee meets twice a year to decide which NGOs applying for consultative status it will recommend to ECOSOC. During its Session, the Committee may ask additional questions to the NGO. Such questions are sent by the NGO Branch. To help the Committee make its decision and avoid getting deferred to future sessions, questions should be replied to as soon as possible.

4.5. The Committee makes a recommendation

The Committee may recommend consultative status, or decide to defer an application for review until the next session while awaiting clarification or answers. Therefore, it is extremely important for NGOs to respond to

questions and requests for clarification promptly when requested to do so. It is also very important to keep all contact information up-to-date in the NGO profile, especially the headquarters' e-mail address since this is the only way for the NGO to be notified of the questions posed.

4.6. ECOSOC Final Decision

ECOSOC is responsible for making the final decision, which is the last step in the application process. The recommendations of the Committee on NGOs from its regular and resumed sessions are considered by the Council during its July Coordination and Management meetings. It is only after the decision is made by ECOSOC that the NGO is granted consultative status and a letter is then sent to the NGO. When the Council finally approves the Committee recommendation to grant consultative status to an NGO, official notification is sent by the Secretariat.

5. Challenges and Way Forward

Long process: The process might take up to two years, even if no question was raised by the Committee on NGOs. Let's assume you submitted your application on 5 June 2024, the earliest date for you to get the status is June 2026.

Politicized process: The NGO committee on NGO is formed of 19 member states. During the review process, their representatives discuss the profiles of the NGOs and some try to block NGOs from getting consultative status through unfair tactics, as described by a report of the International Service of Human Rights "ISHR". [According to ISHR](#), during the first session of 2024, the Committee examined 508 applications for consultative status with ECOSOC. 214 of these NGOs were new applicants and 294 had been deferred from previous years. Only 25.98% of the total NGOs under consideration were granted consultative status (132 in total). This is a significant drop from an already low accreditation rate of 38% and 33% in the regular and resumed sessions respectively of 2023.

“While the Committee continued its strongly criticized practices of denying NGOs accreditation through politically motivated tactics this session like using arbitrary questions, applicant NGOs, certain Committee members, and UN heads, unanimously called for systemic and urgent reform of the Committee”

ISHR February 2024

What you can do till you get the ECOSOC accreditation?

Although having ECOSOC accreditation is important, but it is **NOT** the only way to engage with the UN mechanisms. You **don't** have to **wait** for two years to start your organization's engagement with the UN mechanisms. You can:

Work around the requirement by **collaborating** with a **partner** organization that has ECOSOC consultative status, there are over 6,000 organizations that have the status. You can sort and review all NGOs with ECOSOC consultative status in the [online database](#).

The ECOSOC accreditation is not the only system within the UN system. There are **several** unique systems for the **accreditation** of NGOs, frequently adapted to serve the specific needs of the entity in question and mostly reserved for NGOs working in a specific related field. Other United Nations entities and programs with their own systems for accreditation of NGOs include WHO, UNESCO, IOM, FAO, ILO, UNEP, UNCTAD, IMO, and WMO. You can start from here if one of these organizations is among your target audience for engagement and advocacy!

Furthermore, many UN mechanisms do not require any status, or physical presence in the UN premises. For example, you can engage with many Human rights mechanisms like the Universal Periodic Review (UPR), Special Procedures (SPs), and Treaty Bodies (TBs) by submitting information and lobbying States from home.

6. Additional Resources:

- [ECOSOC Website](#)
- [ECOSOC Resolution 1996/31](#)
- [An Annual Guide for those working with and within the United Nations 2023, 2024](#)
- [Working with ECOSOC: an NGOs Guide to Consultative Status](#)
- [Basic Facts about the United Nations, 42nd Edition](#)
- [ECOSOC at a glance 2024](#)
- [ECOSOC System Chart](#)
- [The ECOSOC Handbook A practical guide to the United Nations Economic and Social Council](#)
- [UN System Chart](#)
- [RELATIONS WITH NON-GOVERNMENTAL PARTNERS STUDY ON MECHANISMS AND PRACTICES FOR INTERACTION WITH NGOS IN THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM AND SIMILAR ORGANIZATIONS](#)

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