

2012 GUIDELINES ON THE ACCREDITATION OF CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS

Adopted on 5 November 2012

A. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS)	2
B. OBJECTIVES OF ACCREDITATION	2
C. APPLICATIONS FOR CSO ACCREDITATION	2
D. PRIVILEGES OF ASEAN-ACCREDITED CSOS	3
E. OBLIGATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION	4
F. REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION	4
G. SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION	4
H. APPROVAL OF AND AMENDMENTS TO THE GUIDELINES	5

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1. As stipulated in Article 16 of the ASEAN Charter, ASEAN may engage with entities which support the ASEAN Charter, in particular the purposes and principles of ASEAN contained therein. The following is the Guidelines on ASEAN's relations with Civil Society Organisations (CSOs).

A. CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANISATIONS (CSOS)

2. A civil society organisation (hereinafter referred to as "CSO") is a non-profit organisation of ASEAN entities, natural or juridical, that promotes, strengthens and helps realise the aims and objectives of the ASEAN Community and its three Pillars – the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community.

B. OBJECTIVES OF ACCREDITATION

3. CSOs are encouraged to seek accreditation with ASEAN. The main objectives of accreditation are:
 - a. To draw the CSOs into the mainstream of ASEAN activities so that they are kept informed of major policies, directives and decisions of ASEAN and are given the opportunity and the privilege of participating in ASEAN activities;
 - b. To ensure interaction and fruitful relationships between the existing ASEAN bodies and the CSOs; and
 - c. To help promote the development of a people-oriented ASEAN Community.

C. APPLICATIONS FOR CSO ACCREDITATION

4. Applications for CSO accreditation shall be submitted to the Secretary- General of ASEAN, who will consider the applications using, among others, the following criteria:
 - a. As a general rule, only a CSO whose membership is confined to ASEAN nationals may be considered for accreditation with ASEAN;
 - b. Approval of application for accreditation of a CSO with ASEAN shall be based primarily upon the assessment of the positive contribution which such a CSO could make to the enhancement, strengthening and realisation of the aims and objectives of ASEAN.
 - c. The objectives of the CSO's activities should be consistent with the aims and objectives of ASEAN towards achieving community building that is in line with one or more of the three pillars of the ASEAN Community – the ASEAN Political-Security Community, the ASEAN Economic Community and the ASEAN Socio-Cultural Community;

- d. A CSO whose membership comes from a relatively even spread of the ASEAN Member States may be allowed accreditation, provided that ASEAN is satisfied that the CSO merits accreditation and the non-participating Member States have given their consent to the CSO and provided further that membership shall remain open for other Member States.
5. Applications for CSO accreditation shall include, at a minimum, information regarding the nature and purpose of the application of the CSO, its constitution and by-laws, a copy of its registration papers, its membership, completed financial statement, background on its key officials, its function, activities, and projects, and its sectoral body.
6. If the Secretary-General of ASEAN considers the application to be in conformity with the Guidelines, it shall be referred to the appropriate sectoral body, which will recommend to the Committee of Permanent Representatives to ASEAN (CPR) for its consideration and approval. When an appropriate sectoral body cannot be identified, the Secretary-General shall consider the application and make recommendations to the CPR for its consideration and approval.

D. PRIVILEGES OF ASEAN-ACCREDITED CSOS

7. An accredited CSO shall enjoy the following privileges:
 - a. It may use the name “ASEAN”, display the official ASEAN flag and emblem, and play the ASEAN Anthem consistent with prevailing ASEAN Guidelines;
 - b. It may submit written statements or recommendations and views on policy matters or on significant events or regional or international concerns, to the sectoral body through the ASEAN Secretariat;
 - c. It may submit its own project proposals for Third Party funding to be channeled through the ASEAN Secretariat, which will refer the matter to the relevant sectoral body for consideration and subsequent approval by the CPR;
 - d. It may initiate programmes of activities for presentation to its sectoral body for appropriate action;
 - e. At the discretion of the Chairman of the sectoral body, it may, through its representative, attend meetings of the sectoral body for consultation on matters and issues of direct concern to the CSO;
 - f. For purposes of doing research for its projects, it may be allowed access to the ASEAN documents on a selective basis in consultation with the ASEAN Secretariat and/or its sectoral body;
 - g. Subject to rules and regulations, it may be allowed the use of the facilities of the ASEAN Secretariat for its official meetings and other official activities in Jakarta;
 - h. It shall be encouraged to be self-reliant in terms of its material requirements; and
 - i. It shall be provided with key ASEAN publications by the ASEAN Secretariat every year.

E. OBLIGATIONS FOR ACCREDITATION

8. An accredited CSO shall be required to comply with the following:
 - a. It shall undertake in writing to abide by the policies, guidelines, directives, and other decisions of ASEAN;
 - b. It shall undertake to advance ASEAN interests and promote the awareness of ASEAN's principles and activities;
 - c. It shall be held responsible for its actions, especially those found detrimental to ASEAN as a whole;
 - d. It shall invite participation of officials of ASEAN Member States at its meetings and activities;
 - e. It shall submit, annually, a written summary of its activities and completed financial statement to the CPR through the ASEAN Secretariat;
 - f. It shall inform the ASEAN Secretariat of changes in its officials and memberships, as well as changes of address; and
 - g. It shall respect and comply with the prevailing national laws and regulations of the concerned ASEAN Member State where its activities/programmes take place.
9. CSOs shall endeavour to establish a working link with an ASEAN sectoral body through the ASEAN Secretariat.

F. REVIEW OF ACCREDITATION

10. The CPR, with the support of the ASEAN Secretariat, shall monitor and review the activities of accredited CSOs and their relations with ASEAN every three years. The CPR may take appropriate measures to deal with CSOs that have not acted in accordance with the provisions set forth in paragraph 11. The updated list of accredited CSOs shall then be published on the official website of ASEAN.

G. SUSPENSION AND REVOCATION OF ACCREDITATION

11. The accreditation of a CSO may be suspended or revoked for the following reasons:
 - a. It fails to meet its obligations as specified in paragraph 8;
 - b. It is inactive, defunct or fails to submit an annual summary of their activities, as required under paragraph 8e for three years in succession;
 - c. It is found to have committed gross misconduct which brings disrepute to ASEAN;
 - d. It acts contrary to the aims, objectives and fundamental principles of ASEAN; and
 - e. It engages in acts inimical to ASEAN or any of the ASEAN Member States.

12. The CPR shall, within a month, review the accreditation of a CSO after a complaint has been lodged by an ASEAN sectoral body or an ASEAN Member State to the Chair of the CPR. Pending the outcome of the review, the accreditation of such a CSO shall be suspended.
13. A CSO whose accreditation has been revoked under paragraph 11 may appeal to the CPR for a consideration of the revocation. Upon appeal, the decision of the CPR shall be final and binding.
14. A CSO whose accreditation is suspended or revoked shall be denied exercise of the privileges provided under paragraph 7.

H. APPROVAL OF AND AMENDMENTS TO THE GUIDELINES

15. The Guidelines shall be approved by the CPR.
16. Any Member State may propose amendments to the Guidelines, which shall be submitted to the CPR for its consideration and agreed upon by consensus. Such amendments shall come into immediate effect.

Notes

1. The original Guidelines were adopted at the 5th Meeting of the 19th ASEAN Standing Committee (ASC), Manila, 16-18 June 1986.
2. The 2nd Meeting of the 39th ASC, Jakarta, 18-19 January 2006, revised the original Guidelines. The revised version was adopted on 3 April 2006.
3. The current version was adopted by the 19/2012 CPR Meeting on 5/11/12 and noted by the 11th ACC Meeting on 17/11/12.