



AGNA Membership Policy

Who is AGNA?

[Affinity Group of National Associations \(AGNA\)](#) was created by CIVICUS to recognise the unique role of national associations of organisations in providing a collective voice for civil society. It was officially launched at the CIVICUS World Assembly in Gaborone, Botswana in March 2004.

National associations serve as key connectors to government and businesses, and help to create a strong enabling environment for civil society organisations, democracy, and the rights of citizen action and participation. They also provide a range of services to civil society organisations to help them be more effective, identify the financial and human resources they need to carry out their work, and promote their capacity to work together.

AGNA takes forward the mission and vision of CIVICUS: to strengthen citizen action and civil society throughout the world so that there is a worldwide community of informed, inspired, committed citizens engaged in confronting the challenges facing humanity. Its work is guided by the [same principles and values as CIVICUS](#).

What are AGNA's objectives?

AGNA brings together national associations and regional platforms from around the world to foster greater cooperation across national and regional boundaries, increase their ability to collaborate on areas of mutual interest, and respond to the unique needs and challenges they face.

It aims to:

- Address the need for an international citizens' coalition;
- Reverse the current understanding of capacity-building characterized by a north-to-south flow of knowledge, information and experience sharing;
- Provide a support system for network leaders; and
- Reduce the 're-invention of the wheel' and improvisation of civil society leadership.

You can find AGNA's current Strategic Objectives [here](#).

What are the benefits of AGNA membership?

- Join a global community of civil society networks and leaders engaged in defending civic space and improving the enabling environment for civil society
- Connect, build solidarity and take collective action with fellow national and regional networks in 90+ countries
- Gain access to financial, technical and human resources to enhance the resilience of your network
- Drive the change in local and global conversations around civil society resourcing, civil society accountability, and enabling environment topics
- Increase the visibility of your network and members through AGNA's global convenings, campaigns, and initiatives
- Stay up-to-date on all the CIVICUS membership and programme engagement opportunities through the AGNA coordination team

How does AGNA fit within the CIVICUS Alliance?

CIVICUS hosts and coordinates AGNA, which is a network of CIVICUS members who are national associations and regional platforms. While it is guided by an elected group of AGNA members on its Steering Committee, AGNA functions within the overall governance system of CIVICUS. Similarly, its strategic plan and priorities directly contribute to advancing CIVICUS' overall strategies and goals.

Who should join AGNA?

AGNA membership is open to CIVICUS voting organisational members. AGNA core membership is open to any national association or platform of civil society organisations, while its affiliate membership is open to regional platforms and thematically-focused networks.

	AGNA core membership	AGNA affiliate membership
CIVICUS voting organisation	national associations; national umbrella civil society networks - limited to 1 per country	regional platforms; thematic networks; national networks and/or platforms where a AGNA core member already exists
CIVICUS associate organisation	Not eligible	Not eligible

National associations are country-based membership networks whose purpose is to represent the collective interests of members and the not-for-profit community more generally in that country. They play a critical part in bringing the sector together. They serve as vehicles for a constructive and coordinated voice for civil society. They are well placed to play the role of interlocutor between governments and civil society, and are in a position of strength to influence public policy.

Membership Criteria

- Be a **voting organization CIVICUS member**: you can register [here](#)
- Be a member-based civil society network, either at national, sub-regional, or regional level
- Committed to achieving AGNA's objectives

In exceptional cases, membership can be granted to civil society organisations that are not member-based networks. Organisations with technical expertise and/or strategic alignment with the potential to benefit the AGNA network are able to join as AGNA affiliate members.

The steering committee is responsible for reviewing these cases. If approved, the coordination team will announce the new member via the AGNA monthly newsletter.

Applicants need to be CIVICUS voting member and commit to achieving AGNA's objectives in order to be considered.

Membership Categories

Independent from CIVICUS' membership categories, AGNA has 2 membership categories:

- **Core membership**: For national associations, restricted to one member per country.
- **Affiliate membership**: For regional platforms, thematic networks, and other members where there is already a full member in the country.

Both membership contribute to achieving AGNA's strategic priorities, and participate in AGNA workstreams, activities, and meetings. There is no preferential treatment or selection of core members over affiliate members in AGNA's work. Core members lead in the strategic direction of the AGNA network, vote for nominees, serve on the Steering Committee, and vote on governance issues at the Annual General Meeting.

How to join?

Step 1: Register as a CIVICUS voting organisation member [here](#)

Step 2: Write to the AGNA team (agna@civicus.org) indicating interest to join

Step 3: AGNA team will send an application form to complete

Step 4: Verification by the AGNA team that applicant fulfils AGNA's membership criteria; the AGNA team will then send a membership confirmation email or explanation of nonmembership

Step 5: AGNA team will announce new member via the AGNA monthly newsletter

All applicants are required to:

1. Fully meet the eligibility requirements for CIVICUS membership.
2. Complete the CIVICUS [membership application form](#), which includes:
 - a. indication of compliance with CIVICUS' mission, vision and values
 - b. indication of compliance with CIVICUS member code of conduct
 - c. indication of consent to abide by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights
 - d. indication of consent or denial to receive notices by electronic mail, and to share contacts within the CIVICUS network.

It is the responsibility of the Member to notify AGNA at agna@civicus.org if the designated representative, their contact information, or their indication of consent to receive notices by electronic mail changes at any time.

Verification of Core Membership

The AGNA team will verify with the Member during the application process that it is a national association of civil society organisations in a specific country.

Multiple networks in one country

It is the responsibility of the applicant to notify the AGNA team if there are other national association or networks of civil society organisations in the country. If there are other national associations or networks in the country, it is the responsibility of the applicant to notify their counterpart(s) regarding their membership with AGNA.

In the event that another national network approaches AGNA, indicating their interest to join the network, the AGNA team will notify the current full member. It is the responsibility of the involved networks to decide between themselves who will be the core member, and who will be the affiliate member(s).

Renewal

AGNA membership does not expire, and follows the renewal process for CIVICUS voting members. CIVICUS voting members who have met their membership responsibilities will have the option of automatic renewal, based on the payment of their membership fees. Alternatively, they will be required to undergo the assessment process again.

Termination

Membership will terminate in the following situations:

- *Resignation:* Membership is terminated upon receipt of a written notice of resignation addressed to the AGNA Team.
- *Dissolution or death:* Membership is terminated on the dissolution of a member organisation or death of an individual member.
- *Expulsion:* Membership is terminated when evidence is brought that a member has not abided by CIVICUS' principles or code of conduct, or do not fulfil the membership criteria outlined in the membership policy. In such a case, a written notice will be prepared by the AGNA Team setting forth the reasons and proofs for the termination. The written notice will be sent to the concerned member, whom will have 5 days to respond in writing. All documentation will then be sent to the Chair and co-Chair of the Steering Committee, who will prepare a recommendation for the Steering Committee.
 - A special resolution on termination needs to be endorsed by a majority vote of Steering committee, either by email or during an online/physical meeting.

Annex I - What Role does the Steering Committee Play?

AGNA is advised by a steering committee constituted by members of the network. These members are elected into office for a period of three years by the AGNA general membership during the annual general meeting or through a virtual election process. Each year, there is a nomination call to all members for three seats. The nominees are then elected by members with full membership to serve for a three-year term.

The responsibilities of the steering committee include:

- Advising on AGNA's strategic direction and the implementation of AGNA's work plan
- Assisting the coordination team to plan the Annual General Meeting
- Doing outreach and engagement with potential members for the network
- Facilitating and encouraging the flow of communication between all AGNA members
- Keeping up to date on current issues and trends emerging in their region
- Ensure the network is transparent and inclusive
- Supporting CIVICUS with resource mobilization to assist with the sustainability of AGNA

To read more about the steering committee's role, refer to the Terms of Reference [here](#).

Who are current AGNA steering committee members?

The AGNA steering committee is composed of nine elected individuals from:

- Asia: 2 representatives
- Africa: 2 representatives
- Latin America and The Caribbean: 2 representatives
- The Pacific: 1 representative
- Europe: 1 representative
- Middle East and North of Africa (MENA): 1 representative

Annex II – How is AGNA accountable?

CIVICUS is committed to empowering civil society to become more accountable, effective, inclusive and innovative agents of change through its membership.

Code of Conduct for CIVICUS Members

In order to function most effectively as a global alliance, to keep CIVICUS' positions and messages consistent and effective and to protect individuals and organisations from harassment and reprisals, the members of CIVICUS must agree to adhering to and respecting the following conditions:

- CIVICUS members will always conduct themselves in an ethical, responsible and respectable manner in all circumstances, and not engage in or write offensive actions/material on behalf of the alliance, as in alignment with CIVICUS' vision, principles and values.
- CIVICUS members do not represent CIVICUS: World Alliance for Citizen Participation. Members will not act as official representatives, nor speak on behalf of and/or in the name of parts of or the whole alliance, unless otherwise stipulated in writing by the Board or the Secretariat.
 - In line with CIVICUS policy, AGNA members will not act as official representatives, nor speak on behalf of and/or in the name of the AGNA network. AGNA members can use the AGNA name and logo in any of their communications to indicate their membership and share information about AGNA's strategic priorities and activities.

Complaint and Feedback Mechanism

As a member of Accountable Now, CIVICUS takes its commitment to transparency, accountability, and continuous learning and improvement very seriously. We count on our members, constituents and partners to reach out to us when they have questions or concerns. As a member-based organisation, it is essential that members hold CIVICUS to account.

Note that any complaint will be taken seriously and investigated following a feedback mechanism launched in 2018. You can read the full Feedback Response Policy and access our feedback form [here](#).