

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Please also refer to the [Information Note for Participants](#).

Major Group Accreditation, Pre-Registration, and Participation in Rio+20

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Q1: What are the major groups?

At the first Earth Summit in 1992 (the UN Conference on Environment and Development, or UNCED), it was recognized that sustainable development could not be achieved by governments alone. It would require the active participation of all sectors of society and all types of people – consumers, workers, business persons, farmers, students, teachers, researchers, activists, indigenous communities, and other communities of interest. The "Major Groups", which were identified in Agenda 21 are: women, children and youth, indigenous peoples, non-governmental organizations, local authorities, workers and trade unions, business and industry, the scientific and technological community, and farmers. These groups have participated in meetings of the [UN Commission on Sustainable Development \(CSD\)](#), and in related sustainable development processes such as the [World Summit on Sustainable Development](#).

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Q2: My organization would like to participate in Rio+20, both in official preparatory events as well as in the actual Conference. Is my organization eligible to participate?

In accordance with UN General Assembly decision 66/544 “Arrangements for accreditation and participation in the preparatory process and in the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development of relevant non-governmental organizations and other major groups”, Major Groups that are currently in consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) as non-governmental organizations (including those on the roster through the list of the Commission on Sustainable Development), as well as those that were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, can participate in the Rio +20 Conference and its preparatory process. **Please note that pre-registration for participation is required** (see question 7 for details on registration).

Those non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and other Major Groups currently not in consultative status with ECOSOC, but wishing to attend and contribute to the Conference, may apply to the Rio+20 Secretariat for that purpose for final decision by the General Assembly (see question 8 for details on applying for accreditation).

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Q3: How can my organization participate in the Preparatory Meetings leading up to Rio+20? The following Rio+20 formal preparatory events have been scheduled:

- 3rd Intersessional Meeting of UNCED (26 - 27 March 2012)
- 3rd Meeting of the UNCED Preparatory Committee (13 -15 June 2012).

The Rio+20 Secretariat will pre-register Major Groups and other stakeholders through the [CSO Net](#) online events registration system starting 1 March. Please check the [official Rio+20 website](#) for details.

Please note that registration for the 3rd Meeting of the UNCED Preparatory Committee (to be held in Rio de Janeiro from 13 to 15 June 2012) is automatic upon registration for Rio+20, and is open [online here](#) **until 20 May 2012**.

The following Rio+20 informal preparatory events have been scheduled:

- Initial discussions on the zero draft of the UNCSD outcome document (January 25-27 2012)
- First round of ‘informal-informal’ negotiations on the zero draft of the UNCSD outcome document (19-23 March 2012)

Modalities for participation Major Groups and other stakeholders in these preparatory meetings will be decided by the UNCSD Bureau. Please check the [official Rio+20 website](#) for updates and details.

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Q4: What is ECOSOC consultative status?

Consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is granted to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) upon recommendation of the ECOSOC Committee on NGOs, which is comprised of 19 UN Member States. After meeting certain criteria and demonstrating that their work is relevant to the aims and purposes of the UN, those NGOs acquire consultative status with ECOSOC, which entitles them to send representatives to attend intergovernmental meetings convened by ECOSOC and its subsidiary bodies, such as the Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD). ECOSOC consultative status is also required for participating in meetings of the Rio+20 Preparatory Committee and Intersessional meetings of the CSD. The list of organizations currently in consultation with ECOSOC can be found [online here](#).

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Q5: What is the CSD Roster?

In 1992, under an ad hoc arrangement established for the 1,378 NGOs that were accredited to the UNCED conference in Rio de Janeiro (known as the Earth Summit), a list of 539 organizations not holding ECOSOC consultative status was drawn up for placement on the CSD Roster, to enable them to attend meetings and participate subsequently in the work of the UN Commission on Sustainable Development (CSD) without necessarily obtaining full ECOSOC consultative status (ECOSOC decision 1993/220).

By ECOSOC decision 1996/302 (26 July 1996), it was decided that those 539 NGOs (without ECOSOC consultative status, but placed on the CSD Roster for the purpose of the work of the CSD) would be accorded expedited consideration to obtain ECOSOC consultative status at the Roster Level, only upon completion of a simple request form submitted to the Committee on NGOs, if they wished to expand their participation in the work of the Council.

In 2001, the Committee on NGOs amended the 1996 provision by ECOSOC decision 2001/295 which stipulated that organizations wishing to establish a relationship with ECOSOC would have to go through the same application process as all other organizations requesting consultative status, with the sole provision that the Committee on NGOs would still undertake consideration of those applications as expeditiously as possible. No new organizations have been added to the CSD Roster since its creation.

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Q6: I am not sure if my organization is accredited. What should I do?

If you are unsure of your organization's accreditation status, you can search for your organization's name within the online database of NGOs holding consultative status with ECOSOC (a consolidated list is also available [online here](#)). If your organization is in

consultation with ECOSOC, it will be listed. If your organization is on the CSD Roster, it will be listed [online here](#). If your organization was accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development, it will be listed [online here](#).

If your organization is not found on any of those three lists, but you believe it is accredited, please contact the NGO Branch directly. The NGO Branch maintains current records of accredited organizations, including those that have recently been granted consultative status but are not yet included in the lists available online. You can contact the NGO Branch [online here](#), or by e-mail at: ngobranch@un.org.

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Q7: What about the NGOs that were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development?

In 2002, 737 organizations were accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa (list available [online here](#)). WSSD accreditation was granted on a temporary basis, however the UN General Assembly decision 66/544 invited WSSD-accredited NGOs to participate in the Rio+20 process, and they are thereby invited to pre-register for the Conference [online here](#) by 20 May 2012.

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Q8: How do I register for the Rio+20 Conference?

Pre-registration for accredited NGOs and other Major Groups organizations is now open [online here](#) until the deadline of 20 May 2012. No more registration will be accepted after that date.

NGOs and other Major Groups currently NOT in consultative status wishing to participate in the UNCSO (Rio+20) and meetings of its Preparatory Committee are offered a one-time opportunity to become accredited, in accordance with General Assembly decision 66/544. Such ad hoc accreditation is open until 20 February 2012. More information is available [online here](#).

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Q9: How do I apply for consultative status with the Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC)?

Information on applying for consultative status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) is available [online here](#). You can also contact the UNDESA NGO Branch [online here](#), or by e-mail at: ngobranch@un.org.

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Q10: What if I do not belong to an organization? Can individuals participate?

Unless you are affiliated with an accredited NGO (non-governmental organization) or IGO (inter-governmental organization), or you are part of a national government delegation, UN rules do not allow an individual to participate in official meetings in one's own personal capacity.

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Q11: How can experts from the academic world participate?

The Rio+20 process adheres to the structure of Major Groups that was outlined in Agenda 21. Experts from the fields of science, technology and education must be affiliated with an accredited organization. You may query the database of accredited organizations [online here](#). You may also wish to contact the Major Groups [organizing partners](#) for the Scientific and Technological Community or the Non-governmental Organizations sector.

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Q12: I am the mayor of a city. Can I participate?

The Rio+20 process adheres to the structure of Major Groups that was outlined in Agenda 21. UN accreditation for local authorities, such as mayors, municipal leaders and other authorities at the sub-national level, must be members of accredited organizations (for example, collective unions such as ICLEI-Local Governments for Sustainability or United Cities and Local Governments, the two organizing partner organizations for the Local Authorities sector) in order to pre-register online for the Conference and its preparatory meetings. You may query the database of accredited organizations [online here](#), but you would be advised to contact the Major Groups [organizing partners](#) for the Local Authorities sector.

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Q13: I represent a private company. Can I participate?

The Rio+20 process adheres to the structure of Major Groups that was outlined in Agenda 21. Private sector entities must be members of accredited organizations (for example, International Chamber of Commerce or World Business Council on Sustainable Development both members of the temporary coalition of business and industry under the Business Action for Sustainable Development) to pre-register online for the Conference and its preparatory meetings. You may query the database of accredited organizations [online here](#), but you would be advised to contact the Major Groups [organizing partners](#) for the Business and Industry sector for more information.

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Q14: How can journalists and other media representatives participate?

Media representatives intending to cover the Rio+20 process and its related preparatory meetings should contact the [UN Media Accreditation and Liaison Unit](#) for guidance:

Department of Public Information
Media Accreditation & Liaison Unit
United Nations Headquarters, Room L-248
New York, NY 10017
Telephone: +1 (212) 963-6934 or +1 (212) 963-6937
Fax: +1 (212) 963-4642
Email: malu@un.org

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Q15: My organization is accredited. What do I need to do now?

If you are planning to attend the Rio+20 Conference and its related preparatory meetings, you must be pre-registered [online](#) by 20 May 2012 through an accredited organization in order to check in at the Conference and receive a grounds pass. Only holders of an official Conference grounds pass will be able to participate in any official proceedings and side events on the premises.

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Q16: My organization holds consultative status with ECOSOC, but we have not received an invitation letter to participate in Rio+20 and its related preparatory meetings. Do we need one?

If your organization is in consultation with ECOSOC, listed on the CSD Roster or holds previous accreditation to the WSSD, you may [pre-register online](#) immediately to automatically generate your letter of confirmation. The deadline for pre-registration is 20 May 2012.

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Q17: My organization is a WSSD accredited organization, but we have not received an invitation letter to participate in Rio+20 and its related preparatory meetings. Do we need one?

Organizations temporarily accredited to the World Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) are also automatically eligible to participate in the Rio+20 process. You may [pre-register online](#) immediately to automatically generate your letter of confirmation. The deadline for pre-registration is 20 May 2012.

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Q18: Is there any funding available to support my organization's participation in the Rio+20 process?

Funding for Major Groups participants is extremely limited. In the event that funding becomes available, participants are selected with due consideration for representation from developing countries, particularly least developed countries, and in full consultation with the official Major Groups organising partners. In all other cases, your organization is responsible for arranging your accommodations and travel, including within metropolitan Rio de Janeiro.

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Q19: How many representatives are allowed to register?

The UN encourages broad participation and representation from Major Groups in the Rio+20 process. Presently, there is no policy to limit to the number of representatives each accredited organization can register. However, should there be concerns regarding the safety and security of the official Rio+20 venue, the Secretariat of the Conference reserves the right to deny and/or restrict the access to the Convention Center and to any of the pavilions, or to request registered participants to leave the premises.

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Q20: My organization is not accredited but I am interested in contributing to the Rio+20 process, how can I do so?

Accreditation to the UN is not a prerequisite for active and effective participation in the field of sustainable development. There are a number of ways by which you can inform the Rio+20 process, including submitting case studies, registering partnerships, and participating in the national preparatory processes. Requests for these types of participation are typically posted on the [official Rio+20 website](#), and are regularly shared with the Major Groups organizing partners for distribution within their networks. If you are not already in close contact with the organizing partners for your Major Groups sector, you are advised to connect with them as soon as possible in order to receive the latest information and updates.

We would strongly encourage you to post news of your activities and related publications in support of Rio+20 on the [official Rio+20 website](#).

If your organization is not accredited and you wish to send representatives to the Rio+20 Conference and its related preparatory meetings, you would be advised to contact an accredited organization within your network and explore the possibility of including your representatives in their delegation. The Major Groups [organizing partners](#) may also choose to include representatives of unaccredited organizations in their organization delegations, at their own discretion.

See also Question 8 for details on how to get accreditation.

Alternatively, you may request to be included in your national delegation by contacting the relevant ministry in your government. Some UN Member States welcome the inclusion of Major Groups delegates as part of their national delegations to major conferences and summits as a means of facilitating registration and access to official proceedings

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Q21: My organization would like to use visual recording equipment at Rio+20. What is required?

Official media accreditation is not accorded to the public information outlets of NGOs and other Major Groups organizations. However, it is becoming common practice for accredited Major Groups organizations to cover official proceedings with photographic and video equipment, and online communication and broadcasting. Any recording requiring the use of extra equipment inside the official Rio+20 venue is only permitted with the approval of the meeting or conference organizers.

In order to ensure that the presence of recording equipment does not disrupt official proceedings or interfere with the work of the delegates, the following guidelines are in effect:

- Photography or filming using tripods will only be allowed from the back and sides of the meeting room;

The conference officer responsible for the meeting will inform UN Safety and Security of any interference arising from the presence of disruptive equipment or devices and, if necessary, contact the [UN Media Liaison and Accreditation Unit](#) to request assistance in resolving the matter.

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Q22: How do I hold a side event at Rio+20?

On-site side events:

A number of on-site side events sponsored by Governments, Major Groups, UN system entities and other Inter-Governmental Organizations will be organized during:

- 3rd Meeting of the UNCSD Preparatory Committee (13 -15 June 2012),
- Four Days of Dialogue on Sustainable Development (16 -19 June 2012), and
- The UN Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 (20 -22 June 2012)

The on-site side events will take place inside RioCentro Convention Center and will be coordinated by the UNCSD Secretariat. More information is available [online here](#).

The deadline for submitting side event proposals is 30 March 2012.

Please pre-register your speakers. Only holders of an official Conference grounds pass will be able to participate in any official proceedings and events on the premises.

Off-site events:

Additionally, there will be opportunities for stakeholders to organize UNCSD-related activities outside RioCentro Convention Center (so called, off-site events) in various venues throughout metropolitan Rio de Janeiro. More information regarding arrangements for off-site events will be available soon.

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Q23: How do I hold a SD-Learning event at Rio+20?

SD-Learning is a capacity building event consisting of multiple courses on crucial aspects of sustainable development. The courses aim at providing participants with practical knowledge and hands-on training from experts around the world.

More information about SD-Learning is available [online here](#).

The deadline for submitting learning events is 28 February 2012.

Please pre-register your speakers. Only holders of an official Conference grounds pass will be able to participate in any official proceedings and events on the premises.

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Q24: How do I host a kiosk or pavilion at Rio+20?

More information will be available shortly.

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Q25. Do I need to pre-register speakers for side events or trainers for SD-Learning events? Only holders of an official Conference grounds pass will be able to participate in any official proceedings and events on the premises of the Rio+20 Conference. That includes panellists, speakers and trainers for on-site side events and SD-Learning events.

The deadline for all pre-registration is 20 May 2012.

See also Q8 for details about pre-registering participants.

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For more information, contact the Major Groups Programme at: uncsd2012@un.org