

Annex 4:**Advisory Note No. 2****Information Note on the procedures of recognition by the ICRC and of admission to the International Federation of a National Society**

This Note provides information for Societies seeking to be recognised by the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) and to be admitted to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (International Federation).¹ It explains the procedures of recognition and of admission, the necessary steps to be taken by an applicant Society and the documents necessary to be submitted.

The conditions for recognition of National Societies are set out in Article 4 of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement (Movement). The conditions for admission to the International Federation are stipulated in Article 4 of the Constitution of the International Federation.

Although the recognition of a National Society by the ICRC² and its admission to the International Federation are distinctly separate, the procedures themselves are closely linked. The ICRC and the International Federation study together all applications for recognition and admission. This is performed by the Joint ICRC/International Federation Commission for National Society Statutes (Joint Statutes Commission), comprising three representatives from each of the two Geneva institutions and a President (usually a retired member of the ICRC or of the International Federation).

The Joint Statutes Commission should regularly identify (on the basis of information provided by ICRC and International Federation delegations) the Societies which can be expected to apply for recognition and admission in the coming two years. The Joint Statutes Commission advises the Society and the ICRC and Federation delegations concerned on the procedures and the various steps that must be followed by the Society in order to be recognized as a component of the Movement and admitted to the International Federation.

The procedures of recognition and of admission must be initiated by the Society with the support of the ICRC and International Federation delegations. The procedures to be followed by the Society applying for recognition and for admission, as defined by the Joint Statutes Commission, comprise the following steps and principles:

1. In any event, the ICRC and International Federation delegations concerned must be informed; they will then support the applicant Society in its efforts towards recognition and admission.
2. Applications for recognition and for admission must be submitted in writing³ to the Presidents of the ICRC and of the International Federation respectively.

The application for recognition must include the following documents:

- the Statutes of the applicant Society;
- the document evidencing the circumstances which brought about the formal recognition of the Society by the Government of its country (e.g., act of legislation);

¹ The purpose of this Note is also to inform the ICRC and International Federation delegations supporting the Societies concerned.

² According to Article 5.2.b of the Statutes of the Movement, the ICRC is given the mandate to recognise a newly established or reconstituted National Society.

³ See the attached Model letter requesting recognition and admission.

- an account of the Society's activities during the two years preceding the application.

The application for admission to the International Federation must include two additional documents:

- a written statement in which the applicant Society acknowledges having taken cognisance of the Constitution of the International Federation in force and in which the Society binds itself to conform to it, and to apply the decisions of the International Federation Assembly and Governing Board;
 - a written statement in which the applicant Society pledges itself to pay its financial contribution to the International Federation in accordance with Article 21 paragraph 2 of the Constitution.
3. It is important to note that applications for recognition and for admission can be sent at any time; they are not linked to any particular event or meeting. Sufficient time, however, must be allowed for the Joint Statutes Commission to take action, including examination of the applications, undertaking a recognition mission, and for the Society to take the appropriate measures if a problem is identified. If the Society envisages to be admitted to the Federation at a particular General Assembly, the Joint Statutes Commission needs to receive the applications at least 6 months before the said Assembly. A guarantee to be recognised and admitted at a certain time cannot be given.
 4. After having studied the documents submitted, and if the Joint Statutes Commission considers that the information provided by the applicant Society is sufficient and the comments of the International Federation and ICRC delegations conclusive,⁴ a mission of the Joint Statutes Commission is organised to determine firsthand whether the conditions for recognition are fulfilled. During such a mission, the representatives of the Joint Statutes Commission expect to meet the leadership of the Society (governance and management), to visit some branches and activities, to discuss with volunteers, and to have consultations with the relevant State authorities.
 5. Based on the documents submitted and the mission's findings, the Joint Statutes Commission formulates a recommendation to each of the two Geneva institutions. The role of the Joint Statutes Commission is consultative and the ultimate decisions rest with the ICRC and the International Federation respectively:
 - The ultimate decision concerning recognition lies with the Assembly of the ICRC, its supreme policy-making body. The Assembly of the ICRC meets approximately every second month. Once the Society is recognised by the ICRC Assembly it becomes a component of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement. It will receive congratulations from the ICRC and a Circular note will be sent to all National Societies informing them of the newly recognised Society.
 - The ultimate decision on admission to the International Federation is the prerogative of its own General Assembly which meets in ordinary session every second year.⁵

⁴ Ideally, prior to the mission undertaken by the representatives of the Joint Statutes Commission, a joint ICRC/International Federation assessment mission conducted by the concerned delegations should take place in order to collect information, assess the situation, clarify certain questions and advise the Society on the steps and measures to be taken.

⁵ Only fully recognised Societies can be considered for admission to the Federation (Art. 4, *Constitution of the Federation*). Pending final admission, the applicant can be admitted on a provisional basis by the Governing Board of the Federation (*Rules of Procedures of the Federation*, Rule 2, Article 2.4).

Model letter applying for recognition and for admission of a National Society

(one letter to ICRC + one letter to International Federation)

To the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross

To the President of the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Dear Mr. President,

Dear Madam President,

The General Assembly (or other competent organ which made the decision) of the(name of National Society) decided at its meeting of.....(date) to apply for recognition by the International Committee of the Red Cross (according to Article 5.2 b of the Statutes of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement) and for admission to the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (according to Article 4 of the Constitution of the International Federation).

In accordance with this decision I have the honour to request the ICRC to recognise my National Society in order to become a component of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and to request the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies to admit it as a member.

I also declare on behalf of my National Society that it will respect the Fundamental Principles of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, adhere to the Statutes of the Movement and be guided in its work by the principles of International Humanitarian Law.

I further declare on behalf of my Society, having reviewed the Constitution of the International Federation, that it will comply with it and with the decisions of the General Assembly and the Governing Board of the International Federation.

My Society hereby commits itself to pay the annual financial contribution to the International Federation in accordance with Article 21, paragraph 2 of the Constitution of the International Federation.

Please find enclosed copies of each of the following documents as required:

- Statutes of my National Society (latest version, adopted on...)
- An authenticated copy of the governmental decree/law on its recognition by the government of our country on the basis of the 1949 Geneva Conventions
- An account of its activities during the two years preceding the application

Yours sincerely