

ADOPTED AT
THE 45TH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF AIPA



GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES OF **AIPA ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNALS**

GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES OF AIPA ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNALS



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GUIDELINES AND PROCEDURES OF AIPA ENGAGEMENT WITH EXTERNALS

I. INTRODUCTION

The Guidelines and Procedures of AIPA Engagement with Externals aim to serve as a reference for external stakeholders seeking to formalize partnership with AIPA.

The engagement of AIPA with externals is categorized into two areas, covers the details and processes for engagement between Parliamentary and Non-Parliamentary Institutions/Organizations with AIPA. This categorization is in accordance with the recommendations put forth by the Task Force on the enhancement of AIPA's engagement with externals, as adopted by the 45th AIPA General Assembly held in Vientiane, Lao PDR.

II. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

External stakeholders engaged with AIPA shall abide by the following principles:

- A. The AIPA Statute and the ASEAN Charter;
- B. Respect the diversities within ASEAN as well as the particularities of individual AIPA Member Parliaments;
- C. Respect the principles of sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, non-interference, and national identities of ASEAN Member States;
- D. Be mindful that AIPA Member Parliaments work towards integration on the basis of solidarity, understanding, cooperation, close relations, and promote the principles of human rights, democracy, peace, security, and prosperity;
- E. Adhere to the working culture of the AIPA and AIPA Member Parliaments; and
- F. Comply with the decision-making principle of consultation and consensus as stipulated in the AIPA Statute and the ASEAN Charter.



III. CATEGORIES OF EXTERNAL ENGAGEMENT

A. PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

Parliamentary engagement refers to the involvement, interaction, or participation of parliamentary institutions, assemblies, or associations with AIPA.

1. OBSERVER PARLIAMENT

1.1. DEFINITION

Observer Parliament refers to any National or Supranational Parliament other than a Member Parliament who is conferred a formal status of an Observer Parliament through a resolution of accreditation by the AIPA General Assembly.

1.2. CRITERIA

Parliament who wishes to be accredited as Observer Parliament should only come from countries or regions that meet the following criteria:

- a. Receive diplomatic recognition from all ASEAN Member States;
- b. Have accredited and designated Special Missions and Ambassadors to ASEAN;
- c. Shall only be from countries which ASEAN Member States enjoy substantial political, economic, and socio-cultural relations;
- d. Priority shall be accorded to Dialogue Partners, Comprehensive Strategic Partners, and Development Partners of ASEAN; and
- e. A parliament that its observer accreditation has not been revoked in the last two (2) years.

1.3. PROCEDURE

An application for accreditation goes through the following procedure:

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- a. Parliament seeking accreditation shall submit an official letter of request signed by the duly authorized Head(s) of Parliament to the AIPA Secretary-General at least three (3) months prior to the General Assembly;
- b. Applications submitted after the above-specified time will be deferred to the next AIPA General Assembly;
- c. Upon receipt of the official letter of request, the AIPA Secretary-General shall notify the AIPA President and AIPA Member Parliaments in writing;
- d. In parallel, the AIPA Secretary-General shall request for views and consultations from the ASEAN Secretary-General;
- e. AIPA Secretariat makes its own recommendations and assessments to be circulated to all AIPA Member Parliaments;
- f. The response from the ASEAN Secretary-General, if any, and the assessment shall then be circulated by the AIPA Secretary-General to all AIPA Member Parliaments for their consideration;
- g. The AIPA President communicates to the AIPA Secretary-General to include this matter in the agenda of the succeeding meeting of the Executive Committee, for consideration;
- h. Upon favorable consideration by the Executive Committee, a draft resolution on accreditation as an observer shall be referred to the Organizational Committee of the General Assembly for deliberation and approval;
- i. Accreditation is granted upon the adoption of the said resolution at the General Assembly. The official announcement and conferment ceremony may be conducted at the Closing Ceremony of the General Assembly;

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- j. If consensus is not reached during the deliberation and consultation, the draft resolution on accreditation will be dropped and the applicant may re-submit its application.

Parliament who is in the process of accreditation and/or interested in seeking accreditation of AIPA Observer status may request to observe the AIPA General Assembly as a guest of AIPA. The following procedure shall apply for the submission of the request:

- a. Submit an official letter of request to the AIPA Secretary-General at least three (3) months prior to the General Assembly;
- b. Upon receipt of the official letter of request, the AIPA Secretary-General shall inform the President of AIPA in writing;
- c. The AIPA President informs the AIPA Secretary-General whether the request is granted or not;
- d. The AIPA Secretary-General will announce the decision in writing to the applicant;
- e. Once granted guest status, the parliament will be allowed to attend and observe the activities of the AIPA General Assembly, and is responsible to funding their participation;
- f. Invitation as guest to the General Assembly will be on a one-off basis and will not be entitled the guest to be invited to future meetings;
- g. The decision to invite guests to the General Assembly should be made on a very selective basis and is the right and full discretion of the President of AIPA; and
- h. For the knowledge of AIPA Member Parliaments, all official correspondence relating to the invitation is to be copied to all AIPA Member Parliaments.

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1.4. OBLIGATIONS

Observers shall be required to comply with the following:

- a. Abide to the Guiding Principles as stipulated in the Article II of this Guidelines and Procedures;
- b. Participate in the AIPA General Assembly and other AIPA Activities;
- c. Fund their participation in the AIPA General Assembly and other AIPA Activities;
- d. Establish a working relation and communication with AIPA through the AIPA Secretariat;
- e. Undertake to advance the relations between AIPA and its parliament, and promote the AIPA principles and activities; and
- f. Fulfil the mandatory annual contribution as stipulated in the Resolution on the Implementation of the Mandatory Annual Contributions for Observer Members of AIPA. Contributing Observer Parliaments shall benefit from the privileges stipulated below. In the event, Observer Parliament fails to remit the annual contribution as specified in the aforementioned Resolution, the non-contributing Observer Parliament shall be forfeited some of its privileges, however, their status as an observer in AIPA shall be retained.
- g. In the event that an Observer Parliament fails to fulfill its mandatory contribution and is absent from the AIPA General Assembly for three consecutive years, its observership status is retained but may not receive an invitation to attend the AIPA General Assembly, until they submit an official letter to the AIPA President to be re-invited.



1.5. PRIVILEGES

Following the accreditation, Contributing Observer Parliament shall benefit from the following privileges:

- a. Official invitation to attend the AIPA General Assembly;
- b. Permission to deliver a three (3) minutes statement at the first plenary session of the General Assembly, preferably in the official language of AIPA;
- c. Engagement in an exclusive dialogue with AIPA Member Parliaments in the course of the General Assembly;
- d. Participation in other AIPA activities on invitation;
- e. By notifying all AIPA Member Parliaments, may initiate and conduct collaborative activities and programs with AIPA; and
- f. May conduct an inter-parliamentary dialogue with AIPA Member Parliaments outside the course of the AIPA General Assembly.

Non-Contributing Observer Parliament shall benefit from the following privileges:

- a. Official invitation to observe the AIPA General Assembly;
- b. Participate in activities held during AIPA General Assembly on invitation by the host; and
- c. With the permission of all AIPA member parliaments, may initiate and conduct collaborative activities and programs with AIPA.

1.6. OTHER PROVISIONS

- a. The AIPA Secretariat shall compile a comprehensive list of Observer Parliaments who have not fulfilled their obligations, particularly regarding the mandatory contribution and

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consecutive non-attendance at the AIPA General Assembly. The list shall be submitted to the Organizational Committee for guidance. Any recommendations provided by the Organizational Committee shall be transmitted to the AIPA President for consideration in determining the extension of invitations to attend the AIPA General Assembly;

- b. The AIPA Secretariat shall communicate and consult the AIPA President and AIPA Member Parliaments regarding request to revoke observership and/or any reservations raised by the Observer Parliament concerning this Guidelines. All responses received during this consultation process shall be recorded, consolidated, and presented by the AIPA Secretariat to the Organizational Committee for discussion and decision-making purposes;
- c. Decision made by the Organizational Committee on the membership status of Observer Parliament shall be recorded in the report and adopted by the AIPA General Assembly. Upon the adoption of the report, the AIPA Secretariat shall promptly communicate to the respective Observer Parliament in writing.

2. INTER-PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLY/ASSOCIATION

Inter-Parliamentary Assembly or Association refers to any international, regional, subregional, and geopolitical parliamentary assemblies or institutions that consist of two or more legitimate national or supranational parliaments.

AIPA and other Inter-Parliamentary Assemblies/Associations may establish a close and mutually beneficial working relationship that aims to foster inter-parliamentary dialogue and cooperation.

2.1. MODALITY OF ENGAGEMENT

The Inter-Parliamentary Assemblies/Associations shall send a written request/invitation to establish working relations with AIPA stating the purpose of the engagement and collaboration.

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AIPA and other Inter-Parliamentary Assemblies/Associations may engage in a mutually agreed modality, including but not limited to dialogue, consultation, interface, seminar, workshop, and forum.

The initiation of the relationship can proceed through a mutually agreed-upon procedure or instrument. At an instance where Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) is required, the AIPA Secretariat will conduct its due diligence and consult with AIPA President and AIPA Member Parliaments. The matter shall be tabled and appropriately discussed by the Committee on Organizational Matters for consideration and adoption at the General Assembly before the signing of cooperation agreement or MOU with its partners.

AIPA Secretariat are bound with the decision-making principle of consultation and consensus, thus shall communicate and submit all correspondence with AIPA Member Parliaments. The working relationship shall be rules-based and proceeding at a pace comfortable to all AIPA Member Parliaments.

Inter-Parliamentary Assembly/Association that has been working closely in a mutually beneficial relationship and on a regular basis with AIPA, upon the consideration and with full discretion of the AIPA President, may be invited to attend the AIPA General Assembly as a guest of AIPA.

2.2. CRITERIA

- a. Established under international law of a state;
- b. Shares general objectives, principles, and values with AIPA;
- c. Desires to enhance friendship and mutual cooperation;
- d. Constructive and meaningful engagements and goodwill in cooperation; and
- e. Endeavors to establish a working relation with AIPA through the AIPA Secretariat.



B. NON-PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

Non-parliamentary engagement refers to interaction, cooperation, or collaboration with formal institutions/organizations at national, regional, and international level that are non-parliamentary institutions.

For the purpose of these Guidelines and Procedures, unless specifically provided otherwise, non-parliamentary institutions shall be referring to the following:

- a. Development Partner: an institution or organization that seeks long-term collaboration with AIPA in support of the objectives and goals of AIPA and ASEAN;
- b. Knowledge and Community Partner: An institution/organization that offers knowledge, practice, and skills of certain issues aligning with AIPA's principles, objectives, and strategic plan; and
- c. Media Partner: a media institution/organization that provides positive news coverage on AIPA.

AIPA's involvement with non-parliamentary entities shall be in accordance with the stipulations set forth in the AIPA Statutes under the section on Aims and Purposes.

1. DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS

1.1. CRITERIA

- a. Share a vision to support the goals of ASEAN and foster parliamentary cooperation among AIPA Member Parliaments;
- b. Focus areas in domains such as good governance, human rights, social inclusion, sustainable development, and gender equality, as defined in the AIPA Strategic Plan 2023-2030;
- c. Value the difference of core competency to develop an equal and balanced collaboration; and

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- d. Pursue collaboration with AIPA through a meaningful substantive, and mutually beneficial cooperation.

1.2. PROCEDURE OF ENGAGEMENT

- a. The institution/organization initiates communication through AIPA Secretariat at any time by submitting a collaboration proposal along with supporting documentation, including a preliminary concept note or terms of reference;
- b. AIPA Secretariat shall conduct an internal evaluation of the proposal to determine if the collaboration is viable;
- c. The AIPA Secretariat may initiate discussion with potential partners to align goals and ensure a shared understanding of project objectives. Upon collaboration requests, further discussion covers aspects like timeline, priorities, responsibilities, funding, and expertise. AIPA Secretariat and the partner institution may consider a written agreement to formalize the cooperation; and
- d. If an MoU is required, the AIPA Secretariat shall conduct its due diligence and notify the AIPA President and AIPA Member Parliaments.

1.3. PRIVILEGES

- a. May observe the AIPA General Assembly on invitation;
- b. Development partners making meaningful contribution and actively engaged with AIPA may deliver a three (3) minutes statement at the first plenary session of the General Assembly, preferably in the official language of AIPA;
- c. May engage in other AIPA activities; and
- d. To be listed as Development Partner of AIPA and be reflected in the AIPA Official website.



2. KNOWLEDGE AND COMMUNITY PARTNERS

2.1. CRITERIA

- a. An institution/organization interested in sharing expertise, knowledge, practice and skill, such as conducting capacity building on certain issues related to AIPA's principles, objectives, and Strategic Plan;
- b. The institution/organization includes but is not limited to academia and research institutions, Civil Society Organizations (CSOs), Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), Community-Based Organizations (CBOs), Youth and/or Women Organizations, and professional associations; and
- c. The program proposed aligns in domains such as good governance, human rights, social inclusion, sustainable development, and gender equality, as defined in the AIPA Strategic Plan 2023-2030.

2.2. PROCEDURE OF ENGAGEMENT

- a. The Knowledge and Community Partner can engage with AIPA for a specific activity by sending an invitation letter, program details, and concept notes via email to the AIPA Secretariat;
- b. AIPA Secretariat shall seek consideration and approval from the Secretary-General of AIPA;
- c. On the occasion where the Member of Parliament is requested to engage in an activity, the AIPA Secretariat shall notify and inform the relevant AIPA National Secretariats of which the Member of Parliament originates, for acknowledgment and approval;
- d. Upon receiving the approval, the AIPA Secretariat shall respond to the email request;



- e. A follow-up communication, including the logistical arrangements or any other practical condition, shall be further discussed from both the designated contact person of the AIPA and the designated contact person of the designated contact person of knowledge and community partner;
- f. The Knowledge and Community Partner may outline any pre-event briefings or preparatory meetings that may be necessary to ensure that the AIPA representative is well-informed about the event's context and objectives; and
- g. In any case where the issue does not align with AIPA's principle, objective, and/or Strategic Plan, the AIPA Secretariat has the right to decline the invitation/cooperation of engagement.
- h. If an MoU is required, the AIPA Secretariat shall conduct its due diligence and notify the AIPA President and AIPA Member Parliaments.

3. MEDIA PARTNERS

3.1. CRITERIA

- a. Legally established, accredited and registered media organization in one of the ASEAN countries or from outside ASEAN countries, including local, national, regional, international, traditional, and online;
- b. Media organization affiliated with ASEAN and the national parliaments of the ASEAN Inter-Parliamentary Assembly (AIPA); and
- c. Media organization who has cooperated with the AIPA National Parliament(s).



3.2. PREREQUISITE AND CONDITION

- a. AIPA and its Secretariat are encouraged to engage with the media organizations to enhance visibility, raise awareness, and reinforce its key messages among target audiences;
- b. A media organization may engage with AIPA through one respective AIPA Member Parliament located in the same country as the organization; and
- c. AIPA Secretariat coordinates with the AIPA National Secretariats regarding the list of media organizations.

II. FINANCIAL ASPECT

A. PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

In accordance with Resolution No. Res.44GA/2023/Org/03 on the Implementation of Mandatory Annual Contribution to the Observer Members, the Committee on Organizational Matters of the 44th AIPA General Assembly agreed to implement a mandatory annual contribution at USD 7,500 to each Observer Member.

For the benefit of these Guidelines and Procedures, Observer Parliaments, and Inter-Parliamentary Assemblies/Associations are wholly responsible for funding their participation in the AIPA General Assembly and other AIPA activities, unless other arrangements are made thereunto.

1. PAYMENT PROCEDURE

- a. AIPA Secretariat will issue an official Invoice specifying the amount (in USD), bank account details, and payment deadline;
- b. Payment shall be made within three months from the issuance date of the invoice;
- c. Following the payment, the Observer Parliaments shall provide the AIPA Secretariat with the transfer receipt;
- d. Upon receiving the contribution, the AIPA Secretariat shall issue an official payment receipt;

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2. ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. At the end of each AIPA financial year, the AIPA Secretariat shall prepare the financial report, including contributions from Observer Parliaments, in accordance with AIPA Financial Procedures;
- b. An external auditor subsequently audits the prepared AIPA financial report;
- c. Upon receiving the audit report, the AIPA Secretariat shall submit the report, along with a draft resolution to the upcoming AIPA General Assembly; and
- d. Following the adoption, the AIPA Secretariat shall share the resolution and audit report with the contributing Observer Parliaments.

B. NON-PARLIAMENTARY ENGAGEMENT

The AIPA Secretariat will refer to its Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) in financial management. However, it retains the flexibility to align with the policies and procedures stipulated by external partners. Any financial aspect in the engagement with AIPA shall be discussed with the AIPA Secretariat prior to the commencement of activity. Both AIPA and institution/organization shall acknowledge their responsibility to fulfill any documented and substantiated financial commitments promptly.

1. BUDGET PROCEDURE

a. GRANT FUNDS

Disbursements of grant funds from partner institutions will be facilitated through a formal agreement duly executed between the benefactor and AIPA. The funds given are limited to implementing certain programs within agreed period. A separate agreement in the form of a Letter of Agreement (LOA) must be signed as a mutual agreement between AIPA and the Partner organization. The LOA should include the proposed project title, budget and other related documents as attachments. The LOA

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approval process must be fully completed before any transactions related to the project occur.

b. TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Any technical support provided by partner institutions shall cover standard budget item on each project, which includes at least the travel costs (return airfares and airport transfer), accommodation, and meeting package. Any optional financial considerations and expenditures, such as additional human resources in the engagement with AIPA shall be discussed with the AIPA Secretariat prior to the commencement of activity.

Should there be any requirement or standard format provided by the external partners for the budget proposal and financial report, AIPA will adhere to the templates provided. In any case a specific format is not required, AIPA will refer to its Standard Financial Report and Standard Operating Procedure in the budgeting, financial management, and reporting.

2. ACCOUNTABILITY

- a. In accordance with the outlined procedures, the AIPA Secretary General shall appoint a focal point for each project who will be responsible for coordinating and overseeing all project-related activities;
- b. Funds designated for projects will be managed in a one separate AIPA account;
- c. Adhering to AIPA's standards, all financial documents associated with the projects will be retained for a period of 10 years; and
- d. An external auditor subsequently audits the prepared AIPA Financial Report.

III. APPROVAL AND AMENDMENTS TO THE GUIDELINES

The Guidelines and Procedures of AIPA's Engagement with Externals shall be approved by consensus at the Organizational Committee and will come into force with the adoption of resolution at the General Assembly.

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Any proposed amendments to the Guidelines shall be submitted to the AIPA Secretary General to be tabled at the General Assembly. Such amendments shall come into immediate effect.