

# Standards & NORMS

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## INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES OF NGOs INSIDE INDIA

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### INTERNATIONAL ACTIVITIES INSIDE INDIA

**1.1** The Ministry of Home Affairs (MHA) provides the guidelines for conducting international seminars, conferences, etc. The procedure to obtain permission for conducting international conferences is provided in the *website : www.mha.nic.in*.

**1.1.1** NGOs should be careful while conducting such activities whether out of FCRA or local funds. The MHA guidelines are also required to be followed in order to facilitate the delegates to obtain 'conference visa'. All

NGOs proposing to have international seminars or inviting international delegates should apply to the concerned nodal ministry and seek approval for such activity. The procedure provided by MHA is as follows :

### WHAT IS INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ETC.

**1.2** International Conferences/Seminars/ Workshops (herein after referred to as events) are those events where substantive

discussions/deliberations/interaction and exchange of thoughts and ideas will take place on a specific subject matter and in which participants from foreign countries will take part.

### **WHAT DOES NOT CONSTITUTE AN INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ETC.**

**1.3** Meetings organized by any business institution having foreign participants from its sister concern abroad, and solely on the subject matter with the business issues of that business institution.

**1.3.1** Sports meets and sports events organized by recognized sports bodies of India where sports-persons of foreign countries will take part.

**1.3.2** Events of performing arts such as Drama Festivals, Mussaira, Kavi Sammelan etc. in which groups from foreign countries will take part.

**1.3.4** Meet of businessmen/industrialists from India and abroad organized by Indian Chambers of Commerce where trade and business issues will be discussed.

**1.3.5** From the above activities it seems that almost all the international seminars and conferences organised by NGOs are subject to the approval from Ministry of Home Affairs through the Nodal ministry.

### **HOW TO PROCEED FOR A CLEARANCE**

**1.4** The organizers conceiving an idea of holding an event in India will be required to submit proposal which must contain information :

- Name of the organizer with complete mailing address.
- Topic/Topics to be covered in the event.

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***It seems that almost all the international seminars and conferences organised by NGOs are subject to the approval from Ministry of Home Affairs through the Nodal ministry***

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- Venue of the event.
- Date of the event.
- Tentative lists of the participating countries and participants with nationality, brief background suiting participation in the event, address, personal and passport details.

**1.4.1** Proposal should invariably be submitted to the nodal ministry and not to the Ministry of Home Affairs. The nodal Ministry will give clearance to the event. The nodal Ministry will obtain clearance of Home Ministry or other agencies, if necessary within the time frame (8 weeks). For organisers it will be a single window clearance.

### **WHAT IS NODAL/ADMINISTRATIVE MINISTRY**

**1.5** The nodal/administrative Ministry means the Ministry of Govt. of India which is dealing/regulating framing rules etc. in respect of subject matter chosen for the event. For example, if an organizer is proposing to hold an event on the topic of 'Adult Non-formal education', then, the nodal/administrative ministry shall be *Ministry of Human Resource Development, Department of Education*. Suppose an organizer proposes to hold an event on topic related to empowerment of women in India then the nodal ministry shall be *Ministry of Social Welfare, Deptt. of Women and Child Development etc.*

## **TIME FRAME REQUIRED TO BE FOLLOWED**

**1.6** Organizers are required to submit their proposal to administrative/nodal ministry at least 8 weeks before the commencement of the event.

## **VISA TO THE FOREIGN PARTICIPANTS**

**1.7** Once an event is cleared by nodal Ministry, organizers may send invitation to foreigners who wish to participate in the event. Foreigners should invariably be advised to opt for 'conference visa' only. *[In the Invitation letter, the organizers should mention the details of clearance accorded by nodal Ministry for conducting the event]*. With invitation letter the participants should approach Missions abroad for grant of conference visa.

## **IN CASE OF DIFFICULTY IN GETTING VISA**

**1.8** Some of the participants may face problem in obtaining conference visa. In these cases, organizers should immediately obtain and furnish the following particulars of the foreigners to nodal ministry with specific request for visa:-

- Sl.No.
- Name of Participant
- Father's/Husband's Name
- Nationality
- Date of Birth
- Place of Birth
- Passport Number
- Date & Place of issue of Passport
- Date of Expiry of Passporte
- Address

*Organizers  
need not request  
Ministry of External Affairs  
and Ministry of  
Home Affairs directly  
for clearance*

## **ONUS OF OBTAINING CLEARANCE FOR EVENT**

**1.9** Organizers need not request Ministry of External Affairs and Ministry (MEA) of Home Affairs directly for clearance. On receipt of the proposal from the organizers, nodal/administrative ministry will examine the proposal and if they feel that clearance of MHA and MEA is required the same shall be obtained by them and they inturn grant overall clearance to organizers. Onus of obtaining clearance of MHA & MEA would rest with nodal/administrative ministries and not with the organizer.

## **STEPS TO BE TAKEN FOR SMOOTH CLEARANCE OF EVENT**

**1.10** Organizers are advised to go through the streamlined channel of submission of proposals for the events and adhere to the time frame (at least 8 weeks ahead of event). If the above procedure is followed, there should not be any difficulty in getting clearance of event in time. MHA has assured all cooperation and help to organizers of various events

## **IMPORTANT TELEPHONE NUMBERS TO BE DIALED IN CASE OF NEED**

**1.11** The MHA has provided the following

telephone numbers which can be dialed in case of any procedural problem or need.

Joint Secretary(F) - 23383075  
Deputy Secretary(F) - 23381374  
Under Secretary(F) - 23382989  
Section Officer(CC) - 23385748

*There is an urgent need  
on the part of the MHA  
to rationalise  
the provisions regarding the  
international activities  
of NGOs in India*

## CONCLUDING REMARKS

**1.12** The intent of this particular issue is to create awareness about the legal formalities involved in holding international conferences and activities. It has been seen that many NGOs are unaware of such provisions.

**1.12.1** Further the provisions are fraught with procedural hassles and lack of awareness at the end of various nodal ministries also which need rationalisation.

**1.12.2** In the past it has been seen that NGOs have faced procedural problems from the nodal ministries. For instance, firstly, there is lack of awareness regarding such provisions which results in delay and reluctance in granting such approval. Secondly, even if approvals are granted, they are given subject to further approval from MHA and MEA. It may be noted that it has been clearly provided that the

nodal Ministry should obtain clearance of Home Ministry or other agencies, if necessary. Therefore, the onus is on the nodal ministry to get clearance from the MHA and MEA and give an unconditional approval. It is within the prerogative of the nodal ministry to give approval directly if it feels that the clearance from MHA and MEA is not necessary. But giving a conditional approval defeats the very purpose of going through the single window of nodal ministry.

**1.12.3** In such circumstances, NGOs are facing undue hardship in conducting international seminars and conferences.

**1.12.4** There is an urgent need on the part of the MHA to rationalise the provisions regarding the international activities of NGOs in India.

**Standards & Norms** aims to provide relevant informations and guidance on NGO governance, Financial Management and Legal Regulations. The informations provided are correct and relevant to the best of the knowledge of the author and contributor. It is suggested that the reader should cross check all the facts, law and contents before using them. The author or the publisher will not be responsible for any loss or damage to any one, in any manner.



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