

FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) Selection Standard Operating Procedure (SOP)

This Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) establishes the process governing the selection of members of the FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN). It provides detailed guidance on the interpretation and operationalisation of the selection provisions set out in the [FOC-AN Terms of Reference \(ToR\)](#), including the application of selection criteria and balancing considerations, ensuring consistency, transparency, and fairness in the selection process.

1. Role and Functions of the Advisory Network

The FOC Advisory Network (FOC-AN) is an independent multistakeholder platform that provides advice to the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) and supports its work through stakeholder engagement, in accordance with the ToR.

1.1 Mandate and Core Functions

The FOC-AN:

- Serves as a mechanism for multistakeholder advice on the aims, objectives, and activities of the FOC, and on issues related to human rights online
- Supports the FOC's mission of advancing human rights online through stakeholder engagement
- Contributes to multistakeholder collaboration around FOC activities and explores opportunities for cooperation
- Participates in and supports the planning and organisation of Freedom Online Conferences and other FOC events and meetings

1.2 Modalities of Engagement

In carrying out its mandate, the FOC-AN:

- Collaborates with FOC entities and communicates with FOC Members
- Provides advice and recommendations on substantive, procedural, and operational matters within the FOC's mandate
- Contributes to and participates in FOC sub-entities and working groups, as appropriate
- Recommends topics for FOC statements and provides input during drafting processes when invited
- Participates in FOC conferences, meetings, and events
- Supports, where appropriate, the planning, organisation, and dissemination of FOC events and processes

1.3 Nature of Contributions

The FOC-AN provides:

- Proactive advice developed within the Network
- Reactive advice in response to requests from the FOC
- Contributions to information and knowledge sharing within the FOC, including through participation in meetings, learning sessions, and other convenings
- Input to the development of FOC outputs and engagement in relevant consultation processes, including through collaboration with FOC Members

All advice is provided in accordance with the ToR.



1.4 Member Expectations

Members are expected to:

- Actively participate in FOC-AN activities, communications, and meetings
- Contribute expertise and perspectives to discussions and outputs
- Engage constructively in a multistakeholder environment
- Support the goals and principles of the FOC

2. Composition

The FOC-AN consists of up to 30 participants representing non-state stakeholders, including civil society, private sector, academia, technical community, and other experts.

Members are selected through an open application process administered by the FOC Support Unit (SU), in accordance with the ToR.

The composition of the FOC-AN balances merit and expertise with diversity across geographic regions, stakeholder groups, gender, and perspectives. Selection is based on the application of selection criteria and balancing considerations in a structured and context-sensitive manner.

3. Selection Criteria

3.1 Core Criteria

Applicants are assessed against the following criteria, as set out in the ToR:

- Commitment to FOC values
- Relevant expertise
- Expected contribution to the work of the FOC-AN and the Coalition

These criteria reflect and operationalise the selection considerations defined in the ToR.

3.2 Assessment Dimensions

In applying the core criteria, applicants are assessed across the following dimensions:

A. Commitment to FOC Values

Demonstrated commitment to:

- Human rights and fundamental freedoms, including freedom of expression and privacy
- An open, interoperable, reliable, and secure internet
- Multistakeholder approaches to internet governance

B. Relevant Expertise and Knowledge

Applicants demonstrate expertise in areas relevant to the FOC's work, including, but not limited to:

- Internet governance and digital policy, including relevant international and regional processes
- Human rights in the digital environment
- Cybersecurity and cybercrime, and their implications for human rights and digital safety
- Data governance, privacy, and information integrity
- Platform regulation and content governance
- Digital inclusion, access, and digital public infrastructure
- Emerging technologies (including AI) and their technological, social, political, and human rights implications
- Legal and regulatory frameworks related to digital rights and digital technologies



C. Professional Experience and Track Record

Applicants demonstrate:

- Relevant professional experience in policy, advocacy, research, technical, or business contexts
- Evidence of impact, such as policy contributions, publications, leadership roles, or project implementation
- Engagement in relevant national, regional, or international processes

D. Engagement with Relevant FOC Processes

Consideration is given to:

- Prior engagement with the FOC processes, its working groups, or related initiatives

E. Expected Contribution

Applicants demonstrate:

- Clear motivation to contribute to the work of the FOC-AN
- Specific areas of intended contribution (e.g. thematic expertise, regional perspective, stakeholder engagement)
- Capacity and willingness to actively participate in meetings, processes, and outputs

F. Skills and Competencies

Relevant skills may include:

- Analytical and policy development skills
- Drafting and communication skills
- Stakeholder engagement and collaboration
- Ability to work in diverse, multistakeholder environments
- Strategic thinking and problem-solving

G. Contribution to Diversity of Perspectives

Assessment takes into account the extent to which the applicant contributes to diversity of:

- Geographic perspective
- Stakeholder viewpoint
- Type of professional affiliation

4. Balancing Categories and Rules

4.1 Balancing Categories

Balancing categories are defined as follows:

- Geographic regions: Africa; Asia-Pacific; Eastern Europe; Latin America and the Caribbean; Western Europe and Others.
- Stakeholder groups: civil society, private sector, technical community and academia.
- Gender: applicants may self-identify (no predefined categories).

4.2 Balancing Rules

Balancing rules are applied as follows:

- Stakeholder balance: Selection should seek to avoid dominance of any single stakeholder group, with no single stakeholder group exceeding approximately 40%.
- Geographic balance:
 - Selection shall ensure minimum regional representation as follows: Africa (4); Asia-Pacific (4); Eastern Europe (2); Latin America and the Caribbean (3); Western Europe and Others



- (4).
 - No region occupies more than 40% of seats.
 - Over-representation from any single country within a region is avoided.
- Gender balance: Selection aims to ensure meaningful gender balance, including a minimum target of 40% representation of women and gender-diverse persons. This approach is reviewed periodically to assess its impact.

5. Implementation of Balancing Rules and Diversity Considerations

Balancing considerations are applied as guiding principles rather than strict quotas. Where balancing targets cannot be fully met based on the applicant pool, the selection body may deviate from these targets with clear justification. Discretion may be exercised where necessary to ensure the overall quality, expertise, and effectiveness of the AN.

The application form includes clear categories for self-identification of:

- Stakeholder group
- Geographic affiliation
- Nationality
- Organisation's headquarters (for organisational applicants only)
- Gender
- Capacity (individual or organisational)

Applicants indicate whether they are applying in an individual or organisational capacity. This information is considered as part of the overall assessment of the application.

Geographic scope of work is captured as follows:

- National (select all that apply)
- Regional (select all that apply)
- Global

Geographic affiliation is used for the purposes of applying regional balancing rules:

- Nationality is used to determine geographic affiliation for applicants applying in an individual capacity.
- Organisation's headquarters is normally used to determine geographic affiliation for applicants applying in an organisational capacity.

Geographic scope of work is not used for regional balancing but may inform overall diversity of perspectives and operational relevance.

6. Term Limits and Renewal

Term limits and renewal rules are as follows, in accordance with the FOC-AN ToR:

- Members may serve a maximum of two consecutive two-year terms.
- Members who wish to continue after their first term must reapply through the open application process, on the same basis as other applicants.
- Active participation is expected. Co-Chairs and/or the Support Unit may request inactive members to step down, with vacancies filled through the standard application process.
- Membership of the AN is not transferable. Where a member's affiliation changes during their term, this results in a vacancy, as it alters the basis on which the member was selected. Such vacancies are filled through the open application process in accordance with the ToR and SOP.



Transitional arrangement for the 2026–2028 cycle:

- All current AN members are required to reapply through the open application process. No automatic renewal applies.
- For the purposes of applying term limits under this framework, a member's most recent term (e.g. 2024-2026) is considered their first term.
- The maximum limit of two consecutive two-year terms applies prospectively and is not applied retroactively to prior service.

7. Selection Process

7.1 Call for Applications

The Support Unit (SU) launches an open call for applications outlining:

- The role and functions of the FOC-AN
- Expected contributions of members
- Selection criteria
- Balancing considerations guiding composition of the FOC-AN

The SU undertakes targeted outreach to encourage applications from underrepresented regions and stakeholder groups, including from the Global South. The FOC-AN may support these efforts as appropriate.

Applicants submit the completed application form, along with their CV.

7.2 Assessment of Candidates

For the 2026-2028 selection cycle, the FOC Support Unit will conduct an initial review of applications against the selection criteria set out in the ToR and apply the balancing rules in line with this SOP. The role of the Support Unit in future selection cycles will be reviewed based on experience.

The Support Unit may consult current FOC-AN Members for input before submission of the proposed composition to the FOC Steering Committee for confirmation.

Assessment is based on the applicant's CV and motivation letter and considers relevant knowledge, skills, experience, and expected contribution to the work of the AN and the Coalition. The selection process is conducted in line with the FOC's commitment to human rights, diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility.

7.3 Application of Balancing Considerations

Based on the pool of applicants who meet the selection criteria, the SU develops a proposed FOC-AN composition that reflects balancing considerations outlined in this SOP, including stakeholder diversity, geographic representation, and gender balance.

7.4 Proposed Composition

The SU prepares a proposed composition of the FOC-AN, explaining how the selection criteria and balancing considerations have been applied.

The proposed composition is shared with FOC-AN members who are not applicants in the current selection cycle for input within a defined timeframe.

7.5 Finalisation and Notification

The final composition of the FOC-AN shall be determined following the application of the above steps.



The proposed composition shall be submitted to the FOC Steering Committee for confirmation in accordance with the ToR.

Applicants shall be informed of the outcome of the selection process. The final composition of the FOC-AN shall be published on the FOC's communication channels.

