



Tips for Registering an IGI FIT

IGI operates by working as a civil society organisation (CSO) in specific countries. This requires credibility with other organisations, NGOs, professionals and government agencies. So, many of FITs (Focal Integrity Teams – local embodiments of IGI) find it essential to register as formal organisations in their own countries.

Benefits of registration vary with legal and social conditions, but typically include:

- The right to operate as a legal entity – to own property and spend money on IGI aims
- Credibility with CSOs, to influence, to provide training, etc.
- Credibility with the authorities, for election monitoring and providing such services as training civil servants against corruption
- Credibility for fund-raising from supporters
- Tax breaks, for being a non-profit organisation

FITs in several countries are now considering registration. The following advice is based on experience in UK (central IGI), Cameroon, Kenya and Zimbabwe. The relevance of this advice will depend on the legal framework in your own country.

1. Make sure you take good advice on what category of organisation you should be. Sakwa Buliba reports that Kenya FIT's first application as a society received no response for years ('a decision is yet to be reached'). They then reapplied as a non-profit "company limited by guarantee" and gained registration in four weeks.
2. Have a clear, written constitution, making use of recommended government wording where possible. You will also probably need to be able to name the officers responsible for running the FIT, and may need minutes of meeting to show that the constitution and officers have been correctly appointed.
3. Define the Objects of the FIT widely enough to ensure they will include all types of activities you are likely to use. Doing things not covered in the Objects would cause major problems in the future.
4. Be clear which government agency you need to apply to – for example, in Cameroon registration is often handled locally, whereas in other countries (including UK) it is all central.
5. Obtain and follow government instructions for registration exactly. Errors on technicalities will only provide an excuse for delay. Not all governments are in favour of

6. Because we were seeking “charitable status” in the UK, we had to be clear as to how we would provide benefit to the public (not just members). The central IGI spent over a year negotiating with the UK Charity Commission on this. We had to compile careful arguments based on the legal definition of public benefit in UK, with references to nationally and internationally accepted statements on the importance of good governance (e.g. The UN Convention Against Corruption ¹, or the UK Nolan Committee Report on Standards in Public Life). We also had to reassure them that we were not unbiased and impartial with reference to political parties, and did not carry out political lobbying
7. Have the money ready for the inevitable registration fee.
8. Allow plenty of time for gaining registration – it will almost certainly be several months.
9. Keep chasing – ring the authority regularly to ensure they have received your application and are progressing. Be patient and polite, but always ask “when?”.
10. Stephen Asek of Cameroon advises: “Do not ask anyone else to do the process for you” – keep control of it yourself.

Above all else, if you have concerns or problems, do talk with:

- Sakwa, the President and Secretary (info@igi-integrity.com – other contact details on the “Contact us” page of the IGI website), or with
- Paul, the Chairman of the Trustees (paul@igi-integrity.com).

We’ll be happy to give whatever help we can.And when you’ve been through the process, don’t forget to feed back your tips and advice to help others.

All the very best!

¹ United Nations Convention Against Corruption, 2003
http://www.osce.org/documents/pdf_documents/1970/01/13250-1.pdf