

Public consultation for foreigners who want to volunteer in Ukraine

People who seek to come from abroad to help Ukraine by volunteering here face a number of requirements of Ukrainian legislation. According to the interim results of the Survey of Foreign Volunteers conducted by CEDEM, one of these rules becomes a challenge for these people.

Why do foreigners first have to receive an "invitation letter" from a Ukrainian organization to volunteer in Ukraine? If a foreigner has relatives in Ukraine, why can't a family member invite him/her to Ukraine? Finally, how to find such an organization?

CEDEM lawyers have prepared a public consultation where you can find answers to these questions.

Based on Ukraine's legislative realities, a foreigner / stateless person needs to obtain an invitation from one of the civil society organizations (CSOs). Below are some important steps to take to check the reliability of a CSO. Those organizations that require any compensation from you for the invitation letter are most likely fraudulent. We advise you to choose a reliable CSO that is interested in your volunteering, will invite you, and sign a volunteer agreement with you.

Step 1. Basic information

- **Name of the organization**

Look up the name of the organization on the Internet. Check if there are other organizations with a similar name (or even a similar website). If there are, be more vigilant, as organizations that "mimic" another are likely to be fraudulent.

- **Website**

Find a professional website with information about the organization's mission, activities, team, and contacts. Pay attention to the following criteria:

- Is the website informative and well designed?
- Are the organization's goals and activities clearly stated?
- Are contact details easily accessible?
- Who are the leaders of the organization? Check their profiles and possible compromising facts (e.g., ties to Russia);
- Does the organization publish financial reports or information on funding sources?
- Where does the organization get its funding from? Are there any donors with ties to Russia?
- Are the integrity awards on the website genuine? Check their authenticity.

- **Social media**

Check the organization's active social media profiles (Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram). Are there any subscribers on these pages? Is there any interaction with the audience on behalf of the page? Do you see anything suspicious on the pages?

Step 2. Check registration and legal status

In the Ukrainian civil society sector, organizations often know each other. Therefore, you can ask a CSO you trust to confirm the information about a potential partner.

You can use the following resources to check on a Ukrainian non-profit organization:

- [YouControl](#)

Aggregates information about every company and individual entrepreneur in Ukraine based on open data from more than 220 sources. YouControl provides information on registration details, organizational structure, non-profit status, founders and authorized persons of the organization. Within the framework of the licensed access provided by YouControl, you can get a reliable assessment of the organization.

- [Opendatabot](#)

This resource can also help verify a private person or organization by accessing open registers. Opendatabot provides information on financial statements, court cases, and organization's leaders.

- [Clarity Project](#)

Another resource that provides information based on data from public registers. In particular, it provides information about the public finances of an organization or an individual. A useful feature of Clarity Project is that it helps to show and visualize the connections between the organizations or people you are looking for.

In addition, it is worth remembering that information about the organization with which you plan to cooperate in order to receive an invitation must be [posted on the website](#) of the National Social Service of Ukraine.

Step 3. Check whether the organization is on the sanction list

You can check whether an organization is sanctioned on the following resources.

- [OFAC Sanctions Search](#);
- [United Nations Security Council Consolidated List](#);
- [SAM.gov](#);
- [The State Register of Sanctions of Ukraine](#) (here you can find individuals and legal entities that have been sanctioned by Ukraine).

Step 4. Check the organization on external resources

Some external resources also check and evaluate the reliability of CSOs. Here is a list of some reputable resources that allow you to check and verify CSOs.

[Candid](#) (formerly Foundation Center and GuideStar)

Provides information on foundations from all over the world (mainly grantmaking organizations, but grantees can also be found on the resource). Candid has information on financial data, mission, contacts, and management of organizations. The site has a system of four distinctions that show how transparent an organization is and how complete its profile is.

[GlobalGiving Atlas](#)

Provides access to a database with data on more than 9.6 million verified public and charitable organizations. The resource provides links to the websites, geographical location, and main areas of work of organizations verified by GlobalGiving Atlas. You can search by country or by organization name.

[Better Business Bureau Wise Giving Alliance](#)

Assesses the transparency of charitable organizations from around the world. Please note that this site does not provide a very broad list of organizations.

Other tips for verification

Pay attention not only to the organization itself, but also to the person who contacts you. You can ask for his/her resume or a letter of reference. In some cases, it makes sense to ask the person you are contacting for a police clearance certificate. Also,

try to find authentic examples of the documents you are requesting online so that you are not deceived by using a different document.

Ask your colleagues for their feedback and recommendations about the organization (especially those who often work with international partners).

Pay attention to "classic" phishing and fraud techniques: when you are pressured to provide money or information immediately or to make a certain decision.

Also, be especially vigilant when you feel that something is wrong with the organization, especially if you are presented with an offer that looks too good to be true.

Cash transactions from charitable organizations are usually suspicious.

Never share sensitive information or internal documents with unverified organizations.

These instructions will help you find a reliable CSO to receive an invitation to come to Ukraine. Remember that before you cooperate with an organization, you should check it out!