

SIHA MEMBERSHIP GUIDELINES

Strategic Initiative
for Women in the
Horn of Africa



SIHA Network

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1. Introduction

The Strategic Initiative for Women in the Horn of Africa (SIHA Network) was established in 1995 by a coalition of women's rights activists with the aim of strengthening the capacities of women's rights organizations and addressing women's subordination and violence against women and girls in the Horn of Africa.

SIHA is a network of civil society organizations from Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Somaliland, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Djibouti and Uganda. SIHA is a feminist institution that is open to different types of feminist groups that primarily work in the field of women's rights and empowerment. The network has grown substantially and is now comprised of 136 member organizations.

As a network, SIHA is made up of members and affiliates that make up its general assembly. Members enjoy a variety of benefits, such as being prioritized for partnerships for project implementation, endorsement for funding, or sub granting to mention but a few.

2. Purpose of the Guidelines

The SIHA membership guidelines serve as key guiding document for SIHA member organizations as well as for interested groups and organizations. It provides an overview about the different types of membership, eligibility criteria, the application process, membership dues, benefits and obligations.

Further information about SIHA Network can be found in the SIHA Strategy as well as the Code of Conduct.

3. Types of Membership

There are two different types of SIHA memberships, the categorization depends on the applicant organization's maturity and capacity (further information can be found below in section 4. Eligibility Criteria in these guidelines). Each type of membership comes with particular benefits (section 6. Membership Benefits).

i. Member Organizations

Our members are non-governmental, non-partisan, women rights (umbrella) organizations located in the Greater Horn of Africa, registered to operate in their country of jurisdiction.

ii. Affiliates

Affiliates are groups, collectives, institutions or organizations having a vested interest in supporting women and girls in the Greater Horn of Africa in line with SIHA's vision, mission and goals.

4. Eligibility Criteria

Becoming a SIHA member is of interest for organizations with a track record of working with women in the Greater Horn of Africa countries.

These can include:

- Community Groups
- Legal Aid Centers
- Professional Associations
- Academic Centers
- Research Centers
- Cooperatives
- Indigenous networks
- Community Based organizations (CBOs)
- Non-Governmental Organizations
- Umbrella Organizations

All women organizations located in the Greater Horn of Africa are welcome to apply for membership with SIHA if they meet the eligibility requirements.

Eligibility criteria for membership with SIHA are as follows:

- At least two years of experience working on women issues (the organization will be required to provide sufficient information and evidence that reflects this)
- Legal status: The applicant organization must demonstrate their legal status to operate within its area of jurisdiction (registered in their country in line with the country laws)
- An organization whose membership is comprised as follows: a minimum of 50% of the working staff must be women, at least 60% of the senior leadership must be women and at least 75% of its board of directors must be women
- Gender equality mandate and policies (The applicant organization will be required to demonstrate this through presentation of e.g. a Human Resources Manual, a constitution and / or an Anti-Harassment Policy)
- The organization's strategy, programs, monitoring and evaluation tools should be guided and based on gender equality principles
- The organization should have a clear stand and programs pro women's human rights as stated in international and regional mechanisms of relevance to the Horn of Africa region
- The applicant organization must acknowledge and commit to the regional and international human rights mechanisms
- Office structure: The applicant organization must have a physical presence; the organization may also be hosted by another institution with a physical address.
- The applicant organization must have a staff/volunteer structure.
- The organization should be well rooted and functioning on community level, depending on the mandate.
- The applicant organization must have a binding document, this can be in the form of a constitution or charter of principles
- The applicant organization must have a structure for implementation of its work, this can be in the form of a strategy and / or an action plan

- The applicant organization must have existing financial system of accountability in place
- The organization must have a clear governance structure, such as a Board of Directors or an executive committee

Umbrella organizations:

- “Umbrella” organization is defined as a group of organizations with a common goal and at least five member organizations
- Transparent governance structure including rotation of leadership

Eligibility criteria to be an affiliate of SIHA are as follows:

- The applicant organization must have a track record of at least one year
- The target group of the organization’s work must be 50% women and girls
- The applicant organization must be gender-diverse: at least 50% of its team must be women (staff and leadership)
- The applicant organization might be virtual
- The applicant organization must have sufficient understanding of SIHA’s vision, mission, and agree to SIHA’s code of conduct

Applicant organization’s membership and governing structure must discuss and approve the vision, mission, strategy, code of conduct, and structure of the SIHA network.

5. Application Process

Description of the application process:

- Applicants are required to complete the SIHA Membership Application Form that can be found on the SIHA website: <https://sihanet.org/application/>
- Once the applicant organization submits their completed application form, SIHA will issue an acknowledgement of receipt of application via email
- In the acknowledgement of receipt email, the applicant organization will be notified that a SIHA staff member of the country office from the country they are applying from will follow up for a vetting interview
- The vetting interview may be conducted physically or virtually
- During the vetting interview, the SIHA staff will follow and complete the SIHA Membership Vetting Checklist
- Simultaneously, a Board Endorsement Form will be sent to the SIHA Board or Advisory representative in the country for completing and signing
- After the vetting interview, the SIHA in-country staff will submit the completed Membership Vetting Checklist along with all the supporting documentation indicated in the membership criteria in addition to the signed Board Endorsement Form
- Final endorsement of SIHA membership and affiliation will be decided upon in the SIHA Board of Director Meeting where all pre-approved members and affiliates will be presented for full endorsement

- Upon approval the new SIHA member/affiliate will receive their welcome literature pack.
- New member organizations will receive their first invoice to pay their annual and registration fee in the first January of their membership.

6. Membership Benefits

- Invitation to SIHA events within or outside the member country (member organizations and affiliates)
- Partnership with the SIHA secretariat (member organizations and affiliates)
- Priority in terms of partnership for project implementation (member organizations and affiliates)
- Participation in the national General Assembly (GA) of all SIHA members/affiliates in the country (member organizations and affiliates)
- SIHA member organizations can be elected to be SIHA members of the SIHA Regional Board of Directors (board member or advisor) (member organizations only)
- Contribution to SIHA's strategies and policies (member organizations and affiliates)
- Invitation to collective care and solidarity spaces (member organizations and affiliates)
- Members can seek support and collaboration in proposal development (member organizations and allies)
- Endorsement for funding / awards (member organizations and affiliates)
- Members can seek and receive technical support and advice when engaging in (project and advocacy) activities geared towards women rights and empowerment (member organizations and affiliates)
- Members are eligible to be sub-grantees of SIHA within the framework of projects (member organizations and affiliates)
- Members and affiliates can receive emergency funding in case of crises (member organizations and affiliates)
- Members can be featured (spotlight) in the quarterly SIHA newsletter (member organizations and affiliates)
- Visibility on SIHA website (member organizations and affiliates)
- Receive copies of SIHA publications (member organizations and affiliates): welcome pack including the "Women in Islam – Journal" (two last issues) as well as country and sector specific literature; one hardcopy and/or softcopy of newly published research and other publications
- SIHA distribution mailing list (member organizations and affiliates)

7. Membership Dues

SIHA membership fees contribute to the SIHA reserve fund, which enables SIHA to:

- extend emergency support to members and affiliates during crises and critical times

- sponsor some of its members/affiliates to participate in capacity building engagements
- secure its sustainability and continuity in case funding/support from external donors reduces.

Members and affiliates can request to view the SIHA membership accounts on annual basis; furthermore, the accounts will be presented during the SIHA BoD meetings.

At the beginning of each calendar year member organizations will be charged an annual subscription fee; affiliates are exempted from paying the annual fee.

- Organizations with a running annual budget of more than \$250,000 annual will pay a \$100 annual subscription
- Organizations with a running budget of less than \$250,000 will pay a \$50 annual subscription
- New members pay a registration fee of \$50 together with their first annual fee in the course of the month January after their application was approved.

Mode of Payment

Payments can be made either via bank transfer to the regional SIHA bank account or via deposit in the respective country to the bank account of SIHA in the country.

8. Member Obligations

- Members are obliged to inform SIHA when there is a change in their management
- Members commit to abide by SIHA's code of conduct
- Members commit to pay the registration fee as well as their annual dues in a timely manner
- Members and affiliates are expected to share their research papers and other publications with SIHA, include SIHA in their mailing lists and newsletters, as well as to extend invitation to SIHA to their events

9. Membership Termination

SIHA rarely terminates memberships. However, termination will be considered by SIHA's Board of Directors under the following circumstances:

- Where an organization or affiliate closes/ceases to exist
- Where an organization or affiliate is involved in behavior that is illegal and/or conflicts with SIHA's vision, mission, and code of conduct in a manner that impacts its and SIHA's societal reputation