

(Access) Criteria for a Nature Protection Organization and for a Reserve.

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Introduction

UON aims to enable an additional long-term income stream towards nature organizations so that they can bring additional areas of nature under protection while sustaining their operations.

As part of UON's trust framework and future UON Rulebook, UON has defined (Access) Criteria for nature organizations that wish to participate in the UON operating model as a Nature Protection Organization (NPO).

In addition, as part of UON's trust framework and future UON Rulebook, UON has defined Criteria for areas of nature protected by an NPO that can be onboarded in the UON operating model as a Reserve.

The criteria defined are in line with IUCN's Protected Area Categories, recognized by international bodies such as the United Nations and by many national governments as the global criteria for defining and recording protected areas, and as such are increasingly being incorporated in legislation.

Definitions

- **UON, Union of Nature Foundation:** UON is a worldwide group of NPOs collaborating in a business model to accelerate nature protection.
- **NPO, Nature Protection Organization:** NPO is a role within the UON operating model for organizations that actively conserve, protect, or restore vast terrestrial or marine areas, entered into by signing the UON Framework Agreement.
- **Nature Area:** The geographically delimited terrestrial or marine area that is actively managed and protected by an NPO in collaboration with local and/or indigenous communities.
- **Reserve:** The geographically delimited area within the Nature Area that is part of the UON operating model and is onboarded in the Uon.Store for the issuing of Uon as agreed in the UON Project Agreement.
- **Grid:** A predefined planetary raster of uniquely geocoded units.
- **Unit of Nature:** Either 1 m² of terrestrial area or 9 m² of marine area as defined by the Grid within a Reserve upon which UON can issue 1 Uon.
- **Uon:** A unique digital proof of protection of a sustainably protected geocoded Unit of Nature registered in your name.

Criteria for an NPO

An NPO is required to sustainably protect the Nature Area/Reserve, and to be able to scale to accelerate nature protection. 'Sustainably' meaning both 'for a long term' and 'without doing harm'.

1. Legal and Governance

An NPO must:

- 1.1 be registered as an independent not-for-profit organization and recognized as such by the local competent authority based on the location of the organization's headquarters;
- 1.2 exist for at least 3 years with a proven track record in nature conservation, protection, restoration, or regeneration;
- 1.3 have an independent board;
- 1.4 submit reports on the organization's work and the Nature Area/Reserve at least once a year.

2. Nature Conservation Capacity

An NPO must:

- 2.1 hold records of at least 2 years experience in conservation fieldwork activities with more than 100 hectares of nature owned/managed by the NPO, its subsidiaries, or local partners;
- 2.2 have at least 2 reports available upon request from its past years and be capable of submitting quarterly reports in a timely and accurate manner upon request.

3. Nature Conservation Scalability

To jumpstart the model, NPOs onboard existing protected areas of nature as a Reserve and use the proceeds from the UON operating model to protect new areas of nature on a 1-on-1 basis.

An NPO must:

- 3.1 match every Unit of Nature upon which a Uon has been issued with a unit of nature in a new protected area, at some time in the future somewhere (**Matching Obligation**).

If fulfilling the Matching Obligation is not possible (e.g. no new project) while the Units of Nature in the Reserve run out, an NPO can enlarge the Reserve.

- 3.2 fulfill their Matching Obligation at any time simply by stating that "*X m² of our new nature project Y were made possible by UON*".

4. Communication Capacity

An NPO must:

- 4.1 manage a profile page on EarthToday, uploading at least 2 content 'cards' per week, with at least 1 card in each area 'deck';
- 4.2 produce communications and marketing materials in line with UON and EarthToday in English;
- 4.3 have at least 1 full-time employee as a marketing/communication manager;
- 4.4 be willing to produce or source high-quality visual materials, when the situation requires, within a limited timeframe.



Criteria for a Reserve

5. Location

A Reserve must:

5.1 be located in a 'natural region'.

Based on the general agreement on the definition of 'nature' and 'natural', UON defines 'nature' and 'natural region' as the places where the landscape has not been significantly altered by human intervention, or which persist despite human intervention. E.g. an urban green space, a zoo, or a tree farm are not eligible to become a Nature Area.

6. Size

A Reserve must:

6.1 span at least 1,000,000 Units of Nature.

7. Ownership & Duration

The NPO must:

7.1 present evidence that the organization or its subsidiaries are actively in hold of a certain type of land/marine/coastal tenure that ensures governance and protection of the Nature Area and Reserve for at least an estimated 20 years, preferably longer.

7.2 If in the Reserve restoration/regeneration/tree planting methods are applied, it must have been in the process of being regreened/restored/regenerated for at least 2 years, preferably longer.

8. Scalability

The NPO should:

8.1 have the potential to expand the agreed Reserve within the Nature Area upon request.

9. Conservation Value

The NPO must:

9.1 monitor and measure its impact within the Nature Area/Reserve to prove that it positively contributes to the following:

- a) preserve, conserve, or restore biodiversity and ecosystem;
- b) mitigate climate change by presenting a reliable estimate of the carbon storage and sequestration capacity;
- c) experiment and showcase innovative conservation methodologies.

10. Community Engagement

The NPO must:

10.1 show proof of engaging and supporting local communities in its decision-making and operations.



11. Geo Referencing Capability

A Reserve must:

11.1 be defined by one (or more) geo-perimeter(s) defined using Geo Information System mapping and cadastration methodologies.

The NPO must:

11.2 provide the geo-perimeter(s) in advance, for testing and assuring the Reserve aligns with user experience requirements.

12. Stability

A Reserve must:

12.1 be located in a 'relatively stable' region to ensure the continuity of protection and the interests of the Uon holders.

It will be identified as 'stable' when it is located in a region or nation state which:

- a) has been ranked up to place 160 in the past three years' Ease of Doing Business Index published by the World Bank;
- b) has scored at least 30 on the past three years' Corruption Index published by Transparency International;
- c) has not had an overall score above 3 ("very low") in the past three years' Global Peace Index (GPI) published by Vision of Humanity.

The NPO must:

12.2 report in a timely and reliable manner in case any part of the Nature area/Reserve faces a threat that may result in a violation of these Criteria.

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