



CHECKLIST FOR INVITING PARTICIPANTS TO MEETINGS IN SWITZERLAND AT THE INVITATION OF A NON-GOVERNMENTAL ORGANISATION (NGO)

STEPS	WHAT	WHEN
1. Identify the participant		As early as possible
2. Check if a visa is needed to enter Switzerland	Please verify here: https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/publiservice/weisungen-kreisschreiben/visa/liste1_staatsangehoerigkeit.html	
3. If yes, identify the competent embassy according to the place of residence	Normally, the visa request must be lodged at the Swiss embassy/consulate responsible for the applicant's place of residence, and in some cases will be handled by an outsourcing centre. Switzerland has agreements with certain Schengen states that allow them to issue visas on its behalf where Switzerland is not represented. If another state issues visas on behalf of Switzerland, the process and the documents required may differ. We advise the inviting NGO to check with the competent representation if such agreements apply to their case. You can find the nearest Swiss embassy or consulate responsible for the applicant's place of residence by consulting the following link: https://www.swiss-visa.ch/register/i210_select_country_view.action	
4. Visa validity and maximum length of stay	If the participant is already holder of a valid Schengen visa, verify that it still covers the foreseen trip. Schengen allows a maximum stay of 90 days within a 180-day period. See calculator: https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/aufenthaltsrechner.html	
5. Ensure that the participant has received an invitation letter from your NGO with the correct personal details on it.	Please refer to the template in the annex. The letter must state: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Last name, first name (exactly the same as in passport); - Length of the stay; - The NGO's mission in relation to the planned visit of the applicant and the link between the NGO and Switzerland; - Why and how the applicant has been selected and in which capacity they will participate in the event; - Covering of costs (travel, hotel, insurance) 	
6. Contact the Swiss embassy/consulate responsible for handling the application	<p>a) Book an appointment 2 months before departure;</p> <p>b) Enquire which additional documents (other than those listed under point 7) are needed to apply for a visa for Switzerland as requirements differ depending on the country of residence.</p> <p>The processing time for visa applications varies and depends on local circumstances. Participants requiring an entry visa are advised to book their appointment 2 months before departure. All applicants need an appointment in order to submit their visa application. Please bear in mind when arranging your appointment that the visa procedure takes at least 15 days once a complete application file with all required documents has been submitted.</p> <p>Please note that Switzerland applies the European Schengen regulations concerning the issuing of visas. In October 2011, Schengen member states introduced the Visa Information System (VIS), which is used to store the biometric data (10 fingerprints and facial image) of Schengen visa applicants. All Swiss embassies and consulates are connected to the VIS system. It is therefore necessary for visa applicants to present themselves in person to submit and register their</p>	2 months before departure

	biometric data. This biometric data remains valid in the VIS system for a period of 5 years.	
7. <u>BEFORE starting the visa application process:</u> <u>DOCUMENTS CHECKLIST</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An application form for short stays duly filled out and signed by the applicant (The form is available at the following link: https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise/visumantragsformular.html) • A valid travel document (must be valid for at least 3 months after the return date and issued within the last 10 years) and a copy of it • Valid residency permit or equivalent document (e.g. exit/return visa) that allows the applicant to travel back to their residence country • Two recent passport-sized photographs • A letter of invitation from the inviting NGO in Switzerland (please refer to point 5 above and to the template in the annex) • Proof of financial resources of the applicant: recent pay slip and a recent certified bank statement • Proof of health and repatriation insurance valid for the Schengen states and covering a minimum amount of EUR 30,000 • A hotel reservation • A flight reservation/booking including return flight • For employees: confirmation of employer stating the function, the basic monthly salary, duration of employment and confirming that the applicant will return to their job after completion of their stay in Switzerland • For self-employed persons: confirmation of their registration documents • Additional documents may be required by the Swiss embassy/consulate 	
8. Focal point for participants	The visa application process must be monitored by an inviting NGO's focal point in Geneva or in the field in order to ensure that all requirements are fulfilled and that the participants are present for the appointment at the embassy/consulate.	
9. <u>Booking the trip if the Swiss authorities delivered a visa with "limited territorial validity", valid only for Switzerland, instead of a Schengen visa.</u>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Do not book a flight with a stopover in a country of the Schengen area*. b) In case of stopovers outside the Schengen area, ensure that the participant has no restriction to travel to that country. c) Do not pay for a flight before having the assurance that the visa will be delivered in due time. 	
10. Before travelling the participant must have:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Valid travel documents b) Visas to <u>exit</u> the country of residence, for <u>entry</u> into Switzerland and, if applicable, <u>re-entry</u> into the country of residence c) The official personalised letter of invitation and a copy of all the documents submitted to the embassy 	

* **List of countries in Schengen area:** Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland.

More general information about visas can be found by consulting the website of the State Secretariat for Migration: <https://www.sem.admin.ch/sem/en/home/themen/einreise.html>