

Membership Policy

Preamble

Common Space is a nonprofit organisation building a satellite constellation, independently owned and operated from governments, to make high-resolution Earth observation (EO) imagery radically more accessible. Our mission is to ensure that communities, civil society, humanitarians, researchers, and citizens everywhere can use this data to protect lives, advance rights, and understand our world.

This Membership Policy establishes who may join the Common Space community as a Member, on what terms, and what rights and responsibilities membership confers. It is grounded in the Common Space Principles — particularly the commitments to radical openness, human dignity, do-no-harm, equity of access, transparency, and independence from national or geopolitical influence.

Membership is not merely a transactional arrangement. It is a covenant: participants agree to uphold the Common Space Principles and to contribute, in ways proportionate to their capacity, to the sustainability and integrity of the mission.

1. Purpose

This Policy applies to individuals, organisations, and governments that seek to join the Common Space community as an Observer or a Member. It sets out:

- the participation available to non-commercial members and the criteria for each;
- the financial contribution framework applicable to members and how costs are distributed equitably;
- the rights, obligations, and governance roles of members;
- the processes for application, vetting, renewal, and termination; and
- the mechanisms for community protection and impacted-community responsibilities.

Complaints, violations, and oversight processes applicable to all participants — including Members — are set out in the Common Space Complaints Policy. This Policy is to be read alongside the Common Space Principles, the Member

Agreement, and the Complaints Policy, which together form the full terms of membership.

2. Guiding Principles for Membership

The design of the Common Space membership model is guided by the following commitments, drawn from the Common Space Principles and from extensive consultation with the Common Space community:

2.1 Universal Eligibility

Anyone should be able to apply and participate. Common Space commits to erecting no unnecessary legal, technical, or financial barriers to access. The application process is open, transparent, and non-discriminatory. Vetting exists to protect the mission and the communities it serves — not to exclude.

2.2 Equity Over Revenue

Humanitarian actors, NGOs, courts, human rights organisations, climate and disaster response bodies, and individuals and communities in harm's way shall receive free access, with no fee or cost barriers, in order to keep access as frictionless as possible for these users. Paying participants receive no precedence over non-paying members: any contribution reflects capacity, not privilege.

2.3 Mission-Aligned Sustainability

Common Space acknowledges that open data is not cost-free. Satellite acquisition, processing, and delivery carry real costs. A mission-aligned financial model is necessary to sustain operations, particularly given the instability of humanitarian funding. Financial sustainability must never compromise mission integrity.

2.4 Transparency and Accountability

All membership tiers, pricing principles, vetting criteria, and governance processes are publicly documented. Common Space will publish the results of its complaints and review processes (subject to appropriate privacy protections, as set out in the Common Space Complaints Policy). Membership decisions — including denials or terminations — are communicated with clear reasoning.

2.5 Independence

Common Space does not accept arrangements that compromise its operational or governance independence, or that create conflicts of interest with its

humanitarian mission. No government or funder may exercise undue influence over tasking priorities, data access decisions, or governance structures.

3. Membership Tiers

Common Space operates a tiered participation model for non-commercial participants. Tiers are differentiated by the type of organisation and the nature of their engagement with Common Space data and governance. All tiers are governed by the Member Agreement and the Common Space Principles.

Tier	Who (illustrative, not exhaustive)	Financial Contribution	Key Rights & Responsibilities
Observer	Individuals, community groups, researchers, informal civil society	Free	Access to open-licensed imagery and the Knowledge Hub. No voting rights. May apply for Member status.
Member	NGOs, academic institutions, research bodies, humanitarian actors, civil society organisations, governments, intergovernmental organisations, First Nations and Indigenous stakeholders, commercial organisations	Free for public interest Tiered, annual fee for private sector	Full data access (subject to vetting). Ability to request tasking. Vote in Working Groups. Participate in governance consultations. Must comply with the Member Agreement and Common Space Principles.

4. Financial Contribution Framework

4.1 General Principles

Common Space adopts a sliding-scale financial model for members. The following principles apply:

- Pricing is transparent and reflects the genuine cost of collecting and delivering imagery.
- Nonprofits, researchers, students, multilaterals, and government members receive free access.
- Private sector pay an annual membership fee to gain access to the archive and ongoing collections during their membership
- Financial contribution confers no precedence in data access or governance.
- In-kind contributions (technical, operational, or other services) may be accepted in lieu of financial membership contributions as agreed in writing with Common Space.

4.2 Minimum Contributions

Public interest members with financial capacity are encouraged to contribute according to their means. The minimum annual financial contribution, where applicable, is USD \$TBD.

4.3 Accessibility Mechanisms

Common Space will explore and, where viable, implement mechanisms to ensure participation is not foreclosed by financial constraint, including pay-forward schemes enabling funded members to sponsor access for others (e.g. start-ups).

4.4 Review of Contribution Levels

Contribution levels will be reviewed annually and published on the Common Space website. Any changes to the pricing framework will be subject to community consultation and published with no less than 90 days' notice.

5. Application and Vetting Process

5.1 How to Apply

Any eligible entity may apply for Observer or Member status through the Common Space website. The application process is open and

non-discriminatory. Applications are assessed against the Common Space Principles and the criteria relevant to the tier being sought.

5.2 Due Diligence

All applicants undergo due-diligence screening. This may include:

- Review of the applicant's purpose, activities, and track record;
- Verification of good standing with relevant governmental authorities (including certificates of good standing where applicable);
- Assessment of any potential conflict with the Common Space Principles, including human rights (specifically International Humanitarian Law), do-no-harm, and environmental-harm obligations; and
- Background checks by a third-party entity of Common Space's choosing, where appropriate.

Particular care is applied where applicants operate in or adjacent to conflict zones or hold governmental or military affiliations.

5.3 Military and Dual-Use Applicants

Common Space recognises that in non-conflict disaster and emergency settings, military organisations may play a legitimate civil protection role (e.g. search and rescue). However, Common Space imagery is intended for humanitarian and commercial use only — not for defense and intelligence purposes.

Applications from military organisations, defence contractors, or government security agencies will be:

- assessed on a strict case-by-case basis;
- evaluated against clearly defined humanitarian criteria and rules of engagement;
- subject to enhanced human review, including review by the Membership Steering Committee where appropriate; and
- refused where there is a material risk of mission creep, targeting of civilian areas, or compromise of Common Space's independence and reputation.

Non-conflict disaster zones are subject to a faster-track access process; conflict zones require additional human oversight and may be refused, except in cases where emergency exceptions are granted.

5.4 Notification of Decisions

Applicants will be notified of the outcome of their application within a reasonable timeframe. Where an application is declined, Common Space will provide reasons. Applicants may appeal a decision by writing to the Ombudsman within 30 days of receiving the decision, in accordance with the Common Space Complaints Policy.

6. Member Rights and Responsibilities

6.1 Member Rights

All members in good standing are entitled to:

- Access to Common Space imagery, subject to the applicable licence terms;
- Recognition as a Common Space member on the website and in promotional materials;
- A vote in any working group,
- Opportunity to participate in the Membership Advisory Committee;
- Contribution to governance consultations and policy development;
- Co-development of use cases demonstrating the benefit of Common Space data, with promotional support from Common Space;
- Access to a vibrant network of practitioners, NGOs, researchers, and technologists working with geographic and EO data.

6.2 Member Responsibilities

All members agree to:

- Comply with the Member Agreement, the Common Space Principles, and recognised international charters (UDHR, IHL, Locus Charter);
- Use data only in ways consistent with the purpose for which membership was granted;
- Actively participate in at least one Working Group;
- Promote the Common Space mission and hold Common Space accountable through direct, constructive feedback;
- Not transfer membership rights or credentials to any other individual, entity, or government contractor;
- Report suspected misuse of Common Space data promptly to Common Space staff or the Ombudsman, in accordance with the Common Space Complaints Policy;
- Pay their agreed financial contribution on time, or notify Common Space promptly if payment is not possible.

6.3 Impacted Community Responsibilities

Common Space recognises special responsibilities toward communities whose territories, environments, or lives are depicted in Common Space imagery. Where communities — including Indigenous communities — raise concerns about imagery that poses a risk to their safety, privacy, or rights, Common Space will:

- Establish a documented process for communities to request review or restriction of imagery;
- Ensure that requests are assessed by a competent and impartial body, with appropriate verification of the community representative's standing;
- Maintain transparency about collection activities and provide notification where practicable; and
- Where restriction is not possible, provide access to historical data repositories for academic and educational purposes with appropriate safeguards.

7. Governance Participation

Common Space is committed to inclusive, multi-stakeholder governance. Membership is a pathway to genuine influence over the mission — not merely a licence to use data.

7.1 Working Groups

Members participate in one or more Working Groups to be defined. Working Groups advise the Board on policy and operational matters and review membership requests, including military-actor exceptions. Leadership roles are open for any member of the Working Group and are elected by the group.

7.2 Membership Steering Committee

A Membership Committee provides members with representation and a vote on cross-cutting membership matters. Its composition, remit, and election process will be defined and published separately.

7.3 Community Voices

Common Space is committed to ensuring that humanitarian practitioners, civil society, affected communities, environmentalists, academics, and citizens can participate in shaping policies and governance. Mechanisms for broader community input (beyond formal membership) will be developed and published separately.

8. Term, Renewal and Termination

8.1 Term

Membership commences on the date the Member Agreement is signed by all parties and continues for 12 months. Members in good standing are invited to renew at the end of each term under the current terms and conditions.

8.2 Good Standing

A member is in good standing when they have: paid their agreed support contribution (or had it waived); complied with the Member Agreement and Common Space Principles; and not been subject to unresolved disciplinary proceedings.

8.3 Termination

Either party may terminate membership on 60 days' written notice. Common Space may terminate immediately (subject to due process) in the event of:

- material breach of the Member Agreement or Common Space Principles;
- failure to pay the agreed support contribution, following a 60-day Cure Period;
- misuse of data in violation of licence terms;
- conduct that poses a serious risk of harm to communities or to the Common Space mission.

Upon termination, all data access ceases. Termination decisions may be appealed through the Common Space Complaints Policy.

9. Policy Review

This Policy will be reviewed annually by the Governance Working Group, in consultation with the broader Common Space community. Any proposed material changes will be published for community comment for no less than 60 days before adoption. The current version of this Policy is available on the Common Space website.

Appendix A: Key Reference Documents

The following documents are referenced in or relevant to this Policy:

- Common Space Principles

- Common Space Member Agreement
- Common Space Complaints Policy

Appendix B: Glossary

- **Administrator:** An agent, executive, or employee of a member organisation with authority to designate Authorised Representatives.
- **Authorised Representative:** An individual authorised by a member to access Common Space data and member benefits on behalf of that member.
- **Common Space Community:** The collective of all Common Space members and partners.
- **Good Standing:** The status of a member who has met their financial obligations, complied with the Member Agreement and Common Space Principles, and is not subject to unresolved disciplinary proceedings.
- **In-Kind Contribution:** A non-financial contribution (technical, operational, or other services) accepted in lieu of a financial support contribution, as agreed in writing with Common Space.
- **Support Contribution:** The financial (or in-kind) contribution made by a member as a condition of access to member benefits.
- **Working Group:** A governance body within Common Space's Membership Steering Committee (currently: Governance, Pricing & Licensing, Technical) open to member participation.