

YOUNGO Local Conference Of Youth (COY) Policy

[Adopted by 28th Feb, 2019]

[Link to the version 2.0](#)

[Link to the version 1.0](#)

This is a policy for YOUNGO Local Conference of Youth (“LCOY”). This policy aims to set out general expectations that a Local COY must meet: the request process to be followed by the Local COY organisers, and the process for approval in order to be officially supported and recognised as a Local COY by YOUNGO. Youth are also free to host their own conferences of any size or type apart from YOUNGO and COY.

Informal translation of the LCOY policy with the purpose to increase the understanding for the LCOY policy. Please note that the LCOY process will always be implemented in line with the official LCOY policy (English version). Please see the informal [Spanish translation](#) and the [French translation](#).

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Preamble

- YOUNGO is the officially recognized constituency of “global youth” to UN Climate Change processes. It comprises youth and youth-centric organizations, that participate in the international climate negotiations in the realm of UN Climate Change. More information about YOUNGO’s purpose and Structure can be found [here](#).
- In 2005, youth formally gathered in Montreal ahead of COP11 to make their voices heard, thus creating the first Conference of Youth (COY). Since 2015, COYs have been decentralised, with Local COYs (LCOYs) happening all across the globe.
- **Definitions of associated terms:**
 - **Global COY:** Usually on the weekend ahead of the annual climate change negotiations (or the UN [Conference of Parties](#), “COP”), a global COY takes place in the same location as the COP itself. YOUNGO COY WG usually invites individuals and organizations in YOUNGO who live or work near the venue of the COP (that changes

every year) to take a leading role as custodians for organizing YOUNGO's annual Global COY.

- **Local COY:** The term is used to refer to any COY other than the Global COY. It will continue to be used as an umbrella term for this purpose.
- **Scope of a Local COY:** A Local COY can be of following nature:
 - **National /Sub-National COY:** Shall refer to a COY organized by and for the youth in a single country. For larger countries, or as deemed necessary because of logistical or geographic reasons, it is possible to have more than one National COY, in case of which they may be called as “sub-national COY” (for example, one on each coast of the USA);
 - **Regional /Sub-Regional COY:** Shall refer to a COY organized by youth of two or more neighbouring countries and for the youth of an entire region or sub-region such as “African COY”, “Pacific COY”, “Scandinavian COY”. Both, organising team and participants are meant to thoroughly represent the region/sub-region. Because of the nature and dynamics of the regions, or as deemed necessary because of logistical or geographic reasons, it is suggested to have Sub-regional focus as well, such as a “Sub-Saharan COY”, “South Asian COY”, “South-East Asian COY”.
 - The scope presented above are examples, the final approval of a proposed LCOY and its scope shall be done via consensus based decision making processes of YOUNGO.
- **Local COY Working Group:** A group of interested members within YOUNGO who will help with the approval process, maintain contact with all Local COYs (seeking to match their preferred language of interaction) in order to coordinate, support, and monitor them for compliance with the Local COY Agreement.
- **co-LCOYs:** Suppose 30 LCOYs are happening in an year; the LCOYs with respect to each other would be called as “co-LCOY”; for example, a national COY in Haiti would be a co-LCOY to a national COY in Austria given that they occur within the same year.

Section 1: General Policy for Local COYs

1. COY is a YOUNGO event. Without YOUNGO there can be no COY.
 - a. The name, “COY”, and “Local Conference of Youth (LCOY)”, is the collective intellectual property of YOUNGO, and as such may only be used by YOUNGO, or by other youth who YOUNGO has given permission to under this Policy;
 - b. A conference can only be called LCOY, if it is officially approved by YOUNGO and close communication and collaboration takes place during the planning. The hub for this inclusion and collaborative work will be the LCOY WG of YOUNGO;
 - c. YOUNGO welcomes and values the contributions that individuals who identify themselves as members of marginalized communities bring to the climate movement, and encourage indigenous people, people of colour, women, people identifying as LGBTQI+, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants and people with disabilities to be involved and represented in the process at all levels (this list is neither exhaustive nor representative of the intersectionality present within each individual). It is expected that this is recognized in any organisation of any event or within the domain of YOUNGO.
2. YOUNGO invites people and organizations in YOUNGO to request (see Section 2) and organize (see Section 3) National, Sub-Regional and Regional COYs in their own countries or regions.

3. LCOY is a conference organised by the youth for the youth:
 - a. The organising process of the conference has to be led by youth individuals or youth-led Entities¹. Support or coordination with non youth Entities (whether individual or institutional) can take place, as long as it does not interfere with the youth led process;
 - b. The organisation of the conference shall, as far as possible, take place in a participatory and collaborative manner, allowing young people from different organisations, backgrounds, and/or levels of experience to engage in the process. Networks as described in in 4.d can be used or may be established for this purpose.
 - c. Primary target audience of LCOYs shall be the youth. Other individuals may participate as well, as long as these interactions do not compromise the youth driven process or objectives of COYs.

4. Any LCOY shall focus on empowering youth action around climate change - [on the communities, national and regional levels](#) - in the international context of the UNFCCC negotiations:
 - a. Objective of LCOYs is to educate, build knowledge and understanding among the national and regional youth on climate change, sustainable development, and United Nations system, especially UNFCCC processes and the annual UN Climate Change Conferences (COPs), as well as empowering young people to participate in these processes, by:
 - i. developing positions of youth on issues related to climate change that are relevant in the respective country or region. Those positions are meant to be fed into the Global COY as to be then reflected as a part of YOUNGO inputs to the annual COPs and are a basis to spread perspectives and ideas of youth around the globe;
 - ii. the LCOY should provide appropriate space and programming to enable participants' effective preparation and engagement at the COP and gain further knowledge about the UNFCCC;
 - iii. This is what distinguishes a LCOY from other youth-led (climate) conferences and is intended to be the primary objective of an LCOY.
 - b. LCOY is a space to empower young people living within the Scope of their conference (national, regional, sub-regional) to take action on climate change and sustainability. This can happen, among other ways, through:
 - i. sharing knowledge and experiences regarding further youth-relevant topics (e.g., social justice issues, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)) which intersect with climate change;
 - ii. capacity building and raising awareness on climate change, its causes and impacts and ways to advocate for related interests of young people among national/regional youth;

¹ all formal and informal child-led, youth-led, and child-and-youth-serving public interest federations, unions, organisations, platforms, associations, councils, networks, movements, mechanisms, structures and other entities - are henceforth called as "Entities"

- iii. connecting youth (organisations) nationally and regionally;
 - iv. developing new and strengthening existing climate and sustainability related projects, campaigns and action plans.
- c. LCOYs connect to each other in a network of conferences and explore synergies of cooperation. This may include but is not limited to:
- i. fostering communication between LCOYs *for example* by organizing participant exchanges between different LCOYs or virtual participation during the event, if possible;
 - ii. engaging in collaborative projects, joint campaigns, action plans;
 - iii. providing mutual support to co-LCOY organizers by offering help and making information and best practices available.
- d. LCOY organizers must engage in and strengthen already-existing networks of young people and youth Entities² within Scope of the LCOY. In absence of such avenues, LCOYs are encouraged to explore laying foundation for new networks.
5. LCOY organizers can seek out sponsors to support the event, if these are ethically acceptable to YOUNGO (see funding Conflict of Interest in COY Handbook linked in Section 3).
6. Ideally, youth individuals or organisations involved in the planning of the LCOY should already be involved in YOUNGO and should receive UNFCCC accreditations to participate in the climate summit; however new members are indeed welcome to the constituency.

Section 2: Local COY Request and Approval Process

1. A request form (“LCOY Request Form”) has been developed, which is required to be filled and upon the approval the request, the proposed conference can officially be called a Local COY. In the form, possible LCOY organisers will be asked to provide details about the planning process of the respective conference, which include but are not limited to:
 - a. Scope of the Local COY (as explained in the Preamble): Approval of any Local COY requires consensus among all relevant actors within the Local COY’s intended scope;
 - b. Details regarding the Organising Team (involved youth organisations + contact details, structure of the team, non-youth partners, sponsors) with a clear plan for how they will take decisions and work well together between different group/organizations/etc.;
 - c. Prior experience with YOUNGO, if any;
 - d. Prior experience with COY, if any;

² One source to locate such organisations / networks can be the YOUNGO membership sheet at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1i94halOr31HqNkKo5Lgh1NxbFUfT2RMBj0VgRYwNP4/edit#gid=0>

- e. Statement of aims (expected number of participants, topics, other plans);
 - f. Plan for implementation;
 - g. Draft budget and a fundraising strategy/plan;
2. While English is the preferred language for request forms, they will be accepted in any official UN language (the YOUNGO COY WG will then make any necessary translation);
 3. Requests for acknowledgement can be sent via the form throughout the year. They will be considered in tranches based on their date of submission:
 - a. First Tranche: submitted before 1st April;
 - b. Second Tranche: submitted before 15th May;
 - c. Third Tranche: submitted before 15th June ;
 - d. Fourth Tranche: submitted before 30th July;
 - e. Fifth Tranche: submitted before 1st September;
 - f. Final Tranche: request submitted not later than 45 days before Global COY;

The LCOYWG can adapt or extend the deadlines for tranches based on past experiences or in case of special circumstances. Requests that are submitted later than 45 days before Global COY may be reviewed on a rolling bases.
 4. It is strongly encouraged for the organizers to begin working on a Local COY as early as possible during the year, especially for those organizing their very first one.
 5. Requests will be reviewed regarding the compliance with Section 1 by the LCOY Working Group (“LCOY WG”, refer to “Preamble” for definition) and other volunteers from LCOYWG and who might also seek for clarifications from the organisers of a proposed LCOY, and would then go through the standard decision making processes of YOUNGO for YOUNGO to endorse the proposed LCOY.
 6. If the proposed LCOY in question is being taken into close consideration for approval, its team members are invited to a video call with the support team of the LCOY WG.
 7. Approvals and denials, along with feedback (if any) shall be sent back within a **maximum** of 2 weeks after the deadline of submission for each tranche. Should there be any “exceptional” circumstances, that require different timelines or solutions, YOUNGO and COY Working Group may use decision-making procedures (along with their timeline) to adapt the procedure to the “exceptional” circumstances. “Exceptional” circumstances can include (but are not limited to) different timelines to do the fundraising or mitigation of any form of conflict. Such measures shall be deployed only when there is enough prerogative to diverge from standard timelines.
 8. Approved LCOY organizers will be asked to sign the Local COY Agreement (see section 3). In return, they will receive an endorsement letter (in English and in any further languages if mentioned in the request form, contingent upon capacity for translation), can use the opportunity to present the respective LCOY on a centralized website, and YOUNGO website (should such and further such avenues exist), along with the allowance to use the official logo of YOUNGO on the website and other outreach documents related to their LCOY.
 9. Failure to uphold this agreement can result in YOUNGO withdrawing its endorsement of the Local COY in question, should reasonable efforts within the COY WG not resolve such problems. Dissociation may include, but it is not limited to: 1) contacting the sponsors of the Local COY, 2) issuing (a) public statement(s), 3) not recognizing any outputs from the COY for inclusion in YOUNGO’s work at the COP.

10. The COY WG may assign the Local COY one or more liaison(s) from the LCOY WG, depending on the available capacity.
11. Updates about the Local COY are periodically offered to the LCOY WG, with any further actions taken as needed.

Approval Process revisited (step - by - step):

1. Request form submitted (typically a google form);
2. Form is translated into English for review (if not already in English);
3. LCOY WG *application team* reviews the form and requests any needed clarification from the proposers;
4. Once all else is in order, the LCOY WG will seek to verify consensus among the relevant actors within the Local COY's scope about who will organize it;
 - a. For a national LCOY, having the main national youth climate actors (explained in the Preamble) showing support on the request form (either as hosting partners or supporters) is sufficient proof of consensus;
 - b. In the case where more than one LCOY would make logistical and/or geographical sense, the LCOY WG may endorse more than one LCOY for the same country/region (for example, one on each coast of the USA). In any case, close communication with all involved actors will be happen before any approval
 - c. For a regional or sub-regional Local COY (due to the very nature of it), it is recommended that a more thorough public process must be used, reaching out to all of YOUNGO and other appropriate contacts avenues in order to make sure that the entire region or sub-region is thoroughly represented in the organising team and to bring to light any lack of consensus and hopefully avoid a party later contesting the legitimacy of the COY; Organiser of proposed regional COYs, together with LCOY WG shall ensure proper processes in place. Any conflicts, if mediated under YOUNGO, shall be resolved through YOUNGO decision making procedures.
5. Once consensus on the scope is confirmed, and the request is officially approved by YOUNGO, an official approval letter from the YOUNGO LCOY WG is issued to the proposers within a maximum of 4 weeks after the deadline of the respective tranche (in both English and the language used in the request form, if other than English);
6. The COY WG assigns the Local COY liaison(s) from the LCOY WG depending on the available capacities;
7. The organizers begin working on implementing their Local COY;
8. Updates about the Local COY are periodically offered to the LCOY WG, with any further actions taken as needed.

Section 3: Local COY Agreement

Failure to uphold this agreement can result in YOUNGO withdrawing its endorsement of the Local COY in question, should reasonable efforts within the COY WG not resolve such problems. Dissociation may include, but it is not limited to: 1) contacting the sponsors of the Local COY, 2) issuing (a) public statement(s), 3) not recognizing any outputs from the COY for inclusion in YOUNGO's work at the COP.

A Local COY:

1. *Shall,*

- a. Abide by all elements of the General COY Policy (Section 1).
- b. Stay in close contact with the Local Working Group for the purpose of guidance, support, and oversight; this includes to at least provide responses to the feedback forms sent out by the LCOY Working Group.
- c. Noting regional and national circumstances, provide information for the website www.conference-of-youth.org at least twice, once after the application process and after the conclusion of the conference. In doing so, they should follow the guidelines and recommendations from the the LCOY Working Group on what information to provide and the method of doing so.
- d. Organize itself effectively in order to maintain the good reputation of the COY and YOUNGO;
- e. Write and publish a brief report about the LCOY, comprising information about the number of participants, statistics of their origin, and cooperating organisations. This report may also include information about main achievements, problems encountered, lessons learnt, or other types of information.

2. *Should,*

- a. Provide a COP-relevant output document to feed the views of their youth participants into the main COY and the COP - such a document could capture views on different topics under UNFCCC processes, and related processes in United Nations;
- b. Consult the '[YOUNGO Handbook for COY](#)', reports from previous COYs (e.g. [COY13](#), [COY11](#)), and the LCOY Toolkit to find further information based on past experiences with organizing COYs, including conflict-of-interest guidelines on sources of funding (see also other guiding documents as appropriate);

3. *Is encouraged to,*

- a. Focus on the climate-related issues specific to their country/region;
- b. Reach a wide number of less climate-engaged youth in their country/region in order to bring them into climate action and the international climate process;
- c. Conduct itself in whatever language(s) are most accessible in their country/region.
- d. Avoid scheduling conflicts between regional COYs and any other COYs within that region;

Section 4: LCOY principles & minimum requirements

Based on the above sections, 10 principles and 6 minimum-requirements summarise what LCOYs are in their essence. Should information in this section stand in contradiction with Section 1 or Section 2, the information in these other Sections shall always get priority.

Principles

1. **Capacity building and empowerment:** Local Conferences of Youth, LCOYs, are events by and embedded in the YOUNGO that build capacities and knowledge of, train, educate and empower young people in a country or region to take action on climate change and sustainable development.³ (see LCOY policy Section, 1 §4.b)
2. **Inclusivity:** Engagement in the organising process of, and participation at the Local COYs should follow the principle of inclusivity. YOUNGO welcomes and values the contributions that individuals who identify as members of marginalized communities bring to the climate movement, and encourages Indigenous people, people of colour, women, people identifying as LGBTQI+, members of ethnic minorities, immigrants and people with disabilities to be involved and represented throughout the LCOY processes. We recognize that this list is neither exhaustive nor representative of the intersectionality present within each individual. (see LCOY policy Section, 1 §1.c)
3. **Preparation for United Nations processes:** The LCOY provides space for young people to learn about, educate, train for, and contribute to UN climate processes, including the UN climate change negotiations and related sustainable development processes. (see LCOY policy Section, 1 §4.a)
4. **By youth for youth:** The organising process must be led by young people and youth-led Entities. Youth are the primary participants of these conferences. (see LCOY policy Section, 1 §3)
5. **Spirit of cooperation:** LCOYs emanate from, benefit and form a part of community of young people who want to work together to fight climate change and promote mutual empowerment (see §4.c and Section 3, §1.c). To do so, LCOYs actively cooperate with
 - i. young people and youth organisations within the same country or region,
 - ii. co-LCOYs, especially those in the same region,
 - iii. the YOUNGO LCOY Working Group,

³ The LCOY toolkit should outline some examples and types of climate action s.a.

- a. collaboration with governments or institutions on the implementation of NDCs or National Adaptation Plans
- b. lobbying at national (/local/regional) governments
- c. awareness campaigns and activism
- d. launching new youth NGOs
- e. creating sustainable businesses
- f. improving resilience to climate impacts
- g. collective behavioural change
- h. art projects
- i. hosting new empowerment campaigns

- iv. the Global COY and other relevant processes and avenues within YOUNGO
6. **Transparency:** LCOY organizing teams should communicate actively with LCOY Working Group and other actors. This will help us as an international movement and constituency of young people to learn from the experiences and mistakes made on the local level (see Section 3, §1.c and §1.d).
7. **Sustainability:** LCOY teams strive to make their conferences as sustainable as possible, noting the regional and national circumstances, and capacities.
8. **Community-building:** LCOY organizers engage in and strengthen already-existing networks of young people and youth Entities⁴ within Scope of the LCOY. In absence of such avenues, LCOYs are encouraged to explore laying foundation for new networks. (see LCOY policy Section, 1 §4.d)
9. **Global action:** LCOY teams are encouraged to undertake activities or projects with co-LCOYs promoting regional or global collaboration. (see LCOY policy Section, 1 §4.c)
10. **Creativity:** LCOY teams are encouraged to experiment with creative ideas that would form basis of their learning curves. The best practices and the lessons learned are shared with the broader YOUNGO community to help other youth for future projects.

Minimum requirements

1. LCOYs shall not accept funding or other forms of support from fossil fuel companies or other, ethically non-acceptable entities. For guidance on what to consider as ethically non-acceptable, please consult the Conflict of Interest Section in COY Handbook (see LCOY policy Section, 1 §5)
2. LCOY shall strictly adhere to the Principle 4: “Organised by youth for youth”
3. LCOYs must, noting regional and national circumstances, provide information for the website www.conference-of-youth.org at least twice, once after the application process and after the conclusion of the conference. In doing so, they should follow the guidelines and recommendations from the the LCOY Working Group on what information to provide and the method of doing so.
4. LCOYs should give regular feedback to the LCOY Working Group via a feedback form that is sent out by the Support team of the LCOY Working Group.

⁴ One source to locate such organisations / networks can be the YOUNGO membership sheet at: <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1i94halOr31HqNkKo5Lgh1NxbFUfT2RMBj0VgRYwNP4/edit#gid=0>

5. LCOY should produce an outcome document capturing views on UNFCCC processes, national policy issues, or other topics related to climate change or sustainable development that are relevant to the participants of the LCOY.
6. LCOYs should write and publish a brief report about the LCOY, comprising information about the number of participants, statistics of their origin, and cooperating organisations. This report may also include information about main achievements, problems encountered, lessons learnt, or other types of information.

Section 5: Frequently Asked Questions

1. **Why do I need an official approval to be able to organise a LCOY?**

As explained in Section 1, the name, “LCOY”, is the collective intellectual property of YOUNGO, and as such may only be used by YOUNGO, or by other youth entities who YOUNGO has given permission. Hence, you need the official approval by YOUNGO. Otherwise, in case of use of term LCOY without endorsement, various steps might be taken which include, but are not limited to: 1) contacting the sponsors of the proposed Local COY, 2) issuing (a) public statement(s), 3) not recognizing any outputs from the COY for inclusion in YOUNGO’s work at the COP.

2. **When should the LCOY take place?**

Ideally, it should take place within 4 weeks before the Global COY (which usually takes place at during the weekend before the start of the annual climate summit). However, if suited reasons are given, a LCOY can also take place before that. 4 weeks before the Global COY is not a hard-timeline, although it is a suggested one. Also, coordinating the scheduling of sub-national, national, sub-regional and regional LCOYs in a region might be expedient to make sure that outcomes of each LCOYs can be fed into the LCOY on the next broader level.

3. **Can there be more than one LCOY in the same country/region?**

Ideally, only one LCOY should take place per country or “region”. However, in case it makes sense due to logistical or geographical reasons, it might be possible that two separate LCOYs take place in the same country/region. In any case, close communication with all involved actors will be happen before any approval. [Refer to Preamble Section, definition for “Scope” for more details on this]

4. **Our request has been rejected, can we hand in an updated version?**

Yes, you can submit an updated version of the request to be considered in the forthcoming tranches.

5. **We do not speak English, can we still organise a Local COY?**

Absolutely yes, a Local COY can be hosted in any language. It is indeed encouraged that LCOYs adapt to the regional and national circumstances relevant to them. However, we encourage that communication with YOUNGO should preferably happen in English, French or other official UN languages.

6. **How can collaboration among LCOYs and the Global COY look like?**

In the past, different collaboration took place:

- Video project: a collective video to present the whole of LCOYs
- Livestreams
- Cross promotion on Social media
- LCOY organisers (who were able to travel to GCOY) presenting their outputs in-person at GCOY
- General exchange on organisation and focus topics/central themes

Please note that this is very much dependent on capacities and circumstances of GCOY and the LCOY, and new ideas of collaboration can be explored and are welcome.

7. How can collaboration between LCOYs look like?

- Participants taking part at several LCOYs; organising youth exchanges
- Creation of common projects
- Shared media campaigns
- Joined Lobbying at regional or international bodies such as ASEAN, EU, AU, etc.

8. What happens if we do not comply with the Local COY Agreement?

Failure to uphold this agreement can result in YOUNGO withdrawing its endorsement of the Local COY in question, should reasonable efforts within the COY WG not resolve such problems. Dissociation may include, but it is not limited to: 1) contacting the sponsors of the Local COY, 2) issuing (a) public statement(s), 3) not recognizing any outputs from the COY for inclusion in YOUNGO's work at the COP.

9. My organisation wants to organise a regional or sub-regional COY, how do we proceed?

If you and your organisation want to organise a LCOY in your region or sub-region, please reach out to the COY Liaisons, the COY WG or the YOUNGO mailing list (before making any concrete actions) to find out whether other organisations based in the same region or sub-region are planning the same or have already successfully applied for the approval by YOUNGO. As regional and sub-regional COYs are also characterized by an organizing team that represents the diversity of nationalities in the region or sub-region, reaching out to YOUNGO is helpful to find further organisations willing to support the respective LCOY planning process. By reaching out to the COY Liaisons, the COYWG or the YOUNGO mailing list you will also find out, whether there is already a regional or sub-regional COY planned and who might be the contact to reach out to in order to join the organising team. As soon as you find sufficient organisations willing to help organise the LCOY of the respective scope, you can submit the approval request.

10. What does it mean to be approved as a Local COY?

This can entail several benefits:

- Authorisation to use "Local Conference of Youth (LCOY)" as the branding of your conference.
- Endorsement by YOUNGO, as a part of which you will be provided with an official approval letter in English and any other requested language (depending on the capacity for translations)
- Authorisation to use the official logo(s) of YOUNGO on all relevant forms of branding (such as website, flyers, publications, etc.) associated with the LCOY.

- Have the outputs of the LCOY being formally fed into GCOY and YOUNGO through avenues that are used by YOUNGO
- Have the opportunity to present your LCOY at a centralized website and YOUNGO website (should such and further such avenues exist)
- Being approved may not necessarily entail any financial benefits (note that YOUNGO, currently, is volunteer-run)