



CONNECT- NM
Coordination of the European
Research Community on Nuclear
Materials for Energy Innovation

A EURATOM Cofund Action



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Guidance for Affiliated Entities

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This document provides guidance on how organisations located in EURATOM Member States, which are not Beneficiaries, can be involved in CONNECT-NM as Affiliated Entities (AEs).

1. Background: Beneficiaries vs. Affiliated Entities

Beneficiaries are organisations mandated by their national programme owners (typically Ministries) to manage their country's participation in the Partnership. The current list of Beneficiaries involved in CONNECT-NM is as follows:

Centro de Investigaciones Energéticas, Medioambientales y Tecnológicas – CIEMAT	ES
Commissariat à l'Energie Atomique et aux Energies Alternatives – CEA	FR
Centre for Energy Research - CER-EK	HU
Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique – CNRS	FR
European Energy Research Alliance – EERA	BE
Agenzia nazionale per le nuove tecnologie, l'energia e lo sviluppo economico sostenibile - ENEA	IT
European Nuclear Energy Network – ENEN	EU
Gesellschaft für Anlagen- und Reaktorsicherheit GmbH – GRS	DE
Jozef Stefan Institute – JSI	SI
Joint Research Centre – JRC	EU
National Science Center Kharkov Institute of Physics and Technology – KIPT	UA
Karlsruher Institut für Technologie – KIT	DE
Narodowy Centrum Badań Jądrowych – NCBJ	PL
Nuclear Research and Consultancy Group – NRG	NL
Regia Autonomă Tehnologii pentru Energia Nucleară – RATEN	RO
Ruđer Boskovic Institute - RBI	HR
Strålsakerhetsmyndigheten – SSM	SE
Sustainable Nuclear Energy Technology Platform – SNETP	EU
Teknologian tutkimuskeskus VTT Oy	FI

Beneficiaries and Affiliated Entities have somewhat different rights, responsibilities, and duties, but both are part of the Consortium and perform tasks as part of Work Packages (WPs), with the possibility of being Task and WP leaders. For this, both can receive EC funding on the same footing. Therefore, they are both subject to financial checks, reviews, and audits, and they both have the same obligations: provide their own financial statement/Certificate on Financial Statements (CFS), contribute to the technical report, submit the deliverables and milestones assigned to them, etc.

Main differences between Affiliated Entities and Beneficiaries

- Affiliated Entities (AEs) do **not** need a national-level mandate.
- AEs do **not** become parties to the Grant Agreement.
- AEs do **not** have voting rights in the General Assembly.

2. Definition and eligibility

Requirements to qualify as an Affiliated Entity

For an organisation to qualify as an Affiliated Entity, a **legal link** with one of the Beneficiaries must exist, such as:

- **Permanent legal structures** (e.g., the relationship between an association and its members);
- **Contractual cooperation not limited to the action** (e.g., an existing collaboration agreement for activities in a field relevant to the action);
- **Capital link**, i.e., direct or indirect control of the Beneficiary, or under the same direct/indirect control, or directly/indirectly controlling the Beneficiary.

The link includes not only the case of parent companies or holdings and their daughter companies or subsidiaries and vice-versa, but also affiliates between themselves (e.g., entities controlled by the same entity, or controlling each other).

Important: The link should **not be limited to CONNECT-NM**, nor established solely for its implementation. Documents should show collaboration prior to CONNECT-NM and intent to continue beyond it. However, an existing contract not covering the full CONNECT-NM duration can still be considered valid by the EC.

The Beneficiary remains **responsible towards the EC** for tasks performed by its AEs and for the recovery of undue payments. The full definition of Affiliated Entities is provided in **Article 8 of the Annotated Grant Agreement**.

3. Commission guidance (Article 8, Annotated Grant Agreement)

The EC defines “link to the beneficiaries” as a legal or capital link that is:

- **Not limited to the action**, and
- **Not established for the sole purpose of its implementation**.

This includes:

- Permanent legal structures (e.g., association-member),
- Contractual cooperation not limited to CONNECT-NM,

- Capital link (direct/indirect control or common ownership).

Examples:

1. **Ownership and control:** Company A (France) owns 20% of Company B (Italy), but has 60% voting rights → eligible AE relationship.
2. **Shared parent:** Company X and Y are both owned by Company Z → both can be AEs.
3. **Supervisory authority:** Ministry A supervises a national agency under national law → eligible AE.
4. **Associations:** The association is the Beneficiary; its members are AEs.
5. **Joint Research Units (JRUs)** are research laboratories or infrastructures jointly created by two or more legal entities to carry out research activities. Although they do not have their own legal personality, they function as a single unit, pooling staff, equipment, and resources from their member organisations for mutual benefit.

In CONNECT-NM, one member of a JRU can act as the Beneficiary, while the other members can participate as Affiliated Entities, provided the following conditions are met:

- The JRU operates as a single scientific and economic unit,
- It is set up to last over a defined period of time,
- It is officially recognised by a public authority under national law.

To prove this, the Beneficiary must submit, via the Coordinator, appropriate documentation to the European Commission (e.g., a law, decree, resolution, or an agreement establishing the JRU) that clearly shows the shared use of research facilities and confirms the JRU's official status.

Participation conditions

Affiliated Entities must:

- Fulfil the conditions for participation and funding.
- Be established in eligible countries (e.g., EU/EURATOM associated countries).

Important: Affiliates in non-associated third countries are *not* eligible to be AEs. Example: Company A (Germany) owns Company B (France) and Company C (non-EU country). B may be an AE; C cannot (may join as an associated partner).

Moreover, Affiliated Entities must:

- Be listed in **Article 8** of the Grant Agreement.
- Have tasks mentioned in **Annex 1**.
- Have their budget in **Annex 2**.

There is **no simplified approval procedure**. Beneficiaries are responsible for implementation quality and timely delivery of AE tasks, and must ensure AEs comply with the same obligations (*mutatis mutandis*).

4. Practical steps for organisations seeking to join CONNECT-NM as AEs

Strictly speaking, there is no formal procedure to “become” an Affiliated Entity. An organisation must **already be affiliated with a Beneficiary before the project proposal is submitted** in order to be considered an Affiliated Entity in CONNECT-NM. If this affiliation is not in place by that time, the organisation **cannot acquire this status later** within the framework of CONNECT-NM.

A key consideration is whether the organisation **meets the Commission’s criteria for affiliation prior to the proposal deadline**. The European Commission ultimately decides if an organisation qualifies as an Affiliated Entity, based on the evidence submitted via the Coordinator, when CONNECT-NM requests a post-call amendment to its Grant Agreement (after project selection).

To be eligible, an organisation must provide evidence of a **pre-existing, broad, and independent link** with the Beneficiary. This typically takes the form of a signed **cooperation agreement** that:

- Is **dated before** the project proposal submission (the older, the better)
- Covers a **scope broader than CONNECT-NM**, and
- Was **not signed solely** to enable participation in CONNECT-NM.

Alternatively, being a **member of one of the three associations** that are Beneficiaries in CONNECT-NM (EERA, ENEN, or SNETP) also qualifies as a valid form of affiliation. In such cases, long-standing membership is preferred, as the Commission may question very recent joinings.

Organisations that are not affiliated in either of these ways **must act early during the proposal preparation phase**. They can:

- Sign a cooperation agreement with a Beneficiary, preferably from their own country, that should be broader than just involvement in the CONNECT-NM consortium, or
- Join one of the three associations mentioned above, which is in the view of CONNECT-NM the simplest alternative.

However, if these steps are taken **too close to the submission deadline**, there is a risk that the Commission may see them as **motivated solely by CONNECT-NM participation** and reject the affiliation.

If the Commission rejects the affiliation status, the organisation cannot join CONNECT-NM as an AE. In such a case, the only way for the organisation to still receive EC funding is by participating as a **Third Party** of a Beneficiary, subject to specific limitations (see the FAQ ["Can a private company be a Third Party?"](#)).



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