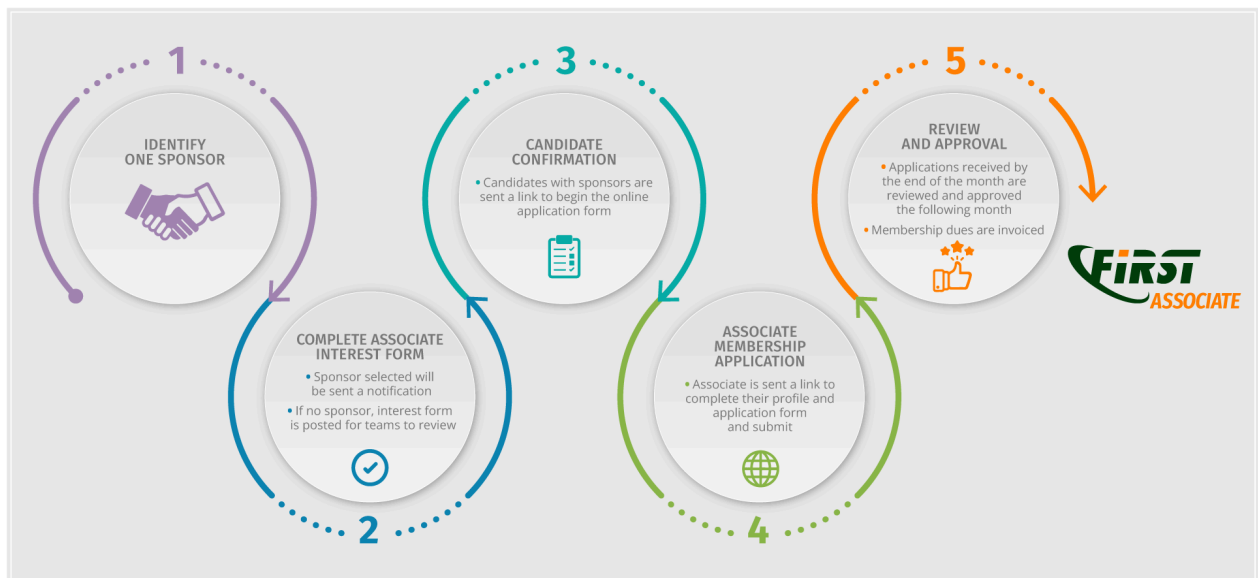# FIRST Membership Process for Associates

Version 1.0

1. Overview

The following is a detailed process of becoming a FIRST Associate Member. Associate membership is for organizations that are not operational incident response teams but who have a valid interest in participating in the FIRST community.

As part of acquiring associate membership, one Sponsor team is needed to support the associate candidate seeking to join FIRST. This document describes the application and sponsoring process. The end goal of this process is to become a member and walk the candidate through the process.

2. Application and Sponsoring Process

The process is composed of 11 steps with a global estimated duration of 2 months but may be shorter.

Please note that:

- Associate membership is an organizational but non-voting membership.

- Associate membership is for non-operational organizations and access to member tools is restricted/limited

- Throughout the process, the Sponsor is strongly advised to interact with the Candidate as needed and provide support.

- If additional guidance or technical support with the FIRST portal is needed, the Sponsor can contact the FIRST Secretariat, for further advice.

- A Candidate can change Sponsors at any time.

Step 1: An organization wishes to become a FIRST Associate Member and completes the Associate Membership Interest Form
This is the starting point. We refer to the applicant as "the Candidate". The Candidate will create a profile for the FIRST Portal and then complete the Membership Interest Form which will be submitted to the FIRST Secretariat. The candidate statement is important to explain the reason for joining FIRST.

Step 2: Candidate must find one FIRST full member who agrees to act as Sponsor. The application process cannot proceed without a sponsor
The Candidate may review the list of current teams to find a sponsor. It is recommended that Candidate reach out to teams they have worked with or who are in their industry/region. If a candidate needs a sponsor – they may consider attending a FIRST event or joining a FIRST SIG to network and meet potential sponsors.

Step 3: Candidate completes the Associate Member Application Form
The Candidate may access to the FIRST Membership Application Form on FIRST Portal once their member interest form is complete and submitted with a sponsor noted. All required fields of the Member Application Form should be completed. The application statement in the form replaces the need for a separate application letter from the candidate. The statement should include the reasons they want to join FIRST and the benefits they intend to bring to the FIRST community. They share this with their sponsor team.

Information provided in the application form will be used to update the liaison profile in the FIRST Portal. By applying to FIRST, the candidate agrees to review this information annually for accuracy and provide regular updates.

Non-profit and not for profit organizations must provide a certificate of non-profit status from a tax authority.

Step 4: Sponsors review candidacy and attaches a letter of support
The Sponsor validates the application and once both confident with the eligibility of the Candidate as future member of FIRST, they write and upload their letter of support recommending the Candidate for associate membership. Sponsors can use **Annex 1** as a template point for their letters. Sponsors have the option to highlight any potentially questionable issues.

Step 5: All materials are submitted for review
Candidate confirms the letter is uploaded on the FIRST portal and then submits the Application Form. This is the final step from the Candidate and the Sponsor.

Step 6: Candidacy compliance check by the FIRST Secretariat The Secretariat checks
The submitted Application Form monthly on completeness and validity of the Application package. If necessary, interaction with Candidate and Sponsor is activated. Once all is in order, the application is passed on to the Membership Committee for review.

Step 7: Membership Committee review
The MC reviews the application. Once the MC is confident to move forward, it recommends the FIRST Secretariat to accept the application. In case of issues with any component of the Application, the MC provides detailed feedback. In case of an issue, go to step 9.

Step 8: Review by Membership and Board
The FIRST Secretariat submits the application (including the MC recommendation) to the FIRST teams mailing list. If no issue is raised, FIRST Secretariat submits the application to the Board. In case of an issue, go to step 9.

Step 9: Application feedback and reapplication (if needed)
If any issues or objections are identified during the application process, the FIRST Secretariat takes this back to the Candidate and the Sponsor for resolution. In case Candidate and Sponsors fail to solve issues/objections, the application gets rejected, and Candidate and Sponsor are formally informed thereof.

Rejected applicants have the right to re-apply, after they can convincingly explain to the FIRST Secretariat, together with their Sponsor, that the situation has changed enough to warrant a new application. If needed, the Secretariat will consult with the FIRST Membership Committee.

Step 10: FIRST Board votes on application

Once everything has been successfully validated, the Board votes on approval of the Candidate's application, and this is duly noted in the minutes. If approved, proceed to step 11.

Step 11: Notification

FIRST Secretariat notifies the Candidate and the Sponsor of the approval and sends the "Welcome Package" to the new member. All members are notified of the success of the Application. The new member is invoiced for annual dues at the start of the following month. Non-profit and not for profit organizations may be eligible for discounted dues ($1000). Other associate member organizations may choose the dues level they plan to pay to support FIRST with a minimum amount of $2500.

Annex 1 - Sponsor Letter Template for Associate Members

I [sponsor] attest that the Candidate satisfies the minimum requirements for FIRST membership.
I [sponsor] am familiar with the way the Candidate operates.
I [sponsor] have met the Candidate and presented FIRST and answered their questions.
I [sponsor] have had working interaction with the Candidate.
I [sponsor] have explained the confidentiality of the information that is passed within FIRST and the Candidate agrees to comply with that. TLP and the FIRST Code of Ethics were also discussed.
I [sponsor] trust that the Candidate will be a good contributor to the FIRST vision and mission.

Any other comments/recommendations:

Sponsor (team name)
Sponsor (contact name)
Title/function
Date
Signature