

## Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 1

### Selection and Retention of Partners for Project Partnership Agreements

July 2013

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Selection and Retention of Partners for Project Partnership Agreements</b>
<b>Reference Documents</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Manual</li> <li>– Enhanced UNHCR Framework for Implementing with Partners</li> </ul>
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#### INTRODUCTION

This Guidance Note provides specific provisions and requirements relating to the selection and retention of partners by UNHCR for entering into a [Project Partnership Agreement](#).

This Policy requires:

- **Heads of Office:** (1) to establish a UNHCR multi-functional Implementing Partnership Management Committee (the [Committee](#)); (2) to ensure that the selection/retention process is carried out with adequate due diligence in an objective, consistent, transparent and timely manner; and (3) to properly communicate the decision to the applicant partners.
- The [Committee](#): to make recommendations on the selection/retention of partners to the [Head of Office](#) based on proper assessment of partners against predefined criteria aligned with operational requirements.

This document is comprised of two parts:

**Policy on the Selection and Retention of Partners for Project Partnership Agreements**, which stipulates mandatory requirements for [UNHCR Offices](#).

**Procedure for the Selection and Retention of Partners for Project Partnership Agreements**, which provides detailed procedures and recommended tools and templates to support [UNHCR Offices](#) in complying with the Policy.

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**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

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## I. POLICY ON SELECTION AND RETENTION OF PARTNERS FOR PROJECT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENTS

### OBJECTIVE

1. The objective of UNHCR's policy on the selection and retention of partners for **Project Partnership Agreements** is to ensure UNHCR partners with the most suitable organization in a given operation for the implementation of **Projects**, in order to provide quality protection and assistance to refugees and other persons of concern. As partners bring distinctive attributes and UNHCR operates in varying and challenging environments, it is necessary to identify the **Best-Fit Partner**.

2. **UNHCR Offices**, through a multi-functional team approach, are required to undertake adequate due diligence and conduct the process of selection/retention of **Implementing Partner(s)** in an objective, consistent, transparent and timely manner in order to:

- a) Best meet the requirements of **Projects** in consideration of requisites and the operational context;
- b) Build on partnership principles, complementarities and comparative advantages;
- c) Demonstrate transparency, objectivity and accountability for its decisions; and
- d) Demonstrate sound stewardship of funding provided by donors.

3. This policy institutionalizes standardized and consistent procedures for the selection/retention of partner(s) across global operations in order to address the following types of risks:

- a) **Operational Risk:** Negative impact on achievement of planned results for refugees and other persons of concern, as a result of entering into a Project Partnership Agreement with entities that are not best suited for a given operation.
- b) **Financial Risk:** Mismanagement and/or loss of UNHCR resources entrusted to partners.
- c) **Reputational Risk:**
  - i) Negative impact on UNHCR partnerships, due to compromised integrity of the UNHCR process; and
  - ii) Negative impact on UNHCR reputation with stakeholders, due to partnering with entities that do not share UNHCR's common values and ethics.

### APPLICATION

4. This policy applies to all **UNHCR Offices** undertaking selection/retention of partner where **Project** implementation requires entering into a **Project Partnership Agreement** with a partner that is a non-governmental organization, Red Cross and Red Crescent Society or other non-profit entities.

5. The process for the selection of partners as outlined in this document does not need to be applied when:

- a) The partner is a United Nations agency.

- b) The partner is a governmental institution that has a unique mandate that cannot be assumed by another organization (such as the ministry of interior of a host country), as determined by the **Head of Office** upon recommendation of the **Committee**.

6. It is at the discretion of the **UNHCR Office** to apply this policy for selection of partners for **Project Partnership Agreements** with a budget of less than USD 50,000 (or accumulative budget of less than USD 50,000 within a year in a given country to any one partner).

7. The policy and procedure on selection/retention of partners should not be used as a tool for termination of **Projects** or partnerships.

### MANDATORY PROCESS

8. The selection/retention process will be conducted with adequate due diligence and evidenced in an objective, consistent, transparent and timely manner. The process involves the following main steps:

- a) Establishment of an **Implementing Partnership Management Committee** (the **Committee**) by the **Head of Office** drawn from UNHCR staff in the operation;
- b) **Call for Expression of Interest** by **UNHCR Office**;
- c) Submission of **Concept Note** by new or existing partner interested in partnering with UNHCR on a given **Project**;
- d) Preparation of lists of applicant organizations and verification of their related documents by the **Secretary to the Committee**;
- e) **Committee** review and recommendation to the **Head of Office**;
- f) Final acceptance or rejection by the **Head of Office** of the **Committee's** recommendations; and
- g) Communication to applicant organizations of the outcome of the selection/retention process.

9. The **Head of Office** will make the selection/retention decision based on the recommendation of the **Committee**. The selected partner will be engaged for a period of two consecutive years of the UNHCR programming cycle. The period of retention can be extended up to a maximum of four years depending on partner performance, continuity of operations and availability of funding. Upon completion of the extended retention period, or whenever there is a substantive change in the operation, **UNHCR Offices** are required to carry out a comprehensive review and selection through a wider solicitation of existing and prospective partners.

### TIMING

10. The appropriate timing of the selection/retention process is crucial. It is important for the processes to be properly aligned with UNHCR's programming cycle. Decisions on selection/retention of partners should be taken well in advance of the planned implementation date. Registration with the host government is not a pre-condition for selection of partners.

### RIGHT TO APPLY AND BE INFORMED

11. Partners that are interested in undertaking a specific [Project Partnership Agreement](#) (partially or fully funded by UNHCR) may initiate their interest or respond to UNHCR's [Call for Interest](#) through the submission of a [Concept Note](#). They are encouraged to inform UNHCR about their organization and its distinctive added value.

12. Prospective partners that are not registered with UNHCR Headquarters will be required to declare that their organization meets the basic compatibility eligibility criteria for establishing a partnership with UNHCR before the organization can be considered for selection for a [Project Partnership Agreement](#) (see [Partner Declaration](#) in Annex A).

13. All applicant organizations will receive written notification, in a timely manner, of the outcome of the selection/retention process. Should an applicant organization request further clarification, the [Head of Office](#) is required to provide a response explaining the transparency and integrity of the selection/retention process undertaken. Applicant organizations that are not satisfied with the response may escalate their concerns to UNHCR's Implementing Partnership Management Service at [epartner@unhcr.org](mailto:epartner@unhcr.org).

#### WAIVERS

14. This policy provides flexibility in case of prevailing local conditions such as urgent, emergency situations and security restrictions. Where such operational constraints do not allow for compliance with this policy, the [Head of Office](#) upon the recommendation of the [Committee](#) is required to seek a waiver from Implementing Partnership Management Service. The written waiver request must clearly provide adequate justification to support such request.

#### DOCUMENTATION

15. [UNHCR Offices](#) are required to establish [Selection Files](#) to maintain all documents related to the selection/retention process, in an organized manner with ease of access for oversight and institutional memory. Documentation on [Selection Files](#) is confidential to UNHCR and must be properly maintained for audit purposes for six years.

#### QUALITY ASSURANCE

16. This policy will be subject to monitoring, review and continuous improvement to ensure its integrity and adapt its applicability for operations.

#### FURTHER GUIDANCE

17. Detailed procedures supporting the practical application of this policy, that [UNHCR Offices](#) are required to follow, are included below.

18. The Implementing Partnership Management Service may be contacted at [epartner@unhcr.org](mailto:epartner@unhcr.org) for further support.

## II. PROCEDURE FOR THE SELECTION AND RETENTION OF PARTNERS

### OBJECTIVE

19. The objective of this section of the Guidance Note is to provide a detailed description of the procedures and recommended tools and templates, to support **UNHCR Offices** in complying with the above-outlined policy.

20. Except for the **Partner Declaration** (Annex A), **UNHCR Offices** may tailor templates provided in the annexes to best suit their operational needs. However, any chosen template must be used consistently throughout the selection/retention process to ensure objectivity and fairness.

### DETAILED PROCEDURES OF THE SELECTION PROCESS

#### Step 1: Establishment of a UNHCR multi-functional Implementing Partnership Management Committee

21. The **Head of Office** is required to establish a multi-functional **Implementing Partnership Management Committee** (“**Committee**”) and appoint its Chairperson, members and alternates. The **Committee** will be responsible for making recommendations to the **Head of Office** on the selection/retention of partners for all **Project Partnership Agreements**.

22. The **Head of Office** will appoint a staff member (preferably from the Programme Unit) as **Secretary to the Committee**. The **Secretary** will facilitate the work of the **Committee** by maintaining and providing complete and accurate information in a timely manner.

23. It is recommended that the **Committee** is established at the country level. In large operations where separate Letters of Instruction exists for a sub-office(s), it is at the discretion of the Country **Head of Office** if **Committees** at the sub-office level are also established. In such cases, a staff member from the country office must be a member of sub-office **Committee**.

24. A memorandum on the establishment and membership of the **Committee** is required to be issued and maintained on the **Selection Files**. The memorandum must also be uploaded to the eSafe folder “**Implementing Partnership Committee**”.

25. Terms of Reference for the **Committee** are contained in Annex B.

#### Step 2: Call for Expression of Interest

26. **UNHCR Offices** are required to broaden opportunities for all interested organizations by inviting existing and new partners to express their interest in implementing a specific **Project**. **UNHCR Offices** should solicit interest from partners that have unique and complementary attributes to UNHCR’s capacities and resources for undertaking a specific **Project** through issuing a **Call for Expression of Interest**.



27. The [Call for Expression of Interest](#) informs interested partners about: project goals and specifications; criteria for selection; deadlines for submission of interest; date of selection decision; and other particularities of the operation and/or [Project](#). [UNHCR Offices](#) may use the recommended (or similar) format for [Call for Expression of Interest](#) in Annex C.

28. The dissemination of the [Call for Expression of Interest](#) should take place through appropriate and available communication media taking into account the local context (e.g. web, newspapers, flyers, meetings, radio, and other means). The same information will be provided to all existing and potential partners at the same time, in order to ensure fairness and objectivity of the process. [UNHCR Offices](#) are encouraged to hold group session(s) with interested organizations to provide further information and answer questions, when required.

29. Partners can bring forward initiatives by submitting a [Concept Note](#) to the relevant [UNHCR Office](#). In cases where the initiative is within the Operation Plan, the [UNHCR Office](#) is required to issue a [Call for Expression of Interest](#) to ensure fair selection among all interested partners.

30. Criteria used to select partners must be aligned with the [Project](#) and operational requirements. The [Committee](#) is required to establish predefined, relevant and assessable criteria to be included in the [Call for Expression of Interest](#). Criteria may include, but are not limited to:

- a) Sector expertise and experience: the required specific skills, sector specialists, knowledge and human resources.
- b) Project management: ability to deliver project objectives, accountability mechanisms and sound financial management, taking into account the audit results of the previous UNHCR-funded projects, past performance and the external audit of partners' financial statements, where applicable.
- c) Local experience, presence and community relations: ongoing programme in the area of operation; local knowledge; engaging refugees and other persons of concern; trust from local communities; local presence; partner policy on community relations; complaint mechanisms for persons of concern; self-organized groups of persons of concern; and other factors that would facilitate access to and better understanding of the persons of concern and that would reduce administrative difficulties.
- d) Contribution of resources: evidenced and documented contribution of resources to the [Project](#) in cash or in-kind (e.g. human resources, supplies and/or equipment) by the partner that are presently available (or potentially mobilized by the partner) in order to supplement UNHCR resources.
- e) Security considerations: ability to operate in security conditions of the [Project](#) site or country as well as existence of partner's organizational policies, procedures and practices related to security risk management.
- f) Cost effectiveness: level of direct costs and administrative costs imposed on the [Project](#) in relation to project deliverables.
- g) Experience working with UNHCR: global and/or local partnerships including knowledge of UNHCR policies, practices and programmes, including an understanding of and ability to work within UNHCR's funding limitations and associated inherent risks. Partners that have three consecutive qualified audit opinions for UNHCR-funded projects may not be considered.

- h) **Other**: other specific needs that may be required, to be identified and communicated in advance, as part of the [Call for Expression of Interest](#).

31. Registration of a partner with the host country is not a pre-condition for selection. However, some host countries may require registration of foreign non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Partners are responsible for securing government requirements for registration and operation in a host country. UNHCR may assist the selected partner in the negotiation with the host government, where applicable.

### Step 3: Submission of Concept Note

32. Interested existing or prospective partners may submit a Concept Note in response to the [Call for Expression of Interest](#).

33. The [Concept Note](#) is primarily for the partner to express its unique advantage and added value for the [Project](#) objectives. The [Concept Note](#) is intended to allow the partner to:

- a) Articulate its objectives in undertaking the [Project](#);
- b) Briefly describe the implementation approach for realizing the desired outcome of the [Project](#);
- c) Demonstrate the unique advantage it brings to the partnership for realizing the desired outcome of the [Project](#); and
- d) Demonstrate its complementarity to UNHCR's capacities and resources for the [Project](#).

34. It is important that the selected partner participates in the design and detailed budgeting of the [Project](#) and concluding [Project Partnership Agreement](#). Therefore, the [Concept Note](#) should not be a fully developed project proposal and should be concise, contain clear information and not exceed three pages.

35. Prospective partners that have not previously worked with UNHCR and are not yet registered with UNHCR Headquarters are required to submit the [Partner Declaration](#) form contained in Annex A with the submission of [Concept Notes](#).

36. It is at the discretion of the [UNHCR Office](#) to determine whether partners use the recommended template in Annex D (or a similar format developed by the UNHCR Office) for the submission of a [Concept Note](#). However, [UNHCR Offices](#) must communicate the submission requirement to all partners. All partners must use the same standard submission format to ensure consistency and objectivity.

### Step 4: Preparation for the Committee Review and Recommendation

37. The [Secretary](#) is required to check whether the applicant organization meets the basic compatibility/eligibility criteria for establishing partnership as outlined in the [Partner Declaration](#) (Annex A). This condition must be met prior to further consideration of the partner for a specific [Project](#). The

Secretary is also required to ensure that the applicant organization is not listed on any of the sanctions lists established and maintained by the United Nations Security Council.<sup>1</sup>

38. The Secretary is required to provide the list of all applicant partners to the relevant units to carry out assessments of applications:

- a) Screening and verification of information provided by the applicant partners typically carried out by Programme/Project Control units.
- b) Technical assessment as applicable to the selection criteria undertaken by sector specialist/multifunctional team. Where applicable, advice must be sought from relevant technical experts in the region or at Headquarters.
- c) Risk assessment undertaken by Programme/Project Control units.

39. The Secretary is required to prepare and maintain all documents for the Committee's review and recommendation, including at a minimum:

- a) List of all applicant partners (prospective and existing partners; qualified and non-qualified) and tabulation of their attributes in accordance with the selection criteria through review of Concept Notes and the results of the assessment by the designated person(s)/unit(s) in the UNHCR Office.
- b) Proposed Concept Note and all related submissions by all applicants.
- c) UNHCR's Call for Expression of Interest.

40. Given the variation in operating environments and partners, it is at the discretion of each UNHCR Office to instruct the Secretary on the appropriate method for verification of information provided by partners. Examples of verification include: checking previous performance reports; audit reports; reference checks; web search; confirmation of legal status and registration; etc.

#### Step 5: Committee Review and Recommendation

41. The Committee is required to:

- a) Verify that the Secretary adhered to the procedures for: issuing the Call for Expression of Interest; collecting Concept Notes from partners; vetting and verifying of documentation provided by partners; compiling results from programme, technical and risk assessments; and any other required preparation.
- b) Examine and evaluate Concept Notes and other requested information submitted by all applicant organizations, technical and other assessments as well as related documents compiled by the Secretary. Annex E contains sample scoring scales and evaluation matrices.
- c) Analyze and review the proposals, taking into account the criteria and Project specifications that were outlined in the Call for Expression of Interest.

42. The Committee will consider all factors to identify the partner that most substantially conforms to the requirements and criteria outlined in the Call for Expression of Interest. The Committee may

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<sup>1</sup> See: [http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq\\_sanctions\\_list.shtml](http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml).

exceptionally reject all proposals, provided that such rejection is in the best interest of the UNHCR operation.

43. The **Secretary** is required to document the minutes of the meeting including the justification and recommendations made by the **Committee**.

44. The recommendations of the **Committee** will be presented to the **Head of Office** for the final decision on the selection/retention of partner. The recommendations and decisions are required to be documented using a consistent format similar to the Selection Recommendation and Decision template in Annex F.

### Step 6: Decision by the Head of Office

45. The **Committee's** recommendation must be presented to the **Head of Office** within three-five working days following the **Committee** meeting.<sup>2</sup>

46. The **Head of Office** is required to endorse or reject the recommendation of the **Committee**. Should the **Head of Office** disagree with the **Committee's** recommendation, the options available are to either select from the list or to initiate a new selection cycle. The **Head of Office** is required to fully document the rationale for approval or rejection of the **Committee's** recommendation.

47. The **Head of Office** will grant that the selected partner is engaged in **Project** implementation for two consecutive years of the UNHCR programme cycle, provided that the partner has demonstrated good performance, the operation continues, and funds are available for **Project** implementation for the second year.

48. In the event, the conclusion of the **Project Partnership Agreement** with selected/retained partner cannot be reached (or the partner opts not to undertake the **Project**), the **Head of Office** may decide to either re-advertise the **Call for Expression of Interest** or select the next **Best-Fit Partner** as determined by the **Committee** during the selection process.

### Step 7: Communication of Decision to Applicant Partners

49. In order to demonstrate transparency, the **Head of Office** is required to inform the applicant organizations, in writing, of the outcome of the selection/retention process within three working days of the date of the decision.

50. It is at the discretion of the **UNHCR Office** whether the name of the selected/retained partner is announced to all applicants. An appropriate communication medium (i.e. email, web, letter, etc.) should be used taking into account protection sensitivities, security constraints and the operational environment. Annex G provides sample wording for providing feedback.

51. Should a partner request clarification on the selection/retention decision, the **Head of Office** is required to provide a response explaining the transparency and integrity of the selection/retention

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<sup>2</sup> See Section III for details for the retention process.

process. However, the **UNHCR Office** may not be in position to disclose the rationale of the decision due to operational sensitivities (e.g. confidentiality related to protection of persons of concern, security). The feedback must be provided to the partner(s) within 15 working days of the request.

52. Applicant organizations that are not satisfied with the feedback provided by the **UNHCR Office** may escalate their concerns to UNHCR's Implementing Partnership Management Service (IPMS) ([epartner@unhcr.org](mailto:epartner@unhcr.org)). IPMS, in collaboration with the Inspector General's Office (IGO), the Division of Programme Support and Management (DPSM) and the relevant Bureau, will review the process undertaken by the **UNHCR Office**. The partner will be informed whether fairness and adherence to the policy and procedure were observed. However, UNHCR reserves the right to decline disclosure of the specificity of decision derived by the **UNHCR Office** due to reasons related to confidentiality of protection of refugees or security.

## RETENTION OF PARTNERS

53. While the selection of partner is for a period of two UNHCR programme cycles, the following is required to be done prior to entering into the second year **Project Partnership Agreement**:

- a) Desk review by the Programme Unit (or other designated unit) to ensure that the operation requires retention and the partner performance is adequate.
- b) If the desk review determines that the partner should not be retained (Annex H), the matter shall be referred to the Committee. Upon recommendation of the **Committee**, the **Head of Office** may decide not to retain the partner. Such decision will be communicated in writing to the partner.

54. After two UNHCR programme cycles, the **Committee** is required to determine whether it is in the best interest of the operation to further retain the selected partner for an additional two programme cycles. The review will be documented in a format similar to the template provided in Annex H and take into consideration the following factors:

- a) Performance of the partner and quality of delivery of desired results;
- b) Whether a change of partner may negatively impact on resources, continuity and/or effective response to the persons of concern;
- c) UNHCR's contribution in the capacity development of the partner may be lost or not yield its desired outcome in case of change of partner;
- d) Contribution of partner (in cash or in-kind);
- e) Willingness of partner to continue with **Project** implementation; and
- f) Availability and interest of alternative partners.

55. The **Head of Office** is required to ensure that for each **Project** a complete and comprehensive selection process is undertaken no less frequently than every four years. **UNHCR Offices** should consider all partners, not to disregard (or include) simply because they are new or existing partner. Wider publicity of **Call for Expression of Interest** and solicitation should be undertaken so to have a broader choice among existing and new partners.

56. If there is a substantive change to the **Project** from one programme cycle to the next, a complete selection process is required to be undertaken. Examples of such changes include: change in needs of the

population group (i.e. repatriation vs. asylum seeking); changes in the operation (i.e. from emergency to maintenance), change of sector (i.e. from health to education); or substantial variation in [Project](#) size and budget.

## OPERATIONAL PROVISIONS

### Timeframes

57. It is important to encourage partnership as early as possible in the programming cycle. Engaging partners as early as possible in the initial stages of assessment and planning (February/March), when the Operation Plan (OP) at field level is being developed, is valuable for stakeholders and for programming purposes. All stakeholders, including existing and prospective partners, may participate in OP formulation.

58. The selection/retention of partners is specifically linked to a particular [Project](#). It must be managed in a timely manner, taking into account specific circumstances of the operation, the programming and resource allocation cycle and the availability of funding.

59. The process of selection/retention of partners must be started as early as possible, well in advance of the start date of implementation. For a typical annual [Project Partnership Agreement](#), the selection/retention decision should ideally take place as soon as the [UNHCR Office](#) knows the outline of the Operation Plan or shortly after mid-year review. However, selection/retention decisions should not be later than October, when the Operation Level (OL) is set for funding of the forthcoming implementation year.

60. The duration of the selection/retention process will depend on the operational environment of the [UNHCR Office](#), such as the scale of operation and the number of candidate prospective and existing partners the [UNHCR Office](#) has to review. It is recommended that the selection/retention process (from issuing the [Call for Expression of Interest](#) to communicating the [Committee's](#) decision) does not exceed three months. The suggested timeframe is:

- a) [Call for Expression of Interest](#): open for four to six weeks to allow partners to prepare the [Concept Note](#) and update Partner Profile information.
- b) [Preparation and vetting of submitted \[Concept Notes\]\(#\) and Partner Profiles by the \[Secretary\]\(#\), reviews/assessments by designated staff](#): three to five weeks.
- c) [Deliberation and decision by the \[Committee\]\(#\)](#): one week.
- d) [Submission of recommendation to the \[Head of Office\]\(#\)](#): within three-five days.
- e) [Communication of decision to applicant organizations](#): within three days of the date of decision.

61. It is important to closely coordinate the selection/retention processes for the forthcoming implementation year, in order to take into account the [Project](#) reporting cycle of existing partnerships. This must be done to ensure that [UNHCR Offices](#) can take timely decisions on the continuation or discontinuation of project level partnerships and allow time for partners to prepare for the outcome.

## Emergency Operations and Operational Waiver

62. Notwithstanding the importance of selecting partners and providing opportunities for new partners, a **UNHCR Office** may determine that a complete selection process cannot be undertaken due to operational and security constraints, as this would have an adverse effect on timely addressing the needs of persons of concern (e.g. initial three months of outbreak of emergency situations or security concerns).

63. In such cases:

- a) The **Committee** is required to be established to make decisions related to working with partners to undertake **Project Partnership Agreements**.
- b) Where possible, the suggested timeframe for the selection process (see paragraph 60) may be compressed in order to respond more quickly to the needs of persons of concern.
- c) If compression of the timeframe is not possible, the **Head of Office** must seek a waiver from the Implementing Partnership Management Service and inform the regional office (where such structure exists). The waiver must be in writing and demonstrate the urgent nature and justification for not undertaking a selection process.
- d) IPMS, in consultation with the Controller and the relevant Bureau and divisions will decide on the waiver request considering all factors. The waiver may be granted for a maximum of one programme cycle.
- e) IPMS is required to respond to the waiver request, in writing, within two working days.

## DOCUMENTATION

64. **Selection Files** must be established by the relevant **UNHCR Office** and structured in an organized manner, to maintain documents related to the process of selection/retention of partners, including:

- a) Memorandum on the establishment of the **Committee** and its composition;
- b) Copies of any documents used to solicit interest for the **Project** and submissions from partners;
- c) Assessment undertaken of each partner against the selection criteria;
- d) Technical and risk assessment of each partner on the specific **Project**;
- e) Assessment of performance for retaining partners, if applicable;
- f) Minutes of the **Committee** meetings clearly documenting the recommendations of the **Committee**;
- g) Decision taken by the **Head of Office**;
- h) Possible waiver requests and responses;
- i) Copies of Partner Feedback; and
- j) Other relevant documents.

65. **Selection File** documentation is confidential to UNHCR and must be properly maintained for six years for audit purposes and to facilitate management oversight.

## **QUALITY ASSURANCE**

66. This Guidance Note on the Selection and Retention of Partners for Project Partnership Agreements will be formally reviewed on a bi-annual basis to determine whether it continues to meet policy objectives and applicability for operations. The primary assessment indicators are provided in Annex I.

## **ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY**

67. The accountability, responsibility and authority of parties referenced in this Guidance Note are provided in Annex J.

## **DEFINITIONS**

68. The definitions of terms used in this Guidance Note are provided in Annex K.



## ANNEX A: PARTNER DECLARATION

### Establishing New Partnerships

*Note:* The Partner Declaration has to be completed by prospective partners that are not yet registered with UNHCR Headquarters. To determine whether a prospective partner is registered, please contact [epartner@unhcr.org](mailto:epartner@unhcr.org). (Once the Partner Portal is developed, the Partner Declaration will be automated and available on the Partner Portal.)

The purpose of this declaration is to determine whether a prospective partner is committed to UNHCR's core values and its commitment to persons of concern. UNHCR will engage in partnerships with non-profit entities that are committed to UNHCR's core values and its commitment to persons of concern. An organization must have answered 'yes' to all five statements in order to engage in a partnership with UNHCR.

Establishing Partnership – Partner Declaration		
UNHCR engages in partnerships with non-profit organizations and entities that are committed to UNHCR's core values and its commitment to persons of concern.		
The purpose of this declaration is to determine whether the prospective partner is committed to UNHCR's core values and its commitment to persons of concern.		
Partner Declaration Please provide name of organization: _____	Please initial response to question	
	Yes	No
By answering yes, the organization confirms that it is not sanctioned by the UN Security Council Committee on Sanctions pursuant to resolutions 751 (1992), 1267 (1999), 1907 (2009) 1989 (2011) or any other resolutions, and that the organization has not supported and does not support, directly or indirectly, individuals and entities associated with those sanctioned by the Committee or any person involved any other manner that is prohibited by a resolution of the United Nations Security Council adopted under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations. <a href="http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml">http://www.un.org/sc/committees/1267/aq_sanctions_list.shtml</a>		
By answering yes, the organization confirms that it is has not been charged with or been complicit in corrupt activities, including crimes against humanity and war crimes, and is not involved, nor has been involved in the past, with such activities that would render the organization unsuitable for dealing with UNHCR or working with persons of concern.		
By answering yes, the organization commits that it will not discriminate against any persons of concern, regardless of their race, religion, nationality, political opinion, gender or social group.		
By answering yes, the organization commits to abide by the <i>Principles of Partnership</i> as endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) in July 2007. The <i>Principles of Partnership</i> are:		



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<p>a) <i>Equality</i>. Equality requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other’s mandate, obligations and independence and recognize each other’s constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.</p> <p>b) <i>Transparency</i>. Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust amount organizations.</p> <p>c) <i>Result-orientated approach</i>. Effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action orientated. This requires result-orientated coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.</p> <p>d) <i>Responsibility</i>. Humanitarian organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills and capacity to deliver on their commitments. Decisive and robust prevention of abuses committed by humanitarians must also be a constant effort.</p> <p>e) <i>Complementarity</i>. The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other’s contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.</p>		
<p>By answering yes, the organization confirms that it is willing to comply with all clauses of the UNHCR Project Partnership Agreement when implementing UNHCR-funded Projects.</p>		

I declare, as an official representative of the above-named organization, that the information provided in these declarations and expression of interest is complete and accurate, and I understand that it is subject to UNHCR verification.

Signature \_\_\_\_\_

Name/title of the duly authorized partner representative \_\_\_\_\_

Name of the partner \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## ANNEX B: IMPLEMENTING PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE TERMS OF REFERENCE

### OBJECTIVE

The objective of the [Committee](#) consisting of a UNHCR multi-functional team is to make informed, objective and transparent recommendations to the [Head of Office](#) in accordance with UNHCR Policies, Procedures and Guidance Notes relating to the selection/retention of the [Best-Fit Partner](#) for the undertaking [Project Partnership Agreements](#).

### SCOPE

The [Committee](#) is to make recommendations to the Head of Office related to the selection/retention of partners for undertaking a [Project Partnership Agreement](#). In this role, the [Committee](#) is required to ensure:

- a) Selection processes are followed in accordance with UNHCR policies, procedures and guidance notes;
- b) Work undertaken by the [Secretary](#) (listing, documentation, vetting and verification, announcements, etc.) is conducted in a transparent, objective manner and in compliance with UNHCR policies, procedures and guidance notes;
- c) Criteria used to select partners are aligned with [Project](#) and operational requirements;
- d) Processes and deliberations for decisions are conducted in an objective, fair and professional manner;
- e) Potential risks (if applicable) of working with specific partners are highlighted in recommendations to the [Head of Office](#);
- f) Preparation of feedback for the [Head of Office](#) in cases where a partner requests feedback on selection decisions; and
- g) All processes and decisions are clearly documented and maintained on [Selection Files](#).

### STRUCTURE

The Head of Office will appoint the Committee and draw its members/alternates solely from UNHCR staff with:

- a) A Chairperson for convening meetings, leading deliberation and presenting the recommendation to the Head of Office.
- b) Membership from each functional area (i.e. programme, protection, finance/administration, community services, and technical sector). Membership must be aligned with the principles of UNHCR Age, Gender and Diversity Mainstreaming strategy.
- c) A Secretary to the Committee to provide relevant support to the Committee for preparation of meetings and documentation, preferably from the Programme or Project Control unit.

The number of the members and their alternates should be reflective of the size of the [UNHCR Office](#) and its resources, but the Committee must consist of at least the chairperson and three full members and the [Secretary](#).

In order to support consistency and efficiency, it is recommended that the tenure of the [Committee](#) be maintained for all processes relating to the selection/retention of partners for two consecutive UNHCR programme cycles.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

[Committee](#) members will vote on all recommendations required for selection/retention of partner. The Chairperson and all members, or their alternates, have equal voting rights. The [Secretary](#) has no voting rights. The majority vote will determine the [Committee](#) recommendation. In case a majority decision cannot be reached, it will be referred to the [Head of Office](#).

Decisions can only be taken when there is quorum, requiring the presence of the Chairperson (or alternate) and two-third of the members (or alternates).

Meetings can take place in-person, by telephone or electronic means, provided that the rules and confidentiality are maintained.

Recommendations to the [Head of Office](#) for final decision must be clearly documented in meeting minutes and maintained in [Selection Files](#), and presented to the [Head of Office](#).

## DOCUMENTATION

The establishment and membership composition of the [Committee](#) is required to be documented in a memorandum and included in the [Selection Files](#) in the [UNHCR Office](#). The memo establishing the Committee must be uploaded to the eSafe folder “Implementing Partnership Committee”.

The minutes of [Committee](#) meetings, [Committee](#) recommendations and the [Head of Office](#)’s decision must be documented and maintained in the [Selection Files](#). The meeting minutes must contain, *inter alia*, a summary of the discussion, the decision taken and the reasons for that decision. Any [Committee](#) member has the right to request the [Secretary](#) that his/her view be duly reflected in the minutes.

Meeting minutes must be shared within three working days of the [Committee](#) meeting with the members of the [Committee](#) and, upon their adoption/signature, be presented to the [Head of Office](#) and regional office (where such structure exists).

All [Committee](#) documentation and deliberations are confidential to UNHCR.

## AMENDMENTS

These terms of reference will be regularly reviewed and amended by UNHCR, as the need arises as well as to enable continuous improvement.

## ANNEX C: CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST [TO BE ISSUED BY UNHCR]

*Note:* The purpose of the [Call for Expression of Interest](#) is to solicit interest from existing or prospective partners that wish to participate in a UNHCR operation and contribute complementary resources (human resources, knowledge, funds, in-kind contributions, supplies and/or equipment) to achieving common objectives as agreed in a [Project Partnership Agreement](#).

UNHCR Offices are required to provide a brief description and background of the [Project](#) and selection criteria for the [Project](#). A sample template for a [Call for Expression of interest](#) is below.

CALL FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST No.		
Project title and Identification:		Project Location:
Brief Background of the Project:		
Goal/Objective, Expected Outcome and Main Activities:		
Intended Population of Concern:		
Project Period [estimated start and end dates of project]:		
Submission Deadline:	Date Decision Results to be Communicated to Applicants:	
Selection Criteria		
<i>Choose relevant criteria</i>	Criteria Description	Assigned Weighting (optional)
	<b>Sector expertise and experience:</b> the required specific skills, sector specialists, knowledge and human resources.	
	<b>Project management:</b> ability to deliver project objectives, accountability mechanisms and sound financial management, taking into account the audit results of the previous UNHCR-funded projects, past performance and the external audit of partners' financial statements, where applicable.	
	<b>Local experience and presence:</b> ongoing programme in the area of operation; local knowledge; engaging refugees and other persons of concern; trust from local communities; local presence; partner policy on community relations; complaint mechanisms for persons of concern; self-organized groups of persons of concern; and other factors that would facilitate access to and better understanding of the persons of concern and that would reduce administrative difficulties.	

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	<b>Contribution of resources:</b> evidenced and documented contribution of resources to the Project in cash or in-kind (e.g. human resources, supplies and/or equipment) by the partner that are presently available (or potentially mobilized by the partner) in order to supplement UNHCR resources.	
	<b>Cost effectiveness:</b> level of direct costs and administrative costs imposed on the Project in relation to project deliverables.	
	<b>Experience working with UNHCR:</b> global and/or local partnerships including knowledge of UNHCR policies, practices and programmes, including an understanding of and ability to work within UNHCR's funding limitations and associated inherent risks. Partners that have three consecutive qualified audit opinions for UNHCR-funded projects may not be considered.	
	<b>Other:</b> as required by the UNHCR Office for any specific project (specify)	
Other information ( <i>optional</i> )		

Issuing UNHCR Office

Contact Address

Signature, Head of Office

Full name and title, Head of Office

Name of UNHCR Office

Date

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## ANNEX D: CONCEPT NOTE [TO BE SUBMITTED BY PARTNER]

*Note:* The purpose of the **Concept Note** is for the partner to express interest and demonstrate its unique advantage and value added for undertaking the **Project Partnership Agreement**.

The **Concept Note** is not a full and well-defined description of a **Project**. The detailed Project and its budget will be fully elaborated after the partner is selected. The **Concept Note** is to help UNHCR to better understand and select the **Best-Fit Partner** for a specific **Project**.

Prospective or existing partners may submit a **Concept Note** to propose an initiative or as a response to a **Call for Expression of Interest** issued by UNHCR. A sample template for a **Concept Note** is below.

<b>CONCEPT NOTE</b>		
(A detailed project description is not required unless requested by UNHCR)		
	Tick if applicable	Identification Number
<b>Proposal in response to UNHCR Call for Expression</b>		
<b>Partner Initiated Concept Note</b>		
<b>Name of Organization:</b>		
<b>Contact Information and Address:</b>		
<b>Project Location:</b>		
<b>Submitted to UNHCR Office:</b>		
<b>Project Goal and Envisaged Outcomes</b>		
Brief description of the how the proposed project will achieve its expected outcome, including new initiatives if applicable		
<b>Background and Rationale</b>		
Please describe the unique advantage your organization brings to the project for achieving the desired outcome for the persons of concern.		
<b>Methodology and approach</b>		
Brief description of the activities, methodology and approach to be used for the project to address the need and achieve the desired outcome for the persons of concern. Describe how the methodology and approach links/complements UNHCR's objectives for the persons of concern, including a description of how your organization would monitor project progress. Indicate whether any other partner(s) or contractor(s) will be used in the delivery of the project activities.		
<b>Resources</b>		
Brief description of how the required resources would be mobilized and the estimated total cost of the project, including total funding to be requested from UNHCR, the organization's contribution (financial and/or in-kind) as well as any contributions by other donors. Please provide number of projects and resources currently managed.		
<b>Technical capacity</b>		
Brief description of the distinctive technical capacity and strengths, including past experiences, to deliver the desired outcome of this project. Brief description of areas of improvement for which the organization may require support.		



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**Expectations**

Brief description of the partner's expectations of UNHCR for the successful implementation of this project.

**Other**

Any other information the organization would like to provide to UNHCR.

**Signature**

**Name/title of the duly authorized Partner**

**Representative**

**Name of the Partner**

**Date**

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## ANNEX E: EVALUATION OF CONCEPT NOTES

The manner in which **Concept Notes** will be evaluated should be determined prior to issuing the **Call for Expression of Interest**. **Concept Notes** should be evaluated against the pre-defined criteria using an evaluation matrix.

Scoring scales can be either qualitative or quantitative as determined most useful by the Committee. Often quantitative scales are easier to use, especially when determining the overall score for weighted criteria. Each criterion should be evaluated separately in order to come to a fully supported recommendation.

To assist UNHCR Offices in establishing scoring scale and evaluation matrices, samples are provided below.

### Example 1: Sample generic scoring scale for all criteria being assessed

Score	Level	Description
3	Excellent	Partner has fully addressed criterion and exceeds the expectation and conforms to best practice.
3	Good	Partner has adequately addressed criterion.
2	Fair	Partner has slight deviation from criterion.
1	Weak	A critical issue raises doubt as to partner's qualification for criterion. A criterion is inadequately addressed.

### Example 2: Sample scoring scale specific to a criterion being assessed

Scoring scale	
Sector expertise and experience in relation to the Call for Expression of Interest	
Score	Description
0	Not addressed or response not relevant
1	Limited applicability
3	Some applicability
5	Substantial or total applicability

### Example 3: Sample criteria, level of importance (weight) and scoring scale established for a Call for Expression of Interest, Concept Review evaluation matrix (per assessor and total)

#### Concept Note Evaluation Matrix

Criterion	Weight
Sector Expertise and Experience	40%
Project Management	20%
Local experience, presence and community relations	20%
Cost effectiveness	20%

Scoring scale	
0	Fails to Fit
1	Poor Fit
2	Fair Fit
3	Good Fit
4	Very Good Fit
5	Excellent Fit

<b>Concept Note 1 Evaluation</b>			
<b>Name of partner:</b>			
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Rating</b>	<b>Weighted Score</b>	<b>Notes</b>
Sector Expertise and Experience			
Project Management			
Local experience, presence and community relations			
Cost effectiveness			
<b>Total weighted score</b>			

*A table should be created for each Concept Note submitted.*

<b>Combined Evaluations per Concept Note</b>			
<b>Name of partner:</b>			
<b>Criterion</b>	<b>Committee Member 1</b>	<b>Committee Member 2</b>	<b>Committee Member 3</b>
Sector Expertise and Experience			
Project Management			
Local experience, presence and community relations			
Cost effectiveness			
<b>TOTAL</b>			

<b>Concept Note Evaluation Matrix</b>				
	<b>Total rating by each Assessor</b>			
	<b>Concept Note 1</b>	<b>Concept Note 2</b>	<b>Concept Note 3</b>	<b>Concept Note 4</b>
<b>Committee Member 1</b>				
<b>Committee Member 2</b>				
<b>Committee Member 3</b>				
<b>Average Rating</b>				



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**ANNEX F: PARTNER SELECTION DECISION**

<b>PARTNER SELECTION DECISION</b>	
Call for Expression/Concept Note Reference No.	Proposed Project Title
Specify recommended partner:	
List of all other applicants in order of scoring :	
Please provide short justification for the selection recommendation.	
Name and Signature Secretary to the Committee	Date
Name and Signature Members of the Committee	Date
Name and Signature Chairperson of the Committee	Date
Decision of the Head of Office	<i>Tick applicable box</i>
Endorse the recommendation of the Committee	
Reject the recommendation of the Committee	
Justification for the above decision	
Next steps	<i>Tick applicable box</i>
Proceed with the selected partner	
Select next Best-Fit Partner from list of proposals	
Initiative a new selection cycle	
Name and Signature Head of Office	Date
Date of communication decision to selected partner	
Date of communication decision to other applicant organizations	
Name(s) and date(s) if any non-selected applicant requested clarification	



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Date of provided clarification and brief description
Committee Meeting Minutes Reference



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## ANNEX G: SAMPLE WORDING FOR FEEDBACK

*Call for Expression of Interest Ref.*

*Dear Sir/Madam,*

*Thank you for submitting a Concept Note for the above-referenced Call for Expression of Interest. While we acknowledge your interest in participating in UNHCR operation and the work your organization does in the field of refugee assistance, after much consideration, we regret to inform you that your Concept Note has not been selected to undertake a Project Partnership Agreement.*

*UNHCR values your partnership and appreciates your continued collaboration with UNHCR in future opportunities. If you have any questions or would like additional feedback, please contact us at [insert contact details].*

*Sincerely,  
UNHCR Head of Office*

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Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés**ANNEX H: PARTNER RETENTION FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION**

<b>PARTNER RETENTION FOR PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION</b>		
Project Number	Project Title	Partner Name
<b>Recommendation</b>		
Retain partner for Project Implementation_____		
Change partner for Project Implementation_____		
<b>Please provide short description of the justification for the recommendation</b>		
Name and Signature of Programme Officer or other designated staff		Date
<b>In case of second year desk review determines the partner should not be retained</b>		
Recommendation of Implementing Partnership Management Committee		
Committee Meeting Minutes Reference (if applicable)		
Decision of the Head of Office		
Name and Signature of the Head of Office		Date
Date of communication decision to partner (if required attach supporting documentation):		

## ANNEX I: QUALITY ASSURANCE

The selection/retention process will be assessed based on the following indicators:

Partnership	Based on <a href="#">Principles of Partnership</a> Expanding opportunities to partners Guidance note developed with partners
Relevancy	<a href="#">Best-Fit Partner</a> rather than cost effectiveness
Flexibility	Waivers Selection criteria Period of selection Retention criteria Composition of <a href="#">Implementing Partnership Management Committee</a>
Simplicity	Practical and manageable processes co-developed with field practitioners IT/IM tool for both partners and UNHCR
Transparency	Selection criteria communicated to partners Selection process feedback mechanism Guidance note available to partners Documented process and decisions
Objectivity	Consistent and standard procedures Selection decisions based on predefined criteria
Integrity	Global consistency Quality assurance role of HQ defined Roles and responsibilities defined Tools and support Subject to audit and review

## ANNEX J: ACCOUNTABILITY, RESPONSIBILITY, AUTHORITY

The **Head of Office** has:

- a) Accountability to ensure that his/her operation has established **Implementing Partnerships** with the most suitable organization to meet the needs of refugees and other persons of concern.
- b) Accountability to ensure that his/her operation complies with UNHCR policies and procedures for the selection/retention of partners for **Project Partnership Agreements**.
- c) Responsibility to establish a multifunctional **Implementing Partnership Management Committee** (the **Committee**); appoint the chairperson and members of the **Committee**, appoint a **Secretary to the Committee**; and ensure that the **Committee** undertakes its duties as described in its terms of reference.
- d) Responsibility to provide a timely response, upon request of UNHCR or partner, on the selection/retention process and decisions taken.
- e) Authority to take decisions on selection/retention of partners.
- f) Authority to negotiate, sign and terminate **Project Partnership Agreements** with partners in accordance with UNHCR policies and procedures.

The **Implementing Partnership Management Committee** of each **UNHCR Office** has:

- a) Accountability to the **Head of Office** to make sound recommendations for the selection of partners for undertaking **Project Partnership Agreement**.
- b) Responsibility to establish selection criteria that will enable the selection of the **Best-Fit Partner** for undertaking **Project Partnership Agreement**.
- c) Responsibility to ensure that decisions are confidential and made in accordance with UNHCR policies and procedures for the selection/retention of partners for undertaking **Project Partnership Agreement**.
- d) Responsibility to ensuring that adequate technical and risk assessments are carried out to support selection/retention recommendations and to recommend required mitigation activities.
- e) Authority to make recommendations to the **Head of Office** on selection/retention of partners.

The **Secretary to the Committee** has:

- a) Accountability to the **Head of Office** to provide timely and accurate information to the **Committee** to support informed decision-making on selection/retention of partners for undertaking **Project Partnership Agreements**.
- b) Responsibility to ensure that information and submissions provided to the **Committee** are made in accordance with UNHCR policies and procedures for selection/retention of partner for undertaking a **Project Partnership Agreement**.
- c) Responsibility to maintain supporting documentation and data integrity of Partner Profiles (web-based and in hard copy).
- d) Responsibility to prepare meeting minutes and maintain recorded outcomes in an accurate and timely manner.



- e) Responsibility to maintain the confidentiality of information submitted to the [Committee](#) as well as the [Committee's](#) deliberations.
- f) Authority to undertake vetting and verification of Partner Profiles and [Concept Notes](#) in order to prepare submissions to the [Committee](#).
- g) Authority to undertake a preliminary screening and present all findings to the [Committee](#). The [Secretary](#) has no authority to disqualify and/or omit applicants.

**Partners** are expected to:

- a) Share a commitment to UNHCR's core values and its commitment to refugees and other persons of concern;
- b) Provide correct, full and updated information to UNHCR as required through the Partner Declaration and Partner Profile;
- c) Submit [Concept Notes](#) and all other information in a clear, correct and transparent manner;
- d) Share experience and bring forward feedback/complaints in an objective manner;
- e) Comply with all clauses of the [Project Partnership Agreement](#).

The **Regional Representative** (where such structure exists) has:

- a) Accountability to ensure that policies and procedures are consistently applied throughout the region.
- b) Responsibility to provide guidance and support to [UNHCR Offices](#) in the region.
- c) Responsibility to provide suggestions to UNHCR Headquarters to improve policies to ensure flexibility for field operations.
- d) Responsibility to review the process and any claims made by partners.

**The Bureaux** has:

- a) Accountability to ensure that their respective field offices comply with UNHCR policies and procedures for the selection/retention of partners.
- b) Responsibility to ensure that policies and procedures are consistently applied throughout all operations and provide advice and support to operations.
- c) Authority to request information from Head of Office on selection/retention decisions and request that corrective measures are taken in case of deviation from UNHCR policies and procedures for the selection/retention of partners.

**Implementing Partnership Management Service** has:

- a) Accountability to ensure that UNHCR has a credible system for selection/retention of the [Best-Fit Partner](#).
- b) Responsibility to provide guidance and support to [UNHCR Offices](#) to ensure effective implementation of this policy.
- c) Responsibility to manage a consultative process with UNHCR and partners in the development and review of policies and procedures.
- d) Authority to establish and review policies and criteria for UNHCR operations that provide flexibility for operations.

- e) Authority to receive feedback from partner and UNHCR, receive complaints from partners, request information from [UNHCR Offices](#) and review processes.
- f) Authority to communicate and convene meetings with partners and relevant divisions/ Bureaux.

## ANNEX K: DEFINITIONS

The following definitions, listed in alphabetical order, will apply:

“**Best-Fit Partner**” means the organization that is the most suitable and provides the most value to meet the needs of a **Project** taking into account the operating environment.

“**Call for Expression of Interest**” means soliciting interest from prospective or existing partners that wish to participate in a UNHCR led operation and contribute complementary resources (human resources, knowledge, cash, in-kind contributions, supplies and/or equipment) to achieve common objectives as agreed in a **Project Partnership Agreement**.

“**Concept Note**” means the submission (in an UNHCR-specified format) by a prospective or existing partner to express its interest in undertaking a **Project**; demonstrate its complementariness to UNHCR’s efforts; and demonstrate the unique advantages and value added it brings to the partnership to realizing the desired outcome of the **Project**.

“**Head of Office**” means the UNHCR Representative/Chief of Mission or the Head of Office/Division/Unit or delegated person (either in the field or at Headquarters) that is responsible for an operation and has been delegated with the authority to sign agreements with **Implementing Partners**.

“**Implementing Partner**” (referred to in this document as “partner”) means an entity to which UNHCR has entrusted to undertake the implementation of **Projects** specified in a signed document (**Project Partnership Agreement**), along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of resources and the delivery of outputs as set forth in such a document. The entity could be a governmental, intergovernmental or non-governmental body, a United Nations organization, or another non-profit organization.<sup>3</sup>

“**Implementing Partnership**” means the collaborative relationship between UNHCR and a partner in order to respond to the needs of persons of concern. The *Principles of Partnership* guide the nature of the relationship. Such partnership starts with early engagement in needs assessment, planning and project formulation, dialogue and negotiations, and is not limited to the mere implementation of predefined Project solely by UNHCR. Partnerships involve risks as well as benefits. Among others, UNHCR participates with financial contributions and other resources to partners, as stipulated in a **Project Partnership Agreement**. Partners are responsible to account fully to UNHCR for the resources entrusted by UNHCR. However, UNHCR remains solely accountable to donors for resources entrusted to UNHCR to respond to the needs of persons of concern.

“**Implementing Partnership Management Committee**” means a multifunctional UNHCR team established by the **Head of the Office** for managing partnerships, including deciding on the selection/retention of partners for undertaking **Project Partnership Agreements**. The Committee is also responsible to review the integrity of process documentations prior to taking a decision.

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<sup>3</sup> See: Article 1.6, Financial rules for voluntary funds administered by the High Commissioner for Refugees, A/AC.96/503/Rev.10.

“Principles of Partnership” means the principles endorsed by the Global Humanitarian Platform (GHP) in July 2007. The GHP was created as an outcome of the “12-13 July 2006 Dialogue Between UN and non-UN Humanitarian Organizations.” The *Principles of Partnership* are:

- f) *Equality*. Equality requires mutual respect between members of the partnership irrespective of size and power. The participants must respect each other’s mandate, obligations and independence and recognize each other’s constraints and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organizations from engaging in constructive dissent.
- g) *Transparency*. Transparency is achieved through dialogue (on equal footing), with an emphasis on early consultations and early sharing of information. Communications and transparency, including financial transparency, increase the level of trust amount organizations.
- h) *Result-orientated approach*. Effective humanitarian action must be reality-based and action orientated. This requires result-orientated coordination based on effective capabilities and concrete operational capacities.
- i) *Responsibility*. Humanitarian organizations have an ethical obligation to each other to accomplish their tasks responsibly, with integrity and in a relevant and appropriate way. They must make sure they commit to activities only when they have the means, competencies, skills and capacity to deliver on their commitments. Decisive and robust prevention of abuses committed by humanitarians must also be a constant effort.
- j) *Complementarity*. The diversity of the humanitarian community is an asset if we build on our comparative advantages and complement each other’s contributions. Local capacity is one of the main assets to enhance and on which to build. Whenever possible, humanitarian organizations should strive to make it an integral part in emergency response. Language and cultural barriers must be overcome.

“Project” means an undertaking to meet agreed objectives for persons of concern and delivery of specific outputs as measured by defined performance indicators within a set time and budget. **Project** in this document refers to a project fully or partially funded by UNHCR.

“Project Partnership Agreement” means a legal and binding agreement entered into by UNHCR and an **Implementing Partner** whereby UNHCR delegates to the **Implementing Partner** responsibility for the implementation of **Projects** with financial participation from UNHCR. The document stipulates the terms and conditions, and obligations, of all involved parties. It concludes the agreed understanding of all previous discussions and negotiations of all involved parties.

“**Selection Files**” means the files maintained by the **Secretary** that contains all documents related to the selection/retention process, such as: memorandum establishing the **Committee**; **Call for Expression of Interest**; **Concept Note**; Partner Declaration; meeting minutes; documented decisions of the **Head of Office**; partner feedback; and related correspondences, etc. **Selection Files** are confidential to UNHCR and must be retained for six years.

“**Secretary to the Committee**” means the UNHCR officer assigned by the **Head Office** to prepare and present information relating to partner selection/retention for **Project** implementation of **Project Partnership Agreements** to the **Committee**.



**UNHCR**

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees  
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

“UNHCR Office” refers to any division or unit at Headquarters, or regional, country or field office that is responsible for engaging a partner into signing a [Project Partnership Agreement](#).

## ANNEX L: SELECTION AND RETENTION DECISION PROCESS DIAGRAM

