**Managing Partnerships**

1. Partnerships are central to the [2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](https://undocs.org/A/RES/70/1) and essential for delivering on the vision and outcomes in UNDP’s Strategic Plan.
2. Resources entrusted to UNDP should be utilized following the highest fiduciary standards. This applies equally to development activities performed directly by UNDP, or activities performed by implementing partners funded by UNDP.
3. This policy provides the prescriptive content, principles and practices for managing partnerships. The series of approved corporate policies detailed here guide UNDP partnerships with governments, the United Nations System, International Financial Institutions (IFIs), the private sector, foundations and civil society organizations (CSOs).
4. Corporate partnership policies assist UNDP staff to:
5. Make well-informed and consistent decisions about selecting partners;
6. Distinguish whether or not a formal partnership is needed;
7. Identify which partnership instrument to utilize (financial and non-financial);
8. Follow the correct partnership approval processes;
9. Maximize partnership benefits while managing and minimizing risks; and
10. Nurture and monitor the partner relationship.

**Definition of UNDP Partnerships**

1. A UNDP partnership is a voluntary and collaborative commitment between UNDP and one or more parties. Together, they work to achieve common objectives in line with overall development goals supported by UNDP.
2. Parties should agree to respect the values and policies central to UNDP’s mandate, and maximize the effective use of resources, including through careful assessment of risks, responsibilities, competencies and benefits. They may provide opportunities for innovation and achievements that might not be feasible by either UNDP or its partner working alone.

**Partnership Principles**

1. All partnerships need to be clearly articulated and jointly developed based on:
2. Integrity;
3. Non-exclusivity and no unfair advantage;
4. Clearly defined roles and responsibilities;
5. Mutual focus on delivering development results;
6. Dedication to agreed outcomes;
7. Cost-effectiveness;
8. Realistic expectations;
9. A medium- to long-term perspective;
10. Underlying institutional interests and organizational values;
11. Alignment to UNDP’s priorities and processes;
12. Non-endorsement;
13. Impartiality, transparency and accountability;
14. Risk sharing; and
15. Partnership benefit.

1. UNDP cannot form partnerships with organizations formally or informally involved in activities inconsistent with the [United Nations Charter](https://www.un.org/about-us/un-charter) or beyond UNDP’s mandate. Discussion with prospective partners must be clear on this point from the earliest stage. Beyond the principles above, all UNDP partnerships must comply with:

1. Norms and standards expressed in General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and
2. UNDP Executive Board resolutions or decisions;
3. The UNDP-Regulatory Framework (UNDP Financial Regulations and Rules, and Private Sector Due Diligence Policy);
4. Indemnity specifications;
5. Intellectual property rights, including related to use of the UNDP name and logo

[**Assessing Partnerships**](https://intranet.undp.org/global/documents/partnerships/Assessing_Partnerships_Flowchart.xlsx)

1. In initiating any partnership, staff should ensure that they and the partner undertake a joint development and review process that builds an open working relationship. The assessment process should raise issues and concerns that may require further review, ensuring thorough due diligence. It should map adequate safeguards and defined boundaries, while leaving scope for innovative and open-ended engagement. It should include a justification, based on sound analysis, for why UNDP should or should not proceed with the partnership.

1. Given the inevitable transaction and management costs involved in partnerships, all should aspire to achieve clear benefits for UNDP and its constituents. While negotiating a partnership agreement, UNDP and its partners should articulate the different types and levels of benefits they each expect as a result. All partnerships should be assessed against their potential to deliver these benefits and reviewed regularly to ensure the benefits are being achieved.

1. On UNDP’s side, benefits should:
2. Make contribution(s) to UNDP's core mission, mandate and achievement of development results; and
3. Complement UNDP's capacity to:
4. Deliver technical expertise / generate knowledge;
5. Access or mobilize resources;
6. Implement programmes and projects;
7. Monitor results and ensure accountability; and/or
8. Foster creativity, innovation and change
9. UNDP partnerships should promote and/or enhance UNDP’s work in one or more of the following areas:
10. Programme leadership;
11. Programme results delivery;
12. Programme coherence;
13. Constituency and network access;
14. Influence on pro-poor policies;
15. Attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals;
16. Reputation enhancement (towards UNDP as a 'partner of choice'); and/or
17. Recognition (branding) and results visibility.

**Reviewing risks**

1. Along with potential benefits, UNDP must assess risks of potential partnerships and articulate ways to manage and migrate them. Possible risks might include:
   1. Distracting UNDP from its core mission such as:
2. Going beyond the UNDP mandate;
3. Loss of programmatic focus and/ or coherence;
4. Duplication of efforts; and/or
5. Lack of internal and/ or external coordination.
   1. Inability to deliver on commitments:
6. Over-ambitious time investment;
7. Financial implications, such as lack of financial capacity and/or prohibitive costs;
8. Lack of sufficient UNDP or partner capacity; and/or
9. Volatile situations which may change due to political/ crisis circumstances.
   1. Unintended external consequences:
10. Lack of understanding of the true motivation behind the partnership;
11. Interface with national processes; and/or
12. Inadvertent partner endorsement.
    1. Reputational compromises:
13. UN neutrality;
14. Political risks including to government relationships;
15. Social and environmental risks

**Defining partners' expectations of UNDP**

1. Partnerships should be mutually beneficial. Partners have the right to expect that:

* 1. UNDP will only commit to partnerships where it has the capacity to deliver on and be accountable for its obligations.
  2. UNDP will honour its commitments, and act in a transparent and accountable manner.
  3. UNDP will comply with all mandates stipulated in the Quadrennial Comprehensive Policy Review; all General Assembly, Economic and Social Council, and UNDP Executive Board legislation, resolutions, and decisions; and inter-agency decisions such as those of the United Nations Development Group, the High-Level Committee on Programmes and the High Level Committee on Management.
  4. UNDP will make its best efforts to maximize partnership benefits.

[**Formalizing Partnerships**](https://intranet.undp.org/global/documents/partnerships/Formalizing_Partnerships_Flowchart.xlsx)

1. Once the assessment phase concludes, if UNDP and its potential partner identify substantive deliverables and wish to establish a partnership to achieve them, staff should identify and utilize the appropriate partnership instrument. All formal partnership instruments should comply with UNDP regulations, rules, policies and procedures. Staff should also ensure that monitoring and measurement mechanisms are in place.
2. When partnerships comply with the partnership principles, UNDP should assess risks and benefits. If there are no programmatic, operational/service or financial deliverables, the partnership does not require a formal partnership instrument.

**Choosing the right partnership instrument**

1. UNDP uses several standard partnership instruments:

* 1. Memorandum of Understanding

1. The [Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PublicPartnerships/NonFinancialAgreements/MoUs-and-SoIs.aspx) formalizes a non-binding partnership by stipulating intent and commitment between partners. It articulates the legislative background, general principles and focus of potential cooperation in pursuit of common goals. It serves as the overall framework for all global, regional and country-level cooperation. Specific country-level implementation agreements are subordinate to MOUs and are used to specify conditions of work. UNDP has different templates for Governments, United Nations entities, the private sector, non-governmental and civil society organizations, academic institutions, and foundations. An MoU is not a financial instrument and therefore cannot be used by UNDP to make or receive contributions from partners. All signed MoUs should be stored in the [UNITY Agreements module](https://undp.lightning.force.com/lightning/o/Agreement__c/list?filterName=00B6N000000ZR8GUAW)  which is the central UNDP Non Financial Agreement Repository. All MoUs uploaded in UNITY are then accessible by all UNDP personnel on the [BERA Non-Financial Agreements Library Sharepoint site](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PublicPartnerships/NonFinancialAgreements/Library.aspx?xsdata=%3D%3D&sdata=aEwyUWIybDJqNm9FZU91OTJUaE5xcGxna0tHU1dFT1BCbU5xcVBJUys2bz0%3D&ovuser=b3e5db5e-2944-4837-99f5-7488ace54319%2Cjohn.cambiotis%40undp.org&OR=Teams-HL&CT=1708619611143&clickparams=eyJBcHBOYW1lIjoiVGVhbXMtRGVza3RvcCIsIkFwcFZlcnNpb24iOiIyNy8yNDAxMDQxNzUwMyIsIkhhc0ZlZGVyYXRlZFVzZXIiOmZhbHNlfQ%3D%3D).
   1. Programming Instruments
2. Based on the initial capacity assessment, detailed implementation arrangements with the selected implementing partner shall be finalized.
3. Letters of agreement should be used for United Nations entities contracted as a ‘responsible party’ for a UNDP-financed project.
4. A project cooperation agreement is used for non-governmental or civil society organizations acting as an implementing partner/executing agency for a UNDP financed project.
5. Grant agreements for credit and non-credit related activities are applied to providing grant funds to non-governmental and civil society organizations.
   1. Financing Instruments
6. [Cost-sharing agreements](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PublicPartnerships/FinancingAgreementTemplates/General-Information.aspx) are financing instruments from donor partners that stipulate conditions for receipt, administration, use and reporting of resources for specific UNDP activities. UNDP has standard agreement templates for governments, United Nations entities, the private sector, non-governmental and civil society organizations and foundations. UNDP has also concluded [specific templates](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PublicPartnerships/FinancingAgreementTemplates/Partner-Specific-Agreement-Templates.aspx)with major funding partners.
7. [Trust fund](https://popp.undp.org/node/11661) agreements establish a separate accounting entity under which UNDP receives contributions to finance programme activities.
8. In case signing of the agreement is delayed, the project implementation period should be adjusted accordingly to ensure project implementation starts after the agreement signature date. In exceptional circumstances such as crisis response, UNDP can negotiate with funding partners to reverse incurred expenses to charge the funding partner within the agreed implementation period.
   1. [Innovation Challenge policy](https://popp.undp.org/node/10941)
9. The Innovation Challenge policy enables UNDP business units to award prizes up to US$40,000 for innovative and effective solutions. The policy offers opportunities to stimulate markets for new solutions to development problems. Innovation challenges are not an alternative form of procurement, but a process designed to reach and motivate the right innovators to work on a development challenge.
   1. Management Service Agreement
10. See POPP Financial Resources/Revenue Management for Management Service Agreement.   
    1. Administrative or Other Support Services to UN Entities
11. Service level agreements state the conditions for UNDP to provide specific and limited business operations/services to other United Nations entities.
12. For additional information see [Managing Service Provision to Other UN Agencies](https://popp.undp.org/node/11671)

1. Partnership agreements are not to be used for procurement. For procurement actions, please see the POPP Procurement section.

**Approving Partnerships**

1. Partnerships must be approved in line with the Delegation of Authorities Policy, as follows:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Nature of Partnership** | **Approval and signature Authority** |
| Global Partnerships | Administrator or Associate Administrator |
| Regional Partnerships | Directors of Regional Bureaus |
| Thematic Partnerships | Director, BPPS |

[**Monitoring Partnerships**](https://intranet.undp.org/global/documents/partnerships/Monitoring_Partnerships_Flowchart.xlsx)

1. The purpose of monitoring partnerships is to learn how implementation enhances each partner's performance, to monitor and manage risks, and take corrective action to ensure that the partnership accomplishes the intended results.
2. Monitoring the implementation of partnership agreements is the responsibility of the designated bureau/unit. Monitoring includes periodic reviews of the effectiveness of the partnership agreement, adherence to a minimal review schedule (annual), and initiating other scheduled or ad hoc reviews. All reviews must include inputs from selected UNDP country offices/regional centres and other relevant partners.

1. At any time, should the bureau/unit or partner identify a need for significant revision of the partnership instrument, the initiating UNDP Business Unit must make appropriate revisions following the same procedures when establishing a new instrument.

[**Reporting**](https://intranet.undp.org/unit/pb/resmob/SitePages/External-Assessments-of-UNDP.aspx)

1. Partnership progress and results should be recorded based on agreed reporting schedules and periodicity. The project progress report available on the Atlas Executive Snapshot and the Corporate Planning System Project Space should apply. Donor reporting should follow the narrative and financial guidance for donor reporting.

**Additional Information:**

* [UNDP BERA Partnerships Home](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PublicPartnerships/Home.aspx)
* [UNDP Private Partnerships](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PrivatePartnerships/Home.aspx)
* [UNDP Funding Compendium](https://www.undp.org/funding)
* [UNDP Funding Channels](https://popp.undp.org/taxonomy/term/106)

• [UNDP Partnership Survey](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PublicPartnerships/Partnership-Survey.aspx)

* [IFI Partnership Strategy](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/PPG-Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?id=%2Fteams%2FBERA%2DPortal%2FPPG%2DDocuments%2FIFIs%2FIFIs%2DInstitutionalDocuments%2FIFI%20Partnership%20Strategy%20%2D%20July%202016%2Epdf&parent=%2Fteams%2FBERA%2DPortal%2FPPG%2DDocuments%2FIFIs%2FIFIs%2DInstitutionalDocuments)
* [Mobilizing Private Finance for Sustainable Development](http://www.undp.org/content/undp/en/home/librarypage/poverty-reduction/mobilizing-private-finance-for-sustainable-development.html)
* [External Assessments of UNDP](https://undp.sharepoint.com/teams/BERA-Portal/SitePages/PublicPartnerships/External-Assessment.aspx)