**Engaging CSO/NGO as a Responsible Party**Page ContentStructure Element - Description

1. The UNDP may extend the reach and effectiveness of its programs by leveraging the capacity and networks of NGOs/CSOs (including community-based groups, youth associations and others) through collaborative relationships.

Structure Element - Procedures

1. Senior Management will lead, with input from programme and operations staff, the operationalization of CSO/NGO engagement through the establishment of appropriate contractual relationships and review progress regularly. Accountabilities towards NGOs/CSOs shall be vested in the head of the Business Unit, with final decisions on modalities and formalities resting on the Head of the Officer or his/her designee.

1. UNDP will ensure on-going scoping: "A strategic analysis of the comparative advantages of organizations on the ground and mapping of their strengths and weaknesses that facilitates the identification of appropriate partners" of the NGO/CSO environment.

1. NGOs/CSOs engagement through appropriate contractual relationships, will be guided by the following considerations:
2. The overall objectives, strategy, and expected results of the project; the geographical scope and span of its activities; and the types of interactions with beneficiaries envisaged for the project;
3. Mapping NGOs/CSOs by program staff which will allow the Business Unit to have a wide pool of potential collaborations and will allow it to quickly replace a collaborative relationship that may be compromised or need to be scaled up;
4. The level of development and maturity of the civil society’s role in the country as may be defined by the availability of NGOs/CSOs, the breadth and depth of their interventions, and the general conduciveness of the political and legislative environment for enabling NGOs/CSOs operations and involvement;
5. The institutional capacity of NGOs/CSOs;
6. The legitimacy and quality of the contribution and values that NGOs/CSOs can provide for the attainment of development results and maximizing the development impact of a programme/project.

Depending on the combination of these criteria and associated risks, Business Units shall decide whether to engage NGOs/CSOs as Implementing Partners or as Responsible Parties (including Grantees) based on the most appropriate engagement modality. For Responsible Party definition, please refer to the [Select Responsible Parties and Grantees](https://popp.undp.org/node/1441) policy of Programme and Project Management on POPP.

1. All collaborative relationships with NGOs/CSOs involving engagement of NGOs/CSOs as Implementing Partners or as Responsible Parties (including Grantees) are subject to a vetting process, which requires a mapping exercise followed by programmatic engagement or strategic selection.

1. The decision to select NGOs/CSOs as Implementing Partner (IPs) or as a Responsible Party (RPs) shall be based on the result of a capacity assessment and risk management framework.

1. The risk management framework must be based on the premise that the level of institutional capacity, evidenced by a positive verification result, is proportional and directly responsive to the scope of the envisaged nature and scope of the engagement.

1. Collaborative relationships require clear accountability frameworks. COs shall ensure that work plans, activities, inputs, and persons responsible are articulated and identified as required by project needs.

1. [**The Partner Capacity Assessment Tool**](https://popp.undp.org/node/956)**[[1]](#footnote-1)** can be used when a crisis has been declared by a UN Agency, or the Government of the host country, or if UNDP Senior Management has set up a mechanism to respond to a crisis situation.

1. There are three (3) ways through which UNDP can engage with NGOs/CSOs. The appropriate instrument depends on the particular set of shared goals and planned results:
2. Programmatic engagement. As Implementing Partners (IP), whereby the NGO/CSO is responsible for the overall accountability and management, including financial management, of an entire project and delivery of all its results. IPs are transferred resources to assist in carrying out its roles, and take on responsibilities for the delivery of project activities, sharing risks and responsibilities with UNDP. Any NGO/CSO that is engaged to act as IP is subject to and most comply with the HACT policy (i.e., micro-assessment and assurance activities).

When an NGO/CSO has been selected to become an IP of a UNDP project, the agreement between UNDP and the NGO/CSO shall be formalized through the signing of a Project Cooperation Agreement (PCA).

1. Strategic Selection. As Responsible Parties (RP), whereby the NGO/CSO is responsible for the implementation of project activities or specific components of a project, including the provision of specific inputs and/or delivery of agreed outputs. RPs receive funding against the achievement of milestones or the provision of goods and services under the specific components of a project, and may receive advanced funds as per the applicable Financial Regulations and Rules governing prepayment. When the amount exceeds $ 30,000, offices follow the applicable HACT policy (e.g. micro-assessment and assurance activities). NGOs/CSOs may be engaged as RP through any of the following modalities:
2. **Based on the assessment of NGOs/CSOs collaborative advantage**

The selection of NGOs/CSOs as RPs based on their collaborative advantage shall be used only for projects that are directly implemented (DIM) by UNDP, or whenever UNDP renders direct CO support to a NIM project, and are subject to existing corporate assurance measures.

Management projects may use the modality when there are well-positioned NGOs, with specific knowledge, which senior management has identified as being beneficial to UNDP as an organization. The decision of senior management must be recorded in a note to file.

1. **Based on a competitive selection process**

This modality is appropriate for engaging NGOs/ CSOs when they are expected to provide specific project inputs and/or undertake well-defined project activities. These are also the situations where competition is most valuable and can optimize results.

Depending on the scope of engagement and availability of NGO/CSO services in a country/location, the selection of NGOs/CSOs as RPs based on competitive selection process can be undertaken through either of the following:

* When a procurement process is limited to NGO/CSOs offerors who will be engaged as a responsible party, the awarding of the contract will be based on a **Quality-Based Fixed Budget Selection** **(QB-FBS).** This means that the budget will be disclosed at the time of the Call for Proposal, and the NGOs/CSOs will submit proposals based on that fixed budget.
* Standard competitive procurement process. The standard [RFP Selection Process](https://popp.undp.org/node/296) whereby NGOs/CSOs can participate in any UNDP selection of service providers to its projects; or
* Direct contracting NGOs/CSOs, using the UNDP policy for justifying [Direct Contracting](https://popp.undp.org/node/296)
1. Through Micro-capital grants, the UNDP may support an activity proposed by an NGO/CSO, within a project, by entering into a [Low Value Grant Agreement](https://popp.undp.org/node/4611). Grantees will be responsible for the achievement of grant objectives, which shall be monitored by the CO.
2. In the above modalities (10.2), the engagement of an NGO/CSO as RP, regardless of the selection process applied, shall be formalized through the signing of a Responsible Party Agreement (RPA).
3. RPs must be legally constituted and fully registered.

1. Under exceptional circumstances, when the legal status or registration of a potential RP is under consideration by appropriate authorities and the CO’s Senior Management has determined that the engagement as an RP of an NGO/CSO or its members is critical to delivery and in the best interests of UNDP, the head of the Business Unit may authorize the use of the IC modality with one or more of the principals. The value of each individual contract shall be capped at the established threshold for micro purchasing. (USD 5,000).

1. The UNDP may address capacity gaps identified through the engagement through the provision of technical expertise aimed at unleashing, strengthening, creating, adapting and maintaining the capacity of RPs, IPs and Grantees although the UNDP does not have a specific mandate for capacity building for NGOs/CSOs as part of the contractual relationship established with NGOs/CSOs as Implementing Partners or as Responsible Parties (including Grantees).
2. The Vendor Sanctions policy of UNDP also applies to NGOs/CSOs and their members, regardless of the process undertaken to engage them as RPs. The cumulative thresholds for the submission to Procurement Review Committees shall also apply to NGOs/CSOs engaged as RPs.
3. When selecting NGOs/CSOs, UNDP may conduct the mapping, capacity assessment exercise and risk assessment with the objective of establishing a Business Unit NGO/CSO roster.

1. Where the NGO/CSO RP is expected to receive an amount exceeding USD 100,000, the conduct of the capacity assessment shall be mandatory. Below this amount, the UNDP BU may exercise the option to apply either:
2. The Partner Capacity Assessment Tool prescribed for humanitarian situation, or
3. The full capacity assessment applicable to those receiving USD 100,000 and above.
4. In cases when UNDP seeks an engagement for a specific TOR without existence of a NGO/CSO roster the overall approach remains the same, although certain steps can be combined and others will be conducted in different order. Below are the main issues to be considered:
5. The first step will be the development of the engagement TOR.
6. Sending RFI & Partner Capacity Assessment Tool can be combined in a single step
7. Steps to conduct the capacity assessment and the risk assessment will remain significantly the same although at this stage it will be conducted from the TOR perspective

1. The PCAT tool is an excel file that contains macros. Some browsers do not support the display of files containing macros. To complete the download of the PCAT, [please follow this quick guide](https://popp.undp.org/_Layouts/15/POPPOpenDoc.aspx?ID=POPP-11-3597) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)