



GESCI

IDENTIFICATION AND SELECTION OF PARTNERS GUIDELINES

Revised 2023

1. Purpose

These guidelines establish a transparent, fair, and donor-compliant framework for identifying and selecting partner organisations. They aim to:

- Strengthen programme quality and sustainability through strategic partnerships.
 - Ensure alignment with donor requirements and organisational values.
 - Promote accountability, equity, and inclusion of local actors.
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2. Principles

- **Transparency:** Clear processes and documented decision-making.
 - **Fairness & Equity:** Equal opportunity for all eligible organisations.
 - **Capacity Strengthening:** Prioritise local ownership and long-term sustainability.
 - **Accountability:** Compliance with donor rules, financial integrity, and safeguarding standards.
 - **Do No Harm:** Sensitivity to political, cultural, and security contexts.
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3. Partner Identification

Partners may be identified through:

- **Open Calls for Expression of Interest (EOI):** Widely advertised to ensure inclusivity and competition.
- **Targeted Outreach:** Where specific technical or geographic expertise is required.
- **Referrals/Networks:** Leveraging civil society networks, government stakeholders, and donors.

Each identification process must include:

1. Publication of eligibility criteria and application requirements.
 2. Information sessions or FAQs to ensure equal understanding.
 3. Use of standardised application templates (e.g., EOIs, capability statements, budgets).
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4. Eligibility Criteria

Prospective partners must demonstrate:

- **Legal registration** in the country(ies) of operation.
- **Non-profit status** (unless otherwise permitted by donors).
- **Alignment with programme objectives** and organisational mission.
- **Track record** in relevant thematic areas (e.g., P/CVE, peacebuilding, health, education, humanitarian response).
- **Operational capacity** to manage funds and implement activities.
- **Commitment to donor compliance** (financial accountability, safeguarding, data protection, anti-terrorism financing).

Additional donor-driven requirements may include:

- Physical presence in programme areas.
- Prior donor-funded project experience.
- Robust safeguarding and risk management policies.

5. Selection Process

The selection process should be documented and consist of:

Step 1: Pre-Screening

- Verify legal status and eligibility criteria.
- Conduct conflict of interest and risk screening.

Step 2: Technical Assessment

- Review applications against scoring criteria such as:
 - Thematic expertise and relevant experience.
 - Understanding of local context and community engagement.
 - Monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) capacity.
 - Security risk management in hard-to-reach areas.
 - Innovation and adaptability (e.g., use of remote monitoring tools).

Step 3: Organisational Capacity Assessment (OCA)

- Review governance, financial systems, HR, and safeguarding policies.
- Use standard tools (internal or donor templates).

Step 4: Due Diligence

- Conduct site visits or remote verification.
- Review references, past donor relationships, and audits.

Step 5: Final Selection & Documentation

- Convene a selection panel with cross-functional staff.
- Record scores, justifications, and final recommendations.
- Secure donor approval if required.

6. Risk Management

- Conduct **partner risk assessments** (financial, operational, reputational, security).
- Develop **mitigation plans** (e.g., capacity building, close monitoring, joint implementation).
- Apply differentiated approaches for high-risk vs. low-risk partners.

7. Partnership Agreement

Once selected, partners will enter into a formal agreement covering:

- Roles and responsibilities.
- Budget and financial management procedures.
- Monitoring and reporting requirements.
- Safeguarding and compliance obligations.
- Termination and dispute resolution mechanisms.

8. Capacity Strengthening & Learning

- Build partner capacity in compliance, MEL, financial management, and safeguarding.
- Promote **peer learning and communities of practice** (e.g., knowledge-sharing

events).

- Encourage co-creation and joint reviews to strengthen mutual accountability.
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9. Review & Continuous Improvement

- Regularly review the guidelines to align with updated donor requirements.
- Capture lessons learned from each partner selection round.
- Adjust criteria and processes to strengthen inclusivity and effectiveness.