



Partnerships with UNFCCC: At a Glance

Introduction and scope

Partnerships hold transformative power in addressing the global climate crisis. The UNFCCC secretariat's collaboration with non-Party stakeholders drives innovation, mobilizes climate action, and helps implement the Paris Agreement globally.

The UNFCCC secretariat plays a fundamental role in supporting the implementation of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol, and the Paris Agreement. The secretariat's partnerships with non-Party stakeholders provides vital access to innovation, knowledge, expertise, technology, data, financing, and networks, helping to fill gaps and advance key activities to support the implementation of the Paris Agreement and global cooperation on addressing climate change.

Partnerships with the secretariat are designed to be **meaningful, mutually beneficial and strategic, in alignment with the objectives of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement**, and directly support the secretariat's activities by helping to leverage resources for advancing the implementation of its mandates.

The framework guiding the secretariat's collaboration with non-Party entities is informed by the United Nations Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector and the UNSDG Common Approach to Prospect Research and Due Diligence for Business Sector Partnerships. It also adheres to the relevant Financial Regulations and Rules of the United Nations.

The secretariat partners with a variety of non-Party stakeholders, including for-profit entities, state-owned companies, non-governmental organisations, business associations, coalitions, philanthropic foundations, UN system organizations, and intergovernmental organizations.



Objectives and principles of partnership with the UNFCCC secretariat

A **partnership** with the UNFCCC secretariat is defined as a **voluntary, collaborative, and contractually established relationship between the secretariat and a non-Party stakeholder. Both parties agree to work together to achieve a common goal or undertake specific tasks towards that end, sharing risks, responsibilities, resources, and benefits as mutually agreed.**

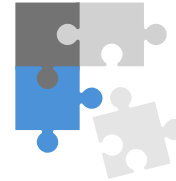
The objective is **to maximise opportunities with non-Party stakeholders through a risk-informed approach to engagement.**

Partnerships are non-exclusive and open to multiple partners at any time.

The number and complexity of partnerships are managed based on the capacity, time, and resources available to the secretariat and each partner for the agreed activities.

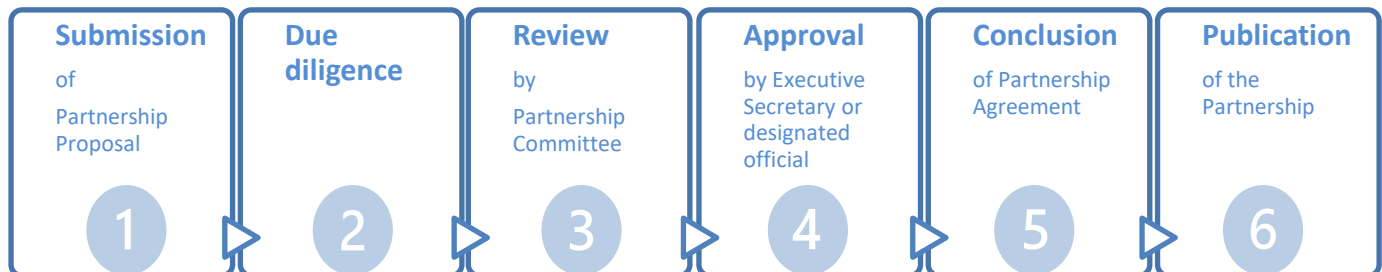
Partnerships are distinct from commercial relationships: any financial obligations outside the partnership must adhere to the secretariat's procurement policies and UN rules, necessitating a formal contract.

Partnerships with the secretariat are governed by principles of integrity, independence and impartiality, accountability, transparency, and confidentiality.



Partnership process: key steps

Partnerships with non-Party stakeholders are formalised through an internal review process aligned with the UN System and the UN Global Compact policies and guidelines. The secretariat performs due diligence assessment using eligibility and exclusionary criteria, **balancing opportunities and potential reputational risks**. Prospective partnerships are reviewed by an internal Partnership Committee that makes a recommendation for final approval by the Executive Secretary.



Partnership proposals

Interested non-Party entities may submit **partnership proposals** to the secretariat on their own initiative or in response to a [call for proposals](#) on the UNFCCC website by e-mail to Partnerships@unfccc.int. The proposal should:

- Clearly reference the relevant call for proposal
- Indicate the scope, objectives, and duration of the proposed partnership and, if applicable, the financial value of the entity's contribution
- Address, to the extent possible and with supporting documentation, the entity's capacity to enter into and implement the partnership, including proof of juridical personality, proof of sound financial management, and proof of technical capacities to carry out the partnership
- Address, to the extent possible and with supporting documentation, whether and how the entity meets each of the UNFCCC secretariat eligibility criteria, indicating any relevant activity or advocacy regarding these criteria
- Confirm by a formal statement that the entity does not meet any of the exclusionary criteria, indicating any relevant activity or advocacy with regard to these criteria
- Include a statement of the entity's intention to fully comply with the terms of a partnership agreement to be agreed with the secretariat .

To obtain a partnership proposal template, please contact the secretariat's Resource Mobilization and Partnerships (RMP) team @ Partnerships@unfccc.int

Evaluation and selection

The selection process of partners involves due diligence, including the application of eligibility and exclusionary criteria. Prospective partners must disclose all relevant information to the secretariat to facilitate the due diligence process.

ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA

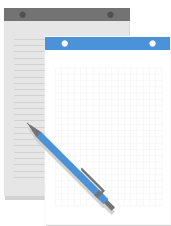
- ✓ Demonstrated support of the core values of the UN as highlighted in the UN Charter
- ✓ Demonstrated support of the principles enshrined in the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, including the commitment to reducing net Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050, as applicable
- ✓ Demonstrated support of internationally recognised principles reflected, *inter alia*, in the UN Global Compact and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- ✓ Active engagement in partnerships and initiatives with the UN, intergovernmental, national, sub-national, industry or sectoral, non-governmental and other related organisations in support of climate, environmental and/or social causes, aligned with one or more of the Sustainable Development Goals
- ✓ Demonstrated support of the principles of sustainable development, including social and environmental corporate responsibility
- ✓ For business sector entities, reporting on corporate environmental and social responsibility performance
- ✓ For not-for-profit entities, regular monitoring and evaluation reporting
- ✓ A strong relationship between the proposed partnership and the business or purpose of the entity

EXCLUSIONARY CRITERIA

- ✗ Entities in industries whose products, services or operations may negatively affect the objectives, activities or reputation of the secretariat, including but not limited to entities whose core products or core related services include fossil fuels
- ✗ Failure to demonstrate ongoing support of the core values of the UN and its causes or to demonstrate commitment to internationally recognised principles concerning human rights, labour and the environment as reflected, *inter alia*, in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the Ten Principles of the UN Global Compact and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- ✗ Illicit or illegal behaviour, including organised crime, trafficking, corruption, drug abuse or terrorism
- ✗ Violation of sanctions established by the UN Security Council or illegal behaviour, including organised crime, trafficking, corruption, drug abuse or terrorism
- ✗ Failure to meet other relevant obligations or responsibilities required by the UN or the secretariat

For entities falling under the exclusionary criteria, partnerships may be considered only under certain conditions, when such entity:

- Confirms that its business or activities do not meet the exclusionary criteria, and that it is sufficiently separated from the exclusionary entity in terms of the corporate and legal structure.
- Confirms that by the nature of its business, it offers products or services to all sectors. If the entity provides products and services to fossil fuel entities, then the entity must present evidence its products and services help fossil fuel entities to substantially accelerate decarbonisation, and that it does not provide products and services that enable fossil fuel expansion.
- Presents credible, verifiable, publicly pledged, and reported net zero commitments by 2050, including phasing out support for fossil fuel entities and/or facilitating transition plans to support the green economy.
- Confirms that its net zero commitments cover at least Scope 1 and 2 and, ideally, Scope 3 of carbon emissions, backed by credible transition plans and/or interim targets, based on IPCC science.



IN OUR COLLABORATION WITH NON-STATE ENTITIES, WE AIM TO BE RISK-AWARE RATHER THAN RISK-AVERSE. OUR APPROACH IS SUPPORTED BY DEFINED RISK THRESHOLDS AND COMPREHENSIVE RISK MITIGATION PLANS.

Three levels of due diligence

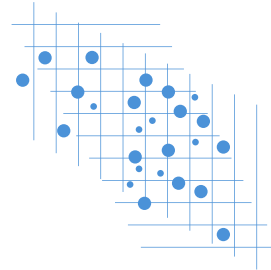
LIGHT
Minimum/Low Risk

STANDARD
Medium Risk

ESCALATED
High Risk

Special considerations

The secretariat maintains a holistic approach to partnerships with non-Party entities, upholding the integrity of its objectives while aiming to ensure equity of involvement in the UNFCCC process across developing and developed countries. The secretariat gives special consideration to partnerships and collaborations with non-Party entities from developing countries, particularly the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) and Small Island Developing States (SIDS).



Partnership formalisation

Partnership agreements

A formal written partnership agreement between the secretariat and a non-State entity is required before a partnership can be implemented. Each partnership agreement clearly defines:

- The roles and responsibilities of the secretariat and the partner(s) in the context of the delivery of its activities
- A mutual understanding of each other's expectations
- The partner's accountability, confidentiality undertaking, relevant resources and benefits
- Timelines for any activities and deliverables agreed and any measurable outputs

Use of the UNFCCC logo

UNFCCC secretariat partners must adhere to specific principles when using the United Nations name, acronym, and emblem, as well as the UNFCCC name and logo. These cannot be used in any form, modified or unmodified, without prior written authorisation from the secretariat.

Authorisation to use the logo may be granted on a case-by-case basis for non-exclusive, non-commercial purposes to advance partnership objectives or show support for UNFCCC's activities. With appropriate written approval and under specified conditions, the UNFCCC logo may also be authorised for a limited number of partners to promote a specific event or initiative.

Key resources

- [United Nations Guidelines on a Principle-based Approach to the Cooperation between the United Nations and the Business Sector](#)
- [The UNSDG Common Approach to Prospect Research and Due Diligence for Business Sector Partnerships](#)
- [Integrity Matters: Net Zero Commitments by Businesses, Financial Institutions, Cities and Regions, The United Nations' High-Level Expert Group on the Net Zero Emissions Commitments of Non-State Entities](#)
- [United Nations General Assembly Economic and Social Council, Report of the Secretary-General, Repositioning the United Nations development system to deliver on the 2030 Agenda: our promise for dignity, prosperity and peace on a healthy planet](#)

This note supersedes the UNFCCC secretariat Bulletin UNFCCC secretariat guidelines for partnership, B/2017/1 of 29 March 2017.