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Administrative, financial and institutional matters

Policy and criteria for engagement and collaboration with non-Party stakeholders

Note by the secretariat

Summary

This note contains information on the secretariat's applied policy and criteria for engagement and collaboration with non-Party stakeholders and safeguards for avoiding any reputational or other potential risk associated with such partnerships.



I. Introduction

A. Mandate

1. The Subsidiary Body for Implementation, at its fifty-eighth session, requested the secretariat to prepare a document on its applied policy and criteria for engagement and collaboration with non-Party stakeholders and safeguards for avoiding any reputational or other potential risk associated with such partnerships, and to make it available at least 60 days before the start of the fifty-ninth session of the Subsidiary Body for Implementation.¹

B. Objective

2. The aim of this note, prepared in response to the mandate referred to in paragraph 1 above, is to provide information on the secretariat's internal processes applicable to accepting voluntary financial contributions from and engaging and collaborating with non-Party stakeholders, and an overview of its measures for preventing any associated reputational or other potential risk.

II. Engagement and collaboration of the secretariat with non-Party stakeholders

3. The secretariat plays a fundamental role in supporting implementation of the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement. The secretariat's collaboration and engagement with non-Party stakeholders, as a complement to its collaboration with Parties, helps to enhance its capacity to meet its substantial responsibilities in this regard by facilitating access to innovation, knowledge, expertise, technology, data, financing and networks. Such resources are critical for the secretariat to progress in its efforts to strengthen the foundations for global cooperation on addressing climate change.

A. Policy and criteria

4. The secretariat welcomes formalized partnerships with and voluntary financial contributions from non-Party stakeholders that share the values and principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations, the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement and internationally recognized principles concerning human rights, labour, the environment and anti-corruption as reflected in the United Nations Global Compact.

5. Such collaboration and engagement must be meaningful, mutually advantageous and strategic, including in terms of 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 implementation of its mandates to address climate change globally.

6. The secretariat maintains a holistic approach to engaging and collaborating with non-Party stakeholders that upholds the integrity of its objectives while aiming to ensure equity of involvement in the UNFCCC process across developing and developed countries.

7. The non-Party stakeholders that the secretariat engages and collaborates with include for-profit entities, State-owned companies and non-governmental organizations, such as non-profit organizations, business associations and coalitions and philanthropic foundations.

8. Partnerships are distinct from commercial relationships and are established for achieving common objectives.

¹ FCCC/SBI/2023/10, para. 154.

9. A non-Party stakeholder may submit a proposal to establish a partnership with or provide a voluntary financial contribution to the secretariat either on its own initiative or in response to a formal call issued via the UNFCCC website.

10. Upon receipt of such a proposal from an interested non-Party stakeholder, the secretariat initiates an internal review process, which includes an assessment by its Partnership Committee of the benefits of and any reputational or other potential risk associated with the proposed partnership.

B. Safeguards for avoiding risk

11. To avoid any reputational or other potential risk associated with the secretariat's engagement and collaboration with non-Party stakeholders, due diligence and risk assessment are conducted as part of the secretariat's internal review. The due diligence procedure involves assessing the non-Party stakeholder concerned against defined eligibility and exclusionary criteria.

12. The eligibility criteria include:

- (a) Demonstrated alignment with the core values of the United Nations;
- (b) Adherence to the principles enshrined in the Convention, the Kyoto Protocol and the Paris Agreement, including commitment to net zero greenhouse gas emissions, where relevant;
- (c) Sharing internationally recognized principles such as those reflected in the United Nations Global Compact and Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights;
- (d) Demonstrated support for the principles of sustainable development, including social and environmental corporate responsibility;
- (e) Compliance with recognized international environmental, social and governance standards;
- (f) Regular monitoring, evaluation and reporting of their environmental, social and governance performance.

13. The exclusionary criteria include:

- (a) Direct involvement in the fossil fuel and mining sectors;
- (b) Failure to uphold the core values of the United Nations and other internationally recognized principles;
- (c) Engagement in illicit activities;
- (d) Violation of sanctions established by the United Nations Security Council;
- (e) Failure to meet other relevant obligations or responsibilities.

14. Engagement with non-Party stakeholders that are indirectly associated with the fossil fuel and mining sectors is considered only in cases where the concerned entity's core operations do not conflict with the rest of the exclusionary criteria and where it maintains a clear separation from excluded entities both structurally and perceptually, offers products or services for all sectors, actively supports decarbonization of fossil fuel entities, and has open and accessible commitments to achieving net zero emissions by 2050 or discontinuing support for such entities and promoting the transition to a green economy.

15. The secretariat gives special consideration to engaging and collaborating with entities originating from developing countries, especially from the least developed countries and small island developing States, in order to increase involvement of non-Party stakeholders from developing countries and thereby enhance geographical balance of engagement in the UNFCCC process.

16. The Partnership Committee reviews the non-Party stakeholder's proposal, the secretariat's report on due diligence and other relevant documentation and makes a

recommendation to the Executive Secretary, who makes the final decision on whether to approve the proposed partnership or voluntary financial contribution.

C. Additional modes of engagement and collaboration

17. Beyond the scope of formalized partnerships with and voluntary financial contributions to the secretariat, there are also UNFCCC initiatives that promote non-Party stakeholder collaboration and engagement, including:

(a) The Nairobi work programme on impacts, vulnerability and adaptation to climate change, the UNFCCC knowledge hub for adaptation and resilience and the first stakeholder engagement mechanism established under the Convention. Under the Nairobi work programme, iterative approaches and strategic partnerships are employed with the aim of closing knowledge gaps, particularly in specific thematic areas and in vulnerable countries and subregions. Collaborators and partners under the Nairobi work programme include academic entities, financial institutions, private sector entities and communities of practice;

(b) The Marrakech Partnership for Global Climate Action, which supports implementation of the Paris Agreement by facilitating collaboration on climate action between governments and cities, regions, businesses and investors;

(c) Race to Zero, a global campaign to advance leadership by and support from regions, cities, businesses and investors towards achieving a healthy, resilient and zero-carbon future;

(d) The Action for Climate Empowerment Hub, a partnership between the secretariat and the Ministry of Economic Affairs, Industry, Climate Action and Energy of the German State of North Rhine-Westphalia. The aim of the Hub is to enhance public support for and involvement in climate action in order to accelerate implementation of the Paris Agreement across all sectors of society, with a focus on youth;

(e) The Fashion Industry Charter for Climate Action, whose wide range of signatories and supporting organizations are working to accelerate decarbonization efforts within the fashion industry;

(f) Sports for Climate Action, which facilitates collaborative climate action among sports organizations and their communities through sharing of learning and best practices and enhancement of innovation in areas of mutual interest.
