

Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 6

UNHCR Partner Portal

Subject:	Partner Portal
Reference Documents	- Explanatory Note on the Launch and Roll-out of UNHCR's Partner Portal - UNHCR Partner Portal Smart-Guide - UNHCR Partner Portal User Guide
Reference No.	UNHCR/AI/2016/8
Date of Issue	29 April 2016
Date of Revision	By 1 January 2018

This Guidance Note informs Partners of the features and use of the UNHCR Partner Portal, as related to UNHCR's Administrative Instruction on the Partner Portal.

This Guidance Note requires:

- UNHCR offices to share with the relevant Partners this Guidance Note on the UNHCR Partner Portal.
- UNHCR offices and Partners to fully understand the importance of the Partner Portal, in strengthening partnerships and in achieving the best protection and solutions for refugees and other persons of concern.

Table of Contents

1.	Purpose	3
2.	Scope	3
3.	Rationale	3
4.	Features of the Portal and Procedures for Access.....	4
4.1	Use of the Partner Portal	4
4.2	Registration and Vetting of Partners.....	4
4.3	Confidentiality of Information	5
4.4	Roll-Out Strategy and Activities	6
5.	Terms and Definitions	6
6.	References.....	6
7.	Monitoring and Compliance.....	6
8.	Dates	7
9.	Contact	7

1. Purpose

1.1 UNHCR collaborates with more than 900 governmental, non-governmental, United Nations and other Partners. In 2014, USD 1.3 billion, or 40% of UNHCR's total delivery of USD 3.4 billion, was implemented through Partnerships on protection and solutions for refugees and other persons of concern.

1.2 The Partner Portal was launched and piloted in several operations. This Guidance Note introduces the Partner Portal and its features, and institutionalizes its use for UNHCR and for its Non-governmental Organization (NGO) and other not-for-profit Partners.

1.3 The Partner Portal is a web-based, innovative, interactive tool for enhanced communication between UNHCR and Partners. The main purposes of the Partner Portal are to strengthen UNHCR Partnerships and achieve the best protection and solutions for refugees and other persons of concern. It is a facility to support the Framework for Implementing with Partners including registration, vetting and maintaining an enhanced quality database on each Partner Profile.

2. Scope

2.1 This Guidance Note is addressed to all NGOs and other not-for-profit Organizations which are interested to partner with UNHCR.¹ The Partner Portal provides, to these potential and existing Partners simplified, personalized, interactive and convenient access to UNHCR, world-wide irrespective of where the organization is located or where UNHCR operates. These Partners, both new and existing, are required to register to obtain authorization for access. The Partner Portal also provides, to UNHCR at the organizational level, basic information about these Partners, their profile and location. The process and the required documentation for registration and access are described in this Guidance Note.

2.2 Compliance with this Guidance Note by these UNHCR Partners is mandatory.

3. Rationale

3.1 UNHCR previously did not have a platform through which interested and potential Partners could reach out to UNHCR. The existing database on Partners until recently was, at best, outdated, incomplete and with limited access. Furthermore, there was no procedure for registration and vetting of existing and potential NGO and other not-for-profit Partners. The new Partner Portal supports easy and self-managed access for these Partners to register with UNHCR, and present its organizational profile. It also assists UNHCR in vetting, registering and recording new Partners, and provides a repository of accurate, consistent and updated data on UNHCR-funded Partnerships that is interactive, self-maintained by Partners, and widely accessible within UNHCR.

3.2 The Partner Portal also supports the management of the Framework for Implementing with Partners and benefits Partners through easily accessible guidance and information in electronic form. The Partner Portal is a "living instrument" and its benefits can be further enriched by the users and through additional innovations in the future.

¹ The use of the term "Partners" throughout this Guidance Note therefore refers to NGO and other not-for-profit Partners.

4. Features of the Portal and Procedures for Access

4.1 Use of the Partner Portal

4.1.1 The access will provide the user important information about UNHCR's collaboration with Partners, data and profile of Partners for entering into Partnership agreements, and policy and guidance on the Partnership Framework. It will also support the selection of Partners including launching of "Calls for Expression of Interest", the submission process for pre-qualification for procurement with UNHCR funds, and other facilities to support the Partnerships.

4.1.2 Partner Portal features will be introduced in phases to smoothly integrate into UNHCR processes. Its first phase is launched through this Guidance Note and includes:

- An instant Dashboard on UNHCR-Partner collaboration and disbursement of UNHCR funds to Partners at the operational level;
- An electronic "eKnowledge hub" relating to the Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners (policies, procedures, guidance and updates);
- A platform for organization-wide announcements of "Calls for Expression of Interest" for wider solicitation of collaboration with potential Partners in UNHCR-funded programmes/projects;
- Initiation of proposals and Concept Notes by potential Partners who are interested in participating in UNHCR operations and UNHCR-funded projects, whether emergency or current from any location;
- Easy and secure submission of requests for Pre-qualification for Procurement Status, pooled accounts, and similar applications;
- Invitations to UNHCR-organized workshops, meetings and conferences;
- Speedy connection and communication through notification by e-mail; and
- Other areas as needed and feasible, as the Framework for Implementing with Partners is further developed.

4.1.3 One of the important features of the Partner Portal is to support the process of engaging Partners in UNHCR operations. UNHCR offices, when soliciting the collaboration of potential Partners for UNHCR-funded programmes/projects, should use the Portal as an electronic platform for announcing the "Calls for Expression of Interest". Potential Partners in any location will be informed instantly, and will be able to submit their proposals and "Concept Notes" and track the decisions. This is expected to improve the pool of potential Partners and will allow UNHCR access to potential Partners in all locations needed.

4.1.4 The following sections of this document provide further details on the processes for accessing the Portal, and registering Partners with UNHCR.

4.2 Registration and Vetting of Partners

4.2.1 Potential Partners interested in collaborating with UNHCR operations and entering into Partnership agreements for programmes/projects funded by UNHCR register with UNHCR through the Partner Portal. Since the Partner Portal is new, all existing Partners and new potential Partners are invited to register. The Partner Portal currently allows for the registration of NGOs/non-profit organizations. In the future the second phase will be tailored for Operational Partners, governments and other institutions, and will be further developed gradually in 2016/2017.

4.2.2 The Organization interested in partnering with UNHCR may approach UNHCR through email ePartner@unhcr.org or log-in at <https://Partner.unhcr.org>. Thereafter the user will be guided through the simple steps. Firstly, the Partner should request login details for the Portal, through “Creation of the User ID and the password”, provide its legal organizational name and authorized person on its behalf, and follow further online steps for granting access to the Partner Portal.

4.2.3 UNHCR will verify the information provided and request the Partner to fulfil three mandatory requirements by submitting:

- a) Its statute or constitutional document, establishing the entity as a non-profit Organization;
- b) Its legal registration with the national authorities of the country of origin for the establishment of the entity as a non-profit organization; and
- c) Two recommendation letters that verify a good collaboration history with reputable organizations such as UN system organizations, donors (ECHO, DFID, USAID etc.) or a governmental entity (only for new Partners). In case such letters are not available, after local assessment, the UNHCR Representative may recommend the registration of the Partner.

4.2.4 Upon assessment of these documents and decision by UNHCR (Division of Financial and Administrative Management/IPMS) that the Organization satisfactorily meets the initial requirements, the Organization will be granted the relevant access to the Partner Portal and be invited to complete a “Partner Declaration” form, stating that the organization’s values and conduct are compatible with UNHCR/UN nature and values (humanitarian, non-discriminatory, safeguarding refugees and human rights), has not been barred or sanctioned by the United Nations Security Council, and abides with the Principles of Partnership and the terms of UNHCR Partnership Agreements. Partners that are already registered in the Partner Portal do not need to submit a separate declaration form when applying for projects.

4.2.5 Following successful review, UNHCR will provide the access to complete the “Partner Profile”.

4.2.6 Finally, upon successful completion of the “Partner Profile”, the Partner will be assigned a “Partner Code” in MSRP that permits the Partner to participate in the Partner selection process, and allows UNHCR to enter into agreements with and disburse funds to the Partner, when required by UNHCR offices.

4.2.7 UNHCR (DFAM/IPMS) will closely support Partners with registration and will monitor the process and assist Partners that have challenges with internet, by providing offline registration facilities.

4.2.8 UNHCR has also established a process to inactivate or suspend a Partner’s access to the Portal and Partner Code, should the Partner not meet the above-mentioned criteria, or should its status and conduct be changed to “inactive or suspended”.

4.2.9 Upon registration, the Partner Organization and its authorized users will be able to present and maintain its profile data, access information on policies and guidance on UNHCR Partnership, express interest in participating in UNHCR operations, submit its application for pre-qualification for procurement with UNHCR funds, and access new additions as the Portal is further developed for use of pooled accounts, etc.

4.3 Confidentiality of Information

4.3.1 The content, data and information in the Partner Portal are internal. Unauthorized access and sharing them with a third party are not permitted.

4.4 Roll-Out Strategy and Activities

4.4.1 The roll-out of the Partner Portal to UNHCR staff in 440 locations (150 offices) and to almost 1,000 Partners is a challenging undertaking. It requires ongoing efforts, broader collaboration and continuous follow-up. The Partner Portal is being launched through a multi-faceted approach and in phases, to ensure a smooth transition and integration into the normal business processes.

4.4.2 The roll-out is supported by face-to-face training, management briefings, individualized support and Q&A sessions, provided through innovative and online facilities such as webinars, skype, and on-line support. Additional guidance materials for UNHCR and Partners have been developed to support the roll-out and application of the Partner Portal, including a user-friendly Smart Guide, a portable electronic visual walk-through of the process providing step-by-step instructions for UNHCR and Partners to easily complete tasks in the Partner Portal. All these materials are available on UNHCR's Intranet, under "[Implementing Partnerships / Partner Portal](#)".

4.4.3 The Partner Portal was jointly developed by UNHCR (DFAM/IPMS) and Partners. UNHCR wishes to express its deep gratitude to the individuals and organizations that have contributed to the development of the Portal, particularly the UNHCR-NGO Field Working Group and the international network of NGO Partner Organizations, including the International Council for Voluntary Agencies, InterAction, Refugee Council-USA, Asia Pacific Refugee Rights Network, OFADEC and the African Taskforce.

5. Terms and Definitions

5.1 Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners: Integral governance and management instrument for managing partnerships aimed at providing quality protection and solutions to persons of concern in partnership, and supporting accountability for resources entrusted to UNHCR. The purpose of the Framework is to outline UNHCR's policies, guidelines and practices for working with Partners implementing projects. The Framework aims to serve as a clear and user-friendly reference for both UNHCR and its Partners to strengthen partnerships, improve operational applicability, enhance accountability and assurance, and improve results for persons of concern.

5.2 Partner Portal: Web-based, innovative and interactive tool for enhanced communication and collaboration between UNHCR and Partners on project Partnerships.

6. References

6.1 The following reference materials are available on the UNHCR Partner Portal <https://Partner.unhcr.org>:

- Explanatory note on the Launch and Roll-out of UNHCR's Partner Portal
- UNHCR Partner Portal Smart-Guide
- UNHCR Partner Portal User Guide

7. Monitoring and Compliance

7.1 The Partner Portal and its access will be managed and maintained by UNHCR (DFAM/IPMS). All Partners, both new and existing, that enter into Partnership Agreements are required to register.

7.2 UNHCR offices (both at Headquarters and country level) are expected to use the Portal to learn about the Partner's background and profile, upload the "Calls for Expression of Interest" for undertaking projects by Partners, and provide support for application of the Framework for Implementing with Partners.

8. Dates

8.1 The Partner Portal was formally launched in April 2015, and became fully operational effective as of 1 January 2016.

9. Contact

9.1 For queries and additional support, DFAM/IPMS may be contacted at ePartner@unhcr.org.

9.2 Feedback on use and suggestions for further improvement of the Partner Portal would be highly appreciated and may also be addressed to ePartner@unhcr.org.