

UNHCR/AI/2016/8

Administrative Instruction on the Partner Portal (Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 6)

The validity of this Administrative Instruction Policy is extended until 31 December 2020. The revised review date is by 31 December 2020.



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Date

ODMS

Custodian of the Guidance Management
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**Administrative Instruction on the Partner Portal
(Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 6)**

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Signature:



Approval date:

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This and other official UNHCR Guidance is available on the Policy and other Guidance Page of the UNHCR-net.

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Appendix 1: Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 6 [external]

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 This Administrative Instruction introduces the Partner Portal and its features, and institutionalizes its use Organization-wide. The Partner Portal was launched and piloted in several operations and 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.

1.3 The Partner Portal provides to 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. All 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 Partners, their profile and location. The process and the required documentation for registration and access are described in this Administrative Instruction.

1.4 This Administrative Instruction can be found on UNHCR's Intranet page on Implementing Partnerships: [Implementing Partnerships / Partner Portal](#).

2. Scope

2.1 This Administrative Instruction is addressed to Representatives and Heads of Office, as well as other UNHCR staff responsible for the management of Partnerships.

2.2 Compliance with this Administrative Instruction by UNHCR and Partners is mandatory.

2.3 **The attached Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 6 (Appendix 1) must be shared with Partners.**

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 Partners. The new Partner Portal supports easy and self-managed access for 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.

4. Features of the Portal and Procedures for Access

4.1 Use of the Partner Portal

4.1.1 The access will provide the users 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 Administrative Instruction 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 Access for UNHCR

4.2.1 All offices working with Partners, both at Headquarters and at country level, are required to obtain access to the Partner Portal through the following procedures. Each Head of Office is required to send a memorandum or email to DFAM/Implementing Partnership Management Service (IPMS) (ePartner@unhcr.org) nominating the following users:

- Project Agreement Manager: the UNHCR Officer assigned by the Head of Office to prepare and present information to the Multifunctional Team - Partnership Management Committee (PMC). Normally this is the person responsible for preparing Project Partnership Agreements (usually the Programme Officer);
- The PMC User: a nominated member of the PMC responsible for reviewing the selection and retention of Partners, undertaking projects and entering into agreements, as nominated by the Head of office; and
- UNHCR Reader: the person with authorized access to read and search the contents of the Partner Portal.

4.2.2 After the Head of Office has nominated these three users, DFAM/IPMS will grant the access to the Portal. Offices are requested to inform DFAM/IPMS on changes in the users for updating the authorized access.

4.2.3 Upon obtaining the access, UNHCR offices will be able to access background data on Partners, track performance, solicit Partnerships, and use other features of the Portal.

4.3 Registration and Vetting of Partners

4.3.1 Potential Partners interested in collaborating with UNHCR operations and entering into Partnership agreements for programmes/projects funded by UNHCR should 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.

4.3.2 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 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.

4.3.3 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.

4.3.4 Upon assessment of these documents and decision by DFAM/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. Following successful review, UNHCR will provide the access to complete the "Partner Profile".

4.3.5 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.

4.3.6 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.

4.3.7 A system is established 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".

4.3.8 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.

4.4 Confidentiality of Information

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

4.5 Roll-Out Strategy and Activities

4.5.1 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 normal business processes.

4.5.2 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](#)".

4.5.3 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 This Administrative Instruction should be read in conjunction with specific guidance on UNHCR's Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners, the applicable UNHCR Project Partnership Agreement, Chapter 4 of the UNHCR Manual, and other applicable guidance. Such guidance may be accessed through the Intranet page relating to Implementing Partnership Management:

https://intranet.unhcr.org/intranet/unhcr/en/home/support_services/implementing_partnerships.html

6.2 The following reference materials are also available on UNHCR's Intranet, under "[Implementing Partnerships / Partner Portal](#)":

- 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 Compliance with this Administrative Instruction will be monitored by DFAM/IPMS who will manage and maintain the Partner Portal and its access.

7.2 All Partners, both new and existing, that enter into Partnership Agreements are required to register.

7.3 UNHCR offices (both at Headquarters and at 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 1 January 2016.

8.2 This Administrative Instruction will be revised upon the launch of phase 2 of the UNHCR Partner Portal roll-out (to be developed in 2016/2017).

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.

10. History

10.1 As the Partner Portal is a new tool supporting UNHCR's Enhanced Framework for Implementing with Partners, this Administrative Instruction does not replace or alter any previous UNHCR internal guidance material.