

Frequently Asked Questions: UNHCR 2022 – 2023 Call for Expression of Interest

1. Why is there a new partner selection and retention policy?

In July 2013, UNHCR launched a new global policy establishing a standard procedure to enhance the transparency of the selection of partners. The objective of UNHCR's policy on the selection and retention of partners for Partnership Agreements is to ensure that UNHCR identifies the best-fit partners for project implementation in a given operation in order to provide quality protection and assistance to refugees and other persons of concern. UNHCR Offices, through a multi-functional team approach, are required to undertake adequate due diligence and conduct the process of selection/retention of Implementing Partner(s) in an objective, consistent, transparent, and timely manner.

UNHCR Syria is launching a country-wide Call for Expression of Interest for potential partners to express interest in their areas of expertise and geographic areas of intervention for the implementation of the 2023 – 2025 Multi-Year Strategy.

2. Is the Call for Expression of Interest (CEOI) open to all organizations?

The CEI applies to all current/past organizations, national/international non-governmental organizations (INGOs and NGOs). Red Cross and Red Crescent Society or other non-profit entities are eligible to apply to this CEI. This CEI does not apply to private companies, Government and UN organizations.

3. Is registration with the Government of Syria a pre-condition for selecting partners?

Yes. National Non-Governmental organizations (NNGOs) are required to provide the Announcement Resolution Document قرار إشهار which includes the NGO's objectives, specific ID number, and date of issuance.

International Non-Governmental Organizations (INGOs) are required to provide the signed Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent (SARC) or Syria Trust (ST).

4. How do interested partners submit the required documents for this CEI?

All documents and annexes should be submitted in English only through the UNHCR Partner Portal at (unpartnerportal.org). To submit the concept note and accompanying documents, your organization must be registered at the Partner Portal. You will be required to upload the statutory and registration documents and letters of recommendation during the registration process. If you encounter any problems during the registration process, please contact UNHCR at epartner@unhcr.org and copy syrdaxoi@unhcr.org.

Documents required to be submitted through the UN Partner Portal:

1. Concept note (Appendix C)
2. Draft budget (Appendix C-2)
3. Partner Bio-Data (Annex B)
4. Any other document as required (if not uploaded already in your profile on the portal)

Please ensure that the above documents are merged into one signed/stamped PDF document and in soft copy to facilitate the review process.

Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA) self-assessment is required as part of the registration on the portal. The self-assessment must be submitted via the UN Partner Portal unless already assessed by a UN entity.

If a potential partner does not have a previous audit report, that does not prevent the Partner from applying to the Call for Expression of Interest.

After the registration at the Partner Portal, you will be able to access UNHCR policies and guidance notes for the Partners, as well as the templates of the partnership agreements documents. The submission must be uploaded within the deadline (17th of July). Requests through emails will not be considered.

5. Will submissions in the Arabic language be considered?

No. All potential partners should submit the concept note and related annexes in English Language only.

6. Is there a budget ceiling for any of the sectors or for the concept note?

There is no specific allocation for any of the sectors and UNHCR will not assess the concept notes based on the requirements at this stage. However, cost-effectiveness is assigned five per cent as part of the selection criteria.

7. What should the Concept Note cover and how is it different from a fully developed project proposal?

The Concept Note is for the organization to express its unique advantage and added value in accomplishing project objectives. The Concept Note is to clearly spell out objectives for undertaking the project, describe the implementation approach, and demonstrate abilities to meet the selection criteria and project requirements, the unique advantage the organization brings to the partnership, and its complementarity with UNHCR. The Concept Note should not be a fully developed project proposal, but rather should be concise and contain clear information.

There is no limitation on the number of sectors and geographical areas to be submitted, details of the locations within the governorates are not a mandatory requirement.

8. Should organizations strictly follow the format proposed by UNHCR when submitting concept notes?

Yes. All partners are required to submit Concept Notes according to the same standard submission format required by the Office to ensure fair assessment, consistency, and objectivity. Please refer to Appendixes C, C2, and B of this CEI.

9. Are current UNHCR implementing partners required to submit a Concept Note if they want to continue working with UNHCR in 2023 – 2025?

Yes, current implementing partners are also required to present a Concept Note if they want to be considered for a partnership in 2023 – 2025.

10. Who will select/clear the Concept Notes submitted by organizations?

UNHCR has established an Implementing Partnership Management Committee (IPMC) in Syria, which will review and evaluate all Concept Notes. The IPMC will, following the multi-functional review of the received Concept Notes and deliberation, submit its recommendations to the UNHCR Representative in Syria for final endorsement.

11. What are the IPMC's selection criteria?

The detailed selection criteria is available in the body of the Call for Expression of Interest document. In addition, the IPMC will be assessing each Concept Note against the criteria outlined in the CEI to screen and verify the information provided by the applicant partner(s), internal technical and risk assessments (as applicable) for specific sectors conducted by the various units of UNHCR, previous performance/audit reports, carry out reference checks, web search, confirmation of legal status and registrations. If deemed necessary to undertake such assessment, a visit to the partner's office is possible to further inform the selection process.

The IPMC will then consider all factors to identify the partner that most substantially conforms to the requirements and criteria mentioned above.

12. When will UNHCR's decision on selection be communicated?

UNHCR will communicate in writing the outcome of the selection process during the third week of September 2022 to all applicant organizations – both the successful as well as the non-successful.

13. What is the meaning of selection?

The selection entails that the NGO will be selected as a potential UNHCR partner for the multi-year strategy period 2023 – 2025. This will allow UNHCR and potential partners to negotiate specific Project Partnership Agreements, on the basis of the positively assessed concept notes and expertise of the NGO at any time during this period and based on the specific requirements for interventions.

The selection, however, is not a commitment by UNHCR to sign a Project Partnership Agreement, nor to provide resources for funding of the NGO proposal to the amount submitted in the Concept Note. The funding that may be received from UNHCR will be subject to specific negotiations on the accepted areas of intervention, UNHCR requesting, receiving and accepting a full-fledged project proposal and concluding the PPA procedures.

14. Once a partner is selected, will the partner have to participate in Calls for Expression of Interest(s) every year?

Through this CEI, UNHCR will establish a pool of potential partners (Partner Roster) for the duration of the multi-year strategy 2023 – 2025. This will allow UNHCR to contact organizations on the Roster during this period for potential partnerships, subject to the context and evolving implementation modalities, needs and priorities of humanitarian partners in Syria, and the availability of resources. Inclusion in the Roster does not guarantee final engagement in a funded partnership agreement. UNHCR may also conduct further assessments to ensure that the potential partner meets specific technical requirements and complies with UNHCR rules and regulations as need be.

15. Once partners are selected, what are the next steps?

Once the selection process is completed and decisions are communicated to all applicant organizations, UNHCR offices in Syria will request selected partners to provide detailed project proposals for the 2023 implementation cycle. These detailed proposals should be discussed with the relevant UNHCR offices in the country to agree on the various aspects of the partnership.

15. In case some documents were missed from submission, can they be submitted later?

UNHCR will contact partners in case some of the submitted documents were missed out, as they might be able to provide them and avoid rejection of their proposals.

16. In instances of queries relating to the Project or the Concept Note, what are the UNHCR contacts?

Queries (in English and Arabic) can be addressed to the IPMC Secretariat in UNHCR Country Office Damascus through: syrdaxoi@unhcr.org.

Contacting any members of the UNHCR Syria IPMC specifically for the purpose of the selection process will be considered to be a breach of the UNHCR policy. The concept notes of partners who have contacted IPMC members will be excluded from the review and selection process. All communication is to be directed to the above-mentioned email address.