



PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT GUIDELINES

APPLICABILITY: ACCI Relief Staff and Development Partners

VERSION: 1 (November 2023)

PREAMBLE

ACCIR form partnerships with likeminded community development and child rights-based organisations that are working to achieve the common goal, which is our mission *is to see whole life transformation in individuals, families and communities by empowering our people to love well.*

ACCIR acknowledge that collaborative partnerships are essential to our mission and in responding to complex global issues in development that are very challenging to combat alone. We place a high value in working with local implementing partners to engage with and empower communities to be active participants in their own development.

Rather than acting simply as a funding body, ACCIR is committed to fostering effective partnerships and using the unique perspective and strengths that we each bring to the partnership. We recognise our partners are the experts in their own complex communities, who should be the ones driving programming decisions. At ACCIR, we seek to offer partners with our technical expertise in formal development knowledge and capacity support throughout the partnership. Together, by combining this expertise and by working collaboratively, we can contribute to fostering effective outcomes and impacts in the communities we support.

SCOPE

Those who fall within the scope below are required to adhere to these **ACCIR Partnership Engagement Guidelines**.

These guidelines apply to following ACCIR Stakeholders.

- All ACCIR Staff.
- All ACCIR Development Partner Organisations

PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES & VALUES

ACCIR is committed to fostering and maintaining a positive culture that creates a safe, caring and productive environment for all our stakeholder, including our partners.

All partners are expected to abide by the ACCI Code of Conduct outlined in the ACCI Standards Policy.

To enable this, we focus on 7 shared values:

1. **Purpose** - we are focused on a common purpose with a shared Christian faith, values and beliefs. We share a positive outlook and common vision and goals.
2. **Respect** - we practice respect for each other. We are respectful of every partner, their contribution and their equality. We value different perspectives, engage in respectful conversations by listening and asking questions and we aim to create a respectful environment by providing a safe place to learn / fail / excel / express / submit / request help and exercise personal responsibility.
3. **Integrity** - we promote integrity in all aspects of our relationships. We will demonstrate integrity through open and honest communication, confidentiality and character development.
4. **Encouragement** - we believe in developing an encouraging environment that is relational, friendly, considerate and seeks understanding.

5. **Empowerment** - we seek to empower partners through being interdependent and supportive. With our partners, we are a team of competent individuals who achieve more by working together, not independently. We will be collaborative, provide coaching and two-way opportunities for growth and will encourage innovation.
6. **Responsibility** - we encourage responsibility through self-learning, reflection, self-awareness and personal development. By encouraging intrinsic motivation, growth and accountability, we recognise that we are responsible to others for the activities we do and our conduct as individuals, partners and as an organisation. We each take responsibility for our own personal conduct, activities and interactions with others. We believe that self-accountability is holding ourselves accountable, so that others don't have to.
7. **Excellence** - we value excellence as seeking the best results with the available resources. We will seek to promote professionalism whilst being grounded and flexible/adaptive. Feedback loops will be implemented to monitor and maintain our high standards that will be effectively communicated through the free flow of information, aiming to always provide clarity in uncertainty. We aim to make the best decisions, in a timely manner, with the limited information in our uncertain environment.

STANDARDS & GUIDANCE

ACCIR and all our Development Partners are committed to complying with the guidelines set out by the Overseas Aid Gift Deductible Scheme (OAGDS).

As a member of ACFID, ACCIR is committed towards upholding ACFID's Code of Conduct and minimum standards of governance, management and accountability of development for non-government organisations (NGOs). Therefore, all ACCIR Development Partners must comply with these standards set by the ACFID Code of Conduct.

PARTNERSHIP ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Clear roles and responsibilities are vital to healthy partnerships and are thoroughly discussed and agreed to during onboarding processes in a mutually accountable and respectful manner. The below table is used as a framework for these discussions.

ORGANISATIONAL ASSESSMENT	ACCIR	Partner
Submitting ACCIR Organisational Assessment Form.		✓
Reviewing ACCIR Organisational Assessment Form.	✓	
PROJECT PROPOSAL		
Initial project concept, community consultation, data collection and project design.		✓
Available to help in planning and project design including community consultation and other research methods.	✓	
Drafting the <i>Project Proposal</i> and <i>Project Framework</i> documents (including Schedules, Stakeholder Analysis, Risk Management Plan and Budget) and providing additional information as requested by ACCIR.		✓
Completing the formal <i>Project Proposal</i> and <i>Project Framework</i> documents.	✓	✓
Recording changes or addendums to the <i>Project Proposal</i> and <i>Project Framework</i> documents.	✓	✓
PROJECT ACTIVITIES		
Project activities implementation and management.		✓
Implementing and maintaining an appropriate project financial and administration systems.		✓
COMPLIANCE		

Primary responsibility for compliance with overseas legal requirements, including registration with appropriate Government ministries and adherence to international law.		✓
Completing ACCI Code of Conduct Policy Training annually.		✓
Primary responsibility to maintaining strong Child Safeguarding/Protection policies and procedures and responding appropriately to any incident, belief or suspicion of abuse or exploitation, non-compliance with the Child Safeguarding Policy or failure to safeguard a child; concerns regarding the safety or wellbeing of a child.		✓
Secondary responsibility to ensuring strong safeguarding policies and procedures are in place and responding appropriately to any reports or suspicion of abuse/harm in line with Australian Government expectations.	✓	
Primary responsibility for compliance with OAGDS (Overseas Aid Gift Deduction Scheme), ACFID (Australian Council for International Development) and other Australian legal requirements.	✓	
Available to advise on compliance issues and systems.	✓	
FINANCES		
Responsibility for fundraising.		✓
Issuing tax-deductible receipts for donations sent directly to ACCIR.	✓	
Providing monthly statement and sending remittance to the field.	✓	
MONITORING AND EVALUATION		
Implementation of strong monitoring and evaluation frameworks, including ensuring the meaningful participation of members of the project target group.		✓
Preparation and sending of all required reports and activities to ACCIR prior to due date.		✓
Preparation and sending of 6 monthly financial reports to ACCI prior to due date.		✓
Reviewing <i>Interim</i> and <i>Annual Progress Reports</i> and providing feedback to Partner.	✓	
Submission of <i>ACCIR Beneficiary Report</i> annually.		✓
Field visit minimum once per project cycle.	✓	
PROJECT RENEWAL		
Submission of updated <i>Organisation Information</i> , <i>Project Reflection</i> , and <i>Project Framework</i> , including proposal, project schedules, stakeholder analysis, risk management plan, implementation plan and budget by the date indicated in your renewal timeline (Provided by ACCIR).		✓
Available to consult on project design and assist with development of <i>Project Framework</i> .	✓	
GENERAL PROMOTION & DONOR REPORTING		
Primary responsibility for promotion and donor reporting.		✓
COACHING & SUPPORT		
Development and monitoring of partnership goals to work towards higher levels effectiveness and compliance.	✓	✓
Project coaching and support as required or when requested, including policy development assistance, training and provision of tools.	✓	

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP APPROVAL & REVIEWS

Partnership Onboarding:

Partnerships are approved after undergoing an onboarding process in close collaboration between ACCIR staff and members of partner organisations. Onboarding processes include the following:

- Relationship Building
 - From the very beginning, ACCIR prioritises building relationship and communicating directly with local implementing partners who are on the ground. Intentional conversations are built into the onboarding process to foster relationships and build rapport.

- We also begin to discuss different ways the partnership could be established. We have processes in place to ensure that required standards are met, however, many of the forms and structures of our partnerships can be adjusted as we work together to ensure the partnership is as mutually beneficial and effective as possible.
- We also look for organisational and programming Mission, Vision and Standards alignment.
- Risk Management – Alongside relationship building, we layer a risk management approach to the development of the partnership. The goal is to develop long-term partners, to add value through partnership with ACCIR and to implement effective programs. The objective of the risk management approach is adding value in improving effectiveness.
- Organisational Assessment -This includes assessing:
 - Accountability (governance structures, legal registrations etc)
 - People (staffing structures and management, volunteers and teams)
 - Partners (other third-parties)
 - Finances and internal controls
 - Financial management and review
 - Operating environment
- Safeguarding Assessment – This includes assessing:
 - Child Safeguarding
 - Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse
 - Environmental
 - Other safeguarding factors impacting vulnerable individuals or communities.
- Development of Program Frameworks - ACCIR staff work collaboratively with partners to develop program frameworks and plans. These project concepts are developed by local practitioners or community members.
 - Key development principles
 - Cross cutting issues
 - Exit strategies
 - Monitoring and evaluation
- Partner Capacity Assessment – This includes assessing:
 - Coaching goals
 - Fundraising strategies
 - Implementation strategies

Partnership Approval:

ACCIR's Project Review Committee assesses the above information and meets to approve all new partnerships. Staff who have worked closely with partners during the onboarding process share their insights, recommendations, along with the perspectives and feedback from partners.

A final decision is made whether forming a partnership is suitable, especially taking into consideration the likelihood of the partnership developing into one that is strong, mutually beneficial and transparent.

Partnerships are then formalised by signing an MOU. The MOU template is to be sent to the partner in the early stages of onboarding to allow time for in-depth discussions, amendments and other changes.

Partnership Review:

Each relief partnership is reviewed on a 3-year cycle. Partners and ACCIR discuss the effectiveness of the partnership and decisions are made regarding renewal.

ACCIR COMMUNICATIONS

ACCIR is committed to ensuring we highlight and profile the work of our partners, providing acknowledgements when we are reporting on their work, stories, images and resources. These guidelines are clearly stipulated in our ACCI Communications Policy.

PARTNER ACTIVITY CATEGORIES

ACCIR use a multifaceted approach to achieving our mission, which includes development projects that incorporate holistic sustainable solutions, promote equal access and opportunities for vulnerable members of society, and advocate for the rights of the poor.

A traffic light system has been developed as a framework for assessing which partnership and partner activities ACCIR will approve. For more information concerning partnership criteria and standards, please also refer to Appendix 1.

Green Light Category:

Areas that are considered a focus for ACCIR.

- Child Focused Development
- Education projects including vocational training, skills training and community education
- Community development programs and capacity building projects
- Income generation activities
- Health, sanitation and medical projects
- Human rights advocacy and prevention work
- Disaster prevention and response
- Child sponsorship programs (community based)
- Community strengthening and family strengthening initiatives
- Caring for orphans and vulnerable children in a community context

Orange Light

Areas where further discussion is required, and partners are encouraged to re-assess these activities to ensure suitability

- English teaching (acceptable if it is linked with a broader strategy)
- Working with existing residential care facilities (depending on the role and nature of the residential care facility) including volunteer work in existing children's residential facilities
- Shelters, boarding homes and transitional homes
- Trafficking and prostitution intervention and rehab programs (require specialised skills)
- Rehabilitation (addiction or trauma- requires specialised training)
- Academic and research funding (requires specialised skills)

Red Light

Areas which ACCIR does not endorse.

- Establishment of new residential care facilities and orphanages
- ACCIR projects with residential care facilities and orphanages (except Kinected Projects)
- Involvement in politics
- Inappropriate use of welfare or relief strategies that create community dependence on external support.

- Inappropriate use of power as a donor or perceived patron which undermines the community's ability to participate in their own development, or exercise their rights, free will or civil liberties;
- Projects which are in conflict with the host governments protocols or laws OR are operating illegally or are not registered in the right manner with the appropriate ministerial body within the country
- Donor driven project designs that propose inappropriate responses to community issues that are not in the best interest of the community.

GRIEVANCES

ACCIR recognises that listening to and responding to feedback, concerns and complaints is integral to our commitment to achieving the high standards and ensures accountability to all stakeholders, including our partners.

ACCIR's commitments and processes for responding to grievances are outlined in:

- ACCI Complaints Handling Policy
- ACCI Whistle-blower Policy

The details for lodging a complaint with either ACCIR or directly to ACFID are also outline on our website.

ACCIR also commits to gathering partnership information from its partners via an annual survey to gain knowledge and understanding on areas of improvement for ACCIR.