IIRR Global Partnership Policy

Introduction

IIRR recognizes partnerships as essential to achieving sustainable development outcomes and addressing the complex challenges facing rural communities globally. Rooted in IIRR's commitment to community-led development, partnerships enable the organization to collaborate with institutions that share its values, enhance program effectiveness, and amplify impact. This policy provides a comprehensive framework for building, managing, and sustaining partnerships in alignment with international best practices for non-governmental organizations.

Purpose of the Policy

The purpose of this Partnership Policy is to articulate the principles, criteria, and processes that guide IIRR's partnership engagements. It serves to ensure that all partnerships are strategic, ethical, transparent, and aligned with the organization's mission. The policy applies to all IIRR offices, programs, staff, and affiliates worldwide.

IIRR's Partnership Philosophy

IIRR believes that effective partnerships are rooted in shared values, mutual respect, complementary strengths, and a commitment to learning and accountability. IIRR works through partnerships that empower communities, foster innovation, and strengthen local leadership. The organization views partnership not merely as collaboration but as a process of co-creation that advances equity, dignity, and sustainable development.

Definition of Partnership

A partnership is *a formalized, collaborative relationship between IIRR and one or more organizations for the purpose of pursuing shared goals*. Partnerships involve mutual contributions, shared risks and responsibilities, and joint decision-making structures. They may range from local community-level collaborations to multi-country and multi-sectoral alliances.

Types of Partners

IIRR works with a diverse range of partners, including community-based organizations, local and international NGOs, academic and research institutions, private sector entities, government agencies, donor institutions, and multilateral organizations. Partnerships may focus on learning, knowledge generation, capacity development, service delivery, research, policy advocacy, or resource mobilization.

Guiding Principles for Partnership

IIRR's partnerships are grounded in principles that uphold accountability, integrity, equity, and respect. These principles reflect international best practices for NGO partnerships.

- **Mutual Respect** – Partners recognize each other's autonomy, contributions, and institutional mandates. Respect for cultural diversity, local leadership, and community values is central to IIRR's approach.

- **Mutual Trust** – Trust is built through transparent communication, consistent engagement, and responsible stewardship of resources. Trust forms the foundation for long-term collaboration.

- **Mutual Accountability** – Partners are collectively accountable to the communities they serve, to donors, and to each other. Accountability includes responsible financial management, compliance with policies, and adherence to agreements.

- **Complementarity and Shared Value** – Effective partnerships leverage the distinct capabilities and strengths of each partner. IIRR prioritizes relationships where shared value can be created through aligned mission and complementary expertise.

- **Transparency and Good Governance** – All partnership processes must be transparent, fair, and free from conflicts of interest. Partners must demonstrate strong governance standards, ethical conduct, and financial integrity.

- **Community-Centered Collaboration** – Partnerships must prioritize community participation and leadership in planning, implementation, and learning. Community voices guide the direction, design, and evaluation of partnership initiatives.

Criteria for Partner Selection

To ensure that partnerships support IIRR's strategy and uphold ethical standards, potential partners will be assessed against the following criteria:

Partners must align with IIRR's mission and values and demonstrate a commitment to community development and participatory approaches. They must exhibit strong governance, including sound financial systems, capable leadership, and ethical practices. Prospective partners must adhere to principles of non-discrimination, respect for human rights, and safeguarding of children and vulnerable individuals. They must be independent of political, religious, or ideological influences that could compromise program integrity. Partners must also demonstrate compliance with anti-terrorism, anti-corruption, and other applicable regulatory requirements.

Due Diligence and Risk Assessment

Prior to entering into any partnership, IIRR conducts a due diligence process to assess legal standing, financial integrity, program capacity, safeguarding arrangements, and reputational risks. Risks are identified and mitigated through written agreements and ongoing monitoring. High-risk partnerships will not be pursued.

Formalizing Partnerships

All partnerships shall be formalized through written agreements that specify objectives, roles and responsibilities, governance structures, resource contributions, reporting requirements, decision-making mechanisms, and duration. Agreements may include Memoranda of Understanding, consortium agreements, grant agreements, or service contracts. Only authorized IIRR representatives may sign partnership agreements.

Implementation and Management of Partnerships

IIRR will actively manage partnerships throughout their duration to ensure accountability and alignment with program goals. Implementation includes regular communication, joint planning, monitoring, and coordination. IIRR staff may be embedded or assigned to partner organizations to strengthen local capacity where appropriate.

Monitoring, Review, and Evaluation

Partnerships will be monitored to assess progress, address challenges, and ensure compliance with agreements. Annual reviews shall be conducted to evaluate partnership performance and identify learning opportunities. Results will contribute to organizational learning and future partnership decisions.

Knowledge Sharing and Documentation

IIRR and its partners will collaborate in documenting lessons, tools, methodologies, and innovations emerging from collective work. Knowledge products may be shared broadly to support replication and sector learning, with appropriate acknowledgment of and credit given to all contributors.

Safeguarding, Ethics, and Compliance

All partners must comply with IIRR policies on safeguarding, anti-corruption, prevention of exploitation and abuse, data protection, environmental responsibility, and conflict of interest. Violations of these standards may result in suspension or termination of the partnership.

Termination of Partnerships

Partnerships may be terminated if they no longer align with IIRR's mission, pose risks to communities or the organization, or involve breaches of agreement or ethical violations. Termination shall follow the guidelines outlined in partnership agreements and shall prioritize minimizing harm to communities.

Policy Review

This policy will be reviewed periodically by IIRR leadership and the Board of Directors to ensure continued relevance and alignment with global best practices. Updates will be incorporated as needed.