

UNHCR REFORMS

KEY CHANGES IN UNHCR PARTNERSHIP MANAGEMENT PROCEDURES



Why are the new procedures important?



They replace all previous UNHCR policies and guidance on managing funded partnerships with a single set of requirements.

UNHCR has updated its processes with the introduction of the Project, Reporting, Monitoring, and Oversight Solution (PROMS), COMPASS and Cloud Enterprise Resource Planning (Cloud ERP) solutions. They will support the online management of agreements and improve monitoring, data quality, reporting and transparency. These changes aim to streamline the management of funded partnerships and improve risk-based decision-making in implementation.

What are the key requirements of the new UNHCR Procedures on Partnership Management?

- **An Implementation Programme Management Committee (IPMC) is established**, except in smaller operations. Its composition and terms of reference are specific to the operation.
- **Competitive selection** takes place shortly after UNHCR operations submit multi-year strategies and partnership selection is aligned with the duration of the strategy, where feasible.
- When entering into or renewing partnerships that involve direct contact with forcibly displaced and stateless persons, operations must verify that **the partner possesses the necessary capacity in terms of PSEA**, using the dedicated **UN Partner Portal module**.
- Operations perform an **internal control assessment (ICA)** when a partner recommended by the IPMC has no previous UN internal control questionnaire (ICQ) from a UN project audit, nor previous ICA by UNHCR, completed within the last three years.
- **A partnership framework agreement (PFA)** defines the provisions of the partnership between UNHCR, the partner and government (in the case of tripartite agreements) often over a multi-year duration. The PFA describes the purpose and scope of the partnership for which the partner was selected, and applicable terms and conditions. It does not include any financial commitment.
- **A data protection agreement** governs the processing of personal data of forcibly displaced and stateless persons as required under a funded partnership. This DPA is established alongside a PFA and contains standard provisions for data protection and information security. The duration of a DPA is aligned to the period that the partner has access to or possession of the personal data.
- **A project workplan (PW)** is subject to a PFA and is for partnerships on an annual basis. It includes a project description, a financial and results plan and a risk register, as well as a financial commitment.
- **The partner reports** on results periodically, as agreed with the operation, with a minimum of three project financial reports (PFRs) per year. Prior to accepting the partner's PFR and releasing the next instalment, the operation conducts performance (PMC02) and financial (PMC03) verifications.
- Any exceptional requests for **extension of liquidation/implementation** from partners must be submitted before the end of November for the year of implementation. Requests are evaluated by the UNHCR operation and approved by the UNHCR regional bureau.
- **Partner's reporting deadlines** are set jointly with the partner and the UNHCR operation, including end-results, end-narrative and end-PFR reports. They are submitted latest by certain globally defined deadlines but can also be submitted earlier.
- **Risk-based project audits** are completed typically after the completion of the implementation period.
- **Any unspent balances** must be returned by partners by end of March of the year following the project workplan implementation.



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What are the main changes in the new procedures?

Until now..

From now on..

Partnership Agreements

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two-year multi-year agreement format with annual renegotiation. • Partnership agreements included various appendices, including Annexes A (project description), B (a PDF budget) and C (data protection). • Grant agreements had a fixed ceiling of USD 4,000, with a maximum accumulate annual total of USD 12,000 per partner. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partnership framework and data protection agreements focus on long-term outcomes, consisting of terms and conditions. • Annual project workplans include financial and results plans, and a risk register and incorporate control measures. • Grant Agreements are capped at USD 12,000 per agreement. Multiple grants to the same partner are possible for a cumulative total of USD 12,000 per year. |
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Internal Control Assessment (ICA) and Project Audit Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ)

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UN agencies used different formats for project audit ICQs, leading to duplication for partners. • UNHCR also used different formats for the ICQ and ICA. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No need to conduct an ICA/ICQ when UN equivalent exists within a three-year validity period. • UNHCR Project control conducts ICA every three years when partner does not have a UN risk rating. |
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Partner's Procurement Capacity

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UNHCR SMS/HQ conducted a pre-qualification for procurement (PQP) process when partners procured over \$100k. • Operations conducted procurement capacity assessments for all partners annually. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PQP and annual procurement capacity assessment are no longer required. • UNHCR operations determine the level and type of procurement by partners based on the procurement risk rating under the ICA/ICQ. |
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Budgeting

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The budget negotiation process involved an Excel template. Annex B was a PDF. • The PFR was generated by UNHCR and shared with the partner upon request via email. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The financial plan is available in PROMS for negotiation and finalization (15x account codes). • A project financial report is automatically generated in PROMS and available for partners via the workflow (same 15x account codes). |
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Project Monitoring Plan

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operations and partners agreed on a project performance monitoring plan (PMC01) for each partnership agreement. • This plan was an offline Excel format. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The PMC01 is no longer required. • Instead, there is 1x annual assessment, monitoring and evaluation workplan per operation. • A new risk register also replaces the project monitoring plan template, to jointly develop with partners surrounding project activities. |
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Goods and Property

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Separate right of use agreement for UNHCR assets on loan to the partner. • Partners reported on all assets twice yearly via their goods and property offline report. • Physical verification was required twice a year on all the above assets. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right of use clauses come under the areas of specialisation and maintained on the UNPP. • No goods and property report is required. • Assets purchased by a partner with UNHCR funding are owned and controlled by the partner. • Partners asset management is assessed during the ICA/ICQ. • Annual physical verification required for assets on loan from UNHCR. |
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Partner Reporting

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner reporting required a minimum of 3x times per year covering results, expenditure, personnel, goods and property. • Set deadlines applied globally to all partners to submit their reports. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partner PFR still required a minimum of 3x times per year. Progress/results reporting is agreed locally. • Partners are required to share a year-end results report (latest by 31 January) and narratives/ financial report (latest by 15 February). |
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