

This briefing paper explores NGO experience of partnering with and accessing funding from UN agencies, and specifically the World Food Program (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). The paper also shares experiences and tips from NGOs including the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) and FAROS.

HOW MUCH DO UN AGENCIES RECEIVE FROM DONORS?

In 2014, UN agencies received over 52% of tracked direct humanitarian funding from governments and private sourcesⁱ. These UN agencies however, often rely on NGO partners to deliver humanitarian aid and protection.

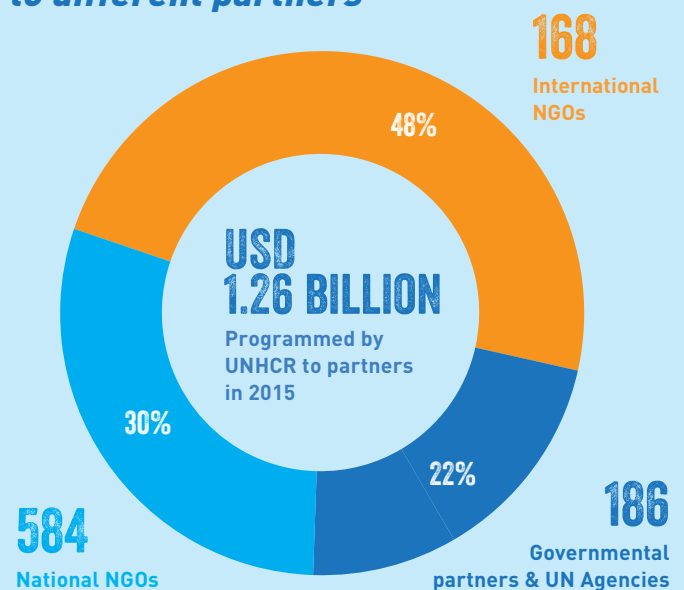
HOW MUCH DO UN AGENCIES PROGRAM IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NGOS?

UNHCR

In 2015, UNHCR programmed 38% of its annual expenditure, totaling USD 1.26 billion, through to 938 partners (584 National NGOs, 168 International NGOs, 172 Governmental partners and 14 UN agencies)ⁱⁱ.

Of these funds, 48% was programmed via International NGOs; 30% by National NGOs; and the remaining 22% through either Governments or other UN agenciesⁱⁱⁱ.

UNHCR – % of funds programmed to different partners



75% of WFP assistance provided through NGO partners

WFP

In 2015, WFP partnered with a total of 1062 NGO implementing partners^{iv}, including over 850 National NGO partners^v. Currently, 75% of WFP's food and cash-based assistance is provided through NGO partners^{vi}. Of these funds programmed through NGOs 54% is programmed via National NGOs; with 46% programmed via International NGOs.

WFP

1062 NGO partners

54% of assistance via National NGOs

46% of assistance via International NGOs

UNHCR AND WFP PARTNERSHIP APPROACHES

Different UN agencies use different approaches to manage NGO partnerships. It can become quite challenging for NGOs to remain aware of the various approaches used. Below provides just a snapshot of the policies and processes used by UNHCR and WFP.

UNHCR:

UNHCR operates with over 120 offices in-country. The majority of these offices hold active partnerships with NGOs, especially National NGOs.

UNHCR'S FRAMEWORK FOR IMPLEMENTING WITH PARTNERS

UNHCR partnerships are guided by a comprehensive 'Framework for Implementing with Partners'. This framework is a combination of regulations, policies, principles, responsibilities and processes to soundly manage funds and programs. This Framework is available in UNHCR's recently developed 'Partner Portal' (partner.unhcr.org).

The Partner Portal is an interactive, accessible web based platform, designed for both current and potential partners to register, to access policies and procedures, to share information, and to upload a profile for a preliminary due diligence process.

HOW DOES UNHCR SELECT PARTNERS?

In July 2013, UNHCR rolled out a policy to ensure a consistent partnership development process, which includes:

1. Initial NGO registration on the Partner Portal
2. A call by UNHCR (in the Partner Portal)
3. The partner responds by submitting a brief concept note
4. A selection process undertaken via a UNHCR committee

Initial partner selection can last for up to four years, assuming strong performance and availability of funds.

Once the partnership is approved, the process to negotiate and design the project agreements occurs at the **country level**. These agreements last one year.

UNHCR country offices then ideally work with partners to work with partners on needs assessment, planning, and coordination during the project's implementation.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION:

UNHCR's Partner Portal: <http://partner.unhcr.org>

Support and guidance: epartner@unhcr.org

Fatima Sherif-Nor: Head of Service, Implementing Partnership Management Service: sherif@unhcr.org

WFP:

WFP is shifting from a mindset of '*we deliver*'; towards '*we deliver better together*'. As part of this increased focus on partnerships, WFP is moving from a sole focus on partnerships with governments, to partnering with more NGOs.

WFP's partnerships are managed at the country level, and framed through Field Level Agreements (FLA).

NGOs should focus on developing relationship with WFP Head and Deputy Head of Programs; and in large WFP country offices, with WFP's Partnership Office – via a Field Level Agreement (FLA) manager. WFP's processes to develop partnerships include the following:

1. Expression of interest
2. Call for proposals
3. Capacity assessment
4. Proposal review
5. Budget negotiation

The length of agreements is not fixed, and varies according to the context and the resources available.

WHERE TO FIND MORE INFORMATION:

WFP NGO Partnerships Page: <https://www.wfp.org/partners/non-governmental-organizations/partner-with-us>

WFP NGO Partnerships Office: wfp.ngounit@wfp.org

Marcus Prior: Head, NGO partnerships: marcus.prior@wfp.org

TIPS BY NGOs, FOR NGOs, ON PARTNERING UNHCR AND WFP

UNDERSTAND:

- Ensure you are aware of the various policies and processes required by different UN agencies. Spend the time to understand this correctly. Clarify any confusion in the partnership agreement templates – these are legally binding documents.

INSIST ON BEING A TRUE PARTNER – NOT JUST AN ‘IMPLEMENTER’:

- Review the Principles of Partnership and ensure these are reflected in your partnerships. Both UNHCR and WFP are signatories to these principles.

PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP:

EQUALITY
TRANSPARENCY
RESULTS-ORIENTED APPROACH
RESPONSIBILITY
COMPLEMENTARITY

The Principles of Partnership were adopted by the Global Humanitarian Platform in 2007, acknowledging gaps in the humanitarian system, which included neglecting the role of local and national humanitarian response capacity.

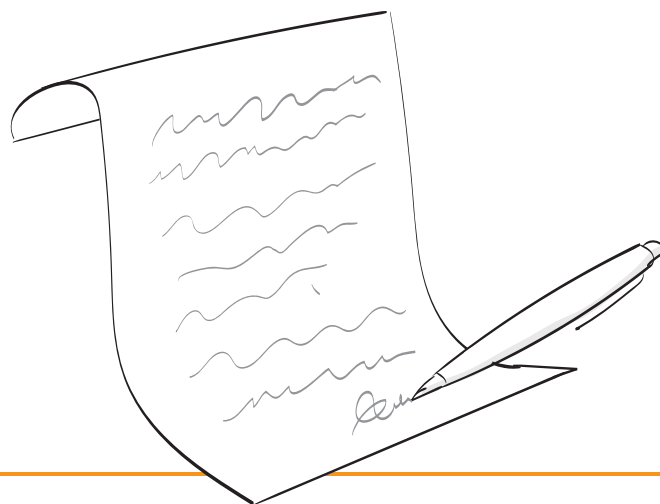
- If you disagree with various processes or policies, or if you need additional support or capacity in a specific area – discuss this with the UN agency.
- Discuss with UN agencies to help support cost recovery to ensure high quality programming: *‘We were not strong in Monitoring and Evaluation. So, we agreed with UNHCR to partly fund an M&E officer to build our capacity in this area and of course, to strengthen the project’.* (FAROS)
- Push for a clear joint planning process at the beginning of any project.

COMMUNICATE AND SHARE INFORMATION:

- Promote a partnership of open communication, honesty and information exchange.
- Be open and honest about your strengths and weaknesses: *‘We are very new partners to UNHCR. One year ago, FAROS, was very small with just five staff running a small day-center in Athens. Today, one year on, we have 35 staff; we operate from four different locations; and we have three UN partners, UNHCR, UNICEF and UNFPA. It is achievable, and not so complicated as one might think’.* (FAROS)
- Both UNHCR and WFP hold annual consultations with NGOs, which provide an important opportunity to highlight partnerships with NGOs. Use these events, in addition to discussions at the country level, to provide feedback on the partnership.

HOW DOES THIS RELATE TO THE GRAND BARGAIN?

UNHCR and WFP joined agencies and donors in signing the Grand Bargain on humanitarian financing. Signatories have committed to work towards improvement across ten specific work streams, some of which include: harmonizing partnership agreements; sharing partner assessment information; simplifying and harmonizing reporting requirements; and funding national and local responders as directly as possible.



LEARN MORE: Visit www.icvanetwork.org for the webinar, video, further information and references.

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