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Quick Guide on CSP Partnerships

This guide summarizes and updates the key Country Strategic Plan (CSP) guidance and tools prepared by the Partnership & Governance Department (PG) in collaboration with Regional Bureaus (RBs) and Country Offices (COs) since 2016. It is based on the learnings on partner engagement and resource mobilisation from the first waves of CSPs as identified through six regional IRM partnerships workshops. The guide is designed as a quick reference for COs that are in the CSP planning, development or implementation phase to help them take a strategic partnership approach throughout the CSP cycle.

1. WHAT IS THE CORPORATE APPROACH TO CSP PARTNERSHIPS AND WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

WFP's Corporate Partnership Strategy highlights that partnership, rather than an end in itself, is a means by which WFP works towards zero hunger. While WFP has always taken a strategic approach to its partnerships, the transition to multi-year, comprehensive CSPs creates an unrivalled opportunity for WFP to forge the long-term multi-stakeholder partnerships that can help countries achieve the SDGs. The Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the World Humanitarian Summit, the Grand Bargain and the UN Development System reform with its system-wide approach to partnership all emphasise that new, stronger and innovative partnerships are pivotal to achieving the 2030 Agenda. No SDG can be achieved on its own and WFP and UN sister agencies have committed to implementing a new way of working which entails partnerships over longer timeframes towards collective outcomes that transcend humanitarian-development divides, support local capacities, meet people's needs, and reduce risk and vulnerability.

WFP's Strategic Plan, which elevates SDG 17 on partnership to one of two WFP Strategic Goals, and the CSP approach position WFP strongly to forge such long-term multi-stakeholder partnerships and pursue more flexible and predictable financing. However, the transformative potential of the Strategic Plan and the CSPs can only be truly realised through the systematic and strategic involvement of new and existing partners throughout the CSP process – from the Strategic Review to CSP implementation.

Stronger partnerships enable WFP to strengthen analysis, planning, programming and response for greater impact on the ground and to diversify funding sources. Member States are fully aware of the importance of partnerships in the CSPs and expect CSP documents with a strong partnership focus.

2. HOW CAN A COUNTRY OFFICE BEGIN ITS STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CSP PARTNERSHIPS?

In order to determine which stakeholders to involve, PG recommends COs to conduct a mapping of partner interests and priorities in the country. Ideally, the partner mapping should be done in conjunction with the Strategic Review and then adjusted throughout the CSP process. In line with the Whole of Society Approach, the [partner mapping](#) should not be limited to existing CO partners but also explore potential new partners.

Tools such as [Influence Mapping](#) and [Backcasting Planning](#) can help the CO map stakeholders around the planned strategic outcomes of the CSPs. The influence mapping, in particular, can help give a broader picture of opportunities and avoid that the CO focuses only on current or previous partners. The CO can consider doing a separate influence mapping for the Host Government as the Strategic Review offers new opportunities to review who the key decision makers are and who controls the budgets at both national and local levels.

3. WHO ARE THE RELEVANT PARTNERS THAT SHOULD BE ENGAGED?

As outlined in the Corporate Partnership Strategy, WFP engages in five main types of partnerships: resource partners, knowledge partners, policy and governance partners, advocacy partners, and capability partners. Specific partners that should be involved in the CSP process of course depend on the country context. However, the following stakeholders should be considered in most countries:

- ⇒ host governments,
- ⇒ government donors,
- ⇒ Rome-based agencies and other UN agencies, funds and programmes,
- ⇒ private sector (companies and foundations),
- ⇒ national thematic consortia such as Scaling Up Nutrition (SUN) and the SUN Business Network,
- ⇒ the World Bank Group and other International Financial Institutions,
- ⇒ NGOs, civil society and the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement,
- ⇒ regional inter-governmental organisations,
- ⇒ academia and think tanks, and
- ⇒ media and marketing companies.

4. WHEN AND HOW SHOULD PARTNERS BE ENGAGED IN THE CSP PROCESS?

Involving partners early in the Strategic Review and capturing their inputs is particularly important as it prepares the ground for later partner engagement in the CSP formulation and implementation phase. Only by engaging partners early in the CSP process, will they have the opportunity provide their inputs, explore alignment with their own strategies and priorities, and have a firm basis for supporting the CSP implementation.

The CO can consider different approaches to partner engagement, including big launch events with all partners, smaller events with specific partner groups, bilateral meetings with targeted partners. The feedback from different partner consultations during the Strategic Review should be seized and form the base of future engagement partner engagement. Close coordination between the CO and RB programme, partnership and budget staff is crucial throughout the process. The CSP programme formulation involves meetings with different government authorities and other partners at national and in some cases local level. The internal information sharing plays an important role in ensuring that WFP's messaging is consistent when different WFP colleagues meet with partners.

5. WHAT ARE THE KEY PARTNERSHIP ISSUES THAT SHOULD BE REFLECTED IN THE CSP?

The CSP proforma and the companion document “key considerations for CSP/ICSP drafting” outlines the key topics that should be reflected in the CSP, including in the partnership, resourcing outlook, resource mobilization strategy and key activity sections. The key issues to be addressed in the partnership section are summarised below.

- Provide a clear description of the partnership strategy and the expected role of partners.
- Clarify how WFP coordinates with partners and what the objectives are .
- Provide an overview of how partnerships are intended to evolve over the course of the CSP.
- Provide information on how WFP will take a Whole of Society approach and seek more collaborative partnerships with NGOs and other civil society organizations.
- Elaborate on how the partnership approach in the CSP will be different from the current approach: is the CO taking a more collaborative approach, seeking partners beyond the food security and nutrition sector? Has the CSP process, in particular the Strategic Review, provided new partnership opportunities?
- What are the risks associated with partnerships?

Recent consultations with Member States have highlighted additional partnership issues that COs should consider reflecting in the CSP:

- What is WFP's plan in terms of leveraging partners' complementary inputs to achieve its outcomes?
- Highlight how WFP will engage with various types of partners (resource, knowledge, policy and governance, advocacy and capability partners).
- What is the division of labour between WFP and other UN agencies, in particular the RBAs, and how will WFP collaborate with the UNCT?
- How will duplication and overlap be avoided through strong coordination approaches under the CSP?
- What is the COs level of engagement with the private sector, in particular in Middle Income Countries?
- What are the planned CO approaches to strengthen, broaden, and diversify its donor base?
- How can COs do more to mobilize resources from partners such as the World Bank and other IFIs but also through pooled funding arrangements which include joint programmes?
- How will the CO prioritize activities in the event that the full amount of CSP funding does not materialize and how WFP will balance competing needs?

The CO should also ensure that the CSP “resourcing outlook” section is consistent with CO’s approach to fundraising. If the CO is regularly issuing appeals for additional resources, then the CSP document should be realistic rather than portraying a relatively stable and well-resourced situation. Finally, the CO should avoid combining emergency humanitarian interventions with early recovery or development assistance. When these are combined, it forces some donors to earmark to comply with their own national legislation and requirements.

See examples of CSPs with strong partnership sections here: [Kenya](#), [Pakistan](#), [Peru](#), [Tanzania](#) and [Tunisia](#). Note that specific donors should not be mentioned. The partnership section should be closely linked with the section on transition and exit strategies.

6. HOW CAN THE COUNTRY OFFICE DEVELOP A COMPREHENSIVE CSP PARTNERSHIP STRATEGY?

While it is important to cover the issues above in the CSP document, the CSP narrative does not allow for a substantial analysis and prioritisation of the partner and resource mobilisation opportunities that have emerged during the CSP process. PG therefore recommends that COs do a CSP partnership strategy such as a Partnership Action Plan (PAP) in parallel with the formulation of the CSP document. The PAP highlights the existing partners and prospects for each Strategic Outcome in the CSP and helps clarify WFP’s unique value proposition in the country. It also includes analysis of the priorities and interests of each group of partners as well as proposed actions for WFP. The PAP template and examples can be found [here](#).

The PAP is an internal document to support the CO’s strategic partner engagement and positioning. It is a vehicle for undertaking and documenting partnership work, including resource mobilization, and should be based on the partner mapping completed earlier in the CSP process. The PAP should be prepared by the CO partnership staff in close coordination with SO managers, other CO programme and budget staff and CO senior management. The PAP should be read in conjunction with the annual Country Office Management Plan (COMP) and updated throughout CSP implementation, as needed. Operational and budgetary information from the COMP, including activity-level details, will be made available to Member States via an online portal. The COMP should provide concrete elements on planned partnership for the implementation of the annual plan of work. Member States view COMPs as a mean to complement the information on partnerships included in CSPs.

7. WHAT IS THE ADVICE AND EXPERIENCE OF COLLEAGUES?

“The Partnership Action Plan is both the road-map and passport for WFP’s ongoing transformation to become the partner of choice. We are limited in our capability to empower the people we serve to meet all their needs. Expanding our range of partnership beyond resource partners to advocacy, capability and national partners are key to overcoming the limitations of our resources. As a living framework, the Partnership Action Plan sets the direction for strategic engagement at country level.”

Lola Castro, Regional Director for Southern Africa

“Zero Hunger will not be achieved without partnerships that enhance financial and technological cooperation. We need leaders from governments, business, civil society and the UN, both in developed and developing countries, to engage and work together. I have supported COs in the region in a variety of ways including launching the results of strategic reviews with key influencers and have had bilateral consultations with Host Governments, donor governments, the UN, International Financial Institutions, the private sector and civil society. If we build the right conditions for addressing SDG17 we’ll be on the path to achieve SDG2. I have been a partnership advocate since the roll out of the IRM began and encouraged my team in the bureau to support every CO in the region to prepare Partnership Action Plans. These plans are helping to bring the importance of partnerships to the forefront and ultimately are key for successful CSPs.”

Miguel Barreto, Regional Director for Latin American and the Caribbean

“Partnership engagement was key for the Honduras CO during the Strategic Review and CSP preparation. Throughout the process, we engaged with a large variety of partners which helped us design each strategic outcome based on synergies among different sectors and we were able to identify potential partner support aiming at a common objective. The CO’s partnership engagement process culminated with a mission from the RB and across an intensive week, we conducted a wide range of partnership consultations.

During these consultations, we presented the proposed direction of our CSP, received constructive feedback and gave partners an opportunity to discuss their priorities in the country and explore areas of alignment. These fruitful discussions helped the CO to prepare our Partnership Action Plan and a solid forecast to support the CSP. I encourage COs going through this process to invest the requisite time and energy to engage closely with partners and capture their inputs/feedback at a very early stage of the process to ensure their buy-in and support to the CSP implementation. It is a long lasting investment which goes beyond the CSP formulation and creates the base for a national advocacy platform around the Zero Hunger Agenda and achievement of the SDG2.”

Pasqualina Di Sirio, former Country Director Honduras.

	Key actions	Key products
Strategic Review	Map partners	Partner mapping
	Involve partners	
	Document partner input	
CSP formulation	Consult new & existing partners	CSP with strong partnership section
	Coordinate closely with CO programme & budget colleagues	Partnership Action Plan
CSP implementation	Prioritize partner management	Updated partner mapping and Partnership Action Plan
	Monitor implementation of CSP partnerships	

Overview of partnership engagement throughout the CSP cycle.

8. WHERE CAN I FIND FURTHER GUIDANCE?

IRM guidance

- ⇒ The [IRM Manual](#) includes the [PG Guidance on Positioning, Partnerships and Resource Mobilization for CSPs](#), which contains practical tools, and guidance to help staff position WFP, engage partners and mobilize resources during the CSP process. The IRM Manual also includes the updated [CSP proforma](#) that emphasises the need for stronger references to partnerships.
- ⇒ The [IRM website](#) includes many relevant resources, including interviews with Country Directors who share their experience with the CSP process.

Selected partnership guidance

- ⇒ AED PG Office: The [Partnership Topic page](#) on WFPGO and the new Partnership Channel on [WeLearn](#) contain generic partnership guidance, tools, agreement templates and soft skill training resources, as well as [New Way of Working](#) guidance.
- ⇒ PGG: [Resource mobilization e-learning course](#), [Salesforce](#), [WFP and the Grand Bargain](#).
- ⇒ PGP: [Guidance](#) and [toolkit](#) on private sector engagement within CSPs
- ⇒ PGR: [Guidance on RBA collaboration](#)
- ⇒ BRU: [Guidance on European Commission and WFP country priorities](#)
- ⇒ NYC: Collection of [guidance documents](#) from NYC and GVA.
- ⇒ WAS: [Guidance on applying for McGovern-Dole school meals funding](#) and forthcoming [World Bank partnership guidance](#).
- ⇒ NGOs and civil society: [the Whole of Society approach to CSPs](#), [CSP guide for NGOs](#), [guidance on NGO partnership management](#) and [guidance on civil society capacity strengthening](#).

See an overview of the regional partnership focal points [here](#).

This document will be regularly updated to reflect new guidance and learning.

PARTNERSHIPS & GOVERNANCE DEPARTMENT, PG
World Food Programme

Via Cesare Giulio Viola 68/70,
00148 Rome, Italy
T +39 06 65131 wfp.org

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