

# Collaboration and Engagement

POLICY NAME	COLLABORATION AND ENGAGEMENT
REFERENCE NUMBER	5-SI-PO-1
POLICY OWNER	CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER
POLICY APPROVER	SYMBIOSIS INTERNATIONAL BOARD
RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE	FINANCE AND RISK COMMITTEE
RELATED POLICIES	CHILD SAFE PSEAH PRIVACY
RELATED DOCUMENTS	DUE DILIGENCE AND CAPACITY ASSESSMENT FOR PARTNERS MOU TEMPLATE
ACFID CODE REFERENCE	5.1, 5.2, 5.3 (5.3.2), 8.2 (8.2.1, 8.2.5)
APPROVAL DATE	21 DECEMBER 2022
REVIEW DATE	21 DECEMBER 2023

## 1 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to guide Symbiosis International and our partners on the expected nature of our engagements with them.

## 2 SCOPE

This policy applies to Symbiosis International and its relationships with prospective and current partners, both in Australia and overseas; and is applicable to all partnership activities including core development and humanitarian responses.

The types of partners engaged by Symbiosis International are listed in Section 7, Appendix 2.

## 3 LOGIC AND PRINCIPLES

Symbiosis International is built on strong relationships. Partners may include governments, non-government organisations, philanthropic groups, individual donors, community organisations and educational and health care institutions. Partnerships are essential to fulfilling Symbiosis International's vision, enabling it to establish relationships with local communities and ensure sustainable outcomes from its projects.

Symbiosis International will endeavour to uphold the following principles:

**Transparency** – Consistent with its commitment to integrity, Symbiosis International will be open in its communications about its activities and performance.

**Mutual Respect and Benefit** - Symbiosis International will respect partners' differences and leverage the strengths of partner organisations for the benefit of the primary stakeholders. Symbiosis International will appropriately acknowledge the contribution of involved partners to their mutual benefit.

**Effectiveness** – Symbiosis International will promote partnerships which support positive change, building relationships that promote accountability and continuous learning, so that sustainable outcomes are delivered.

## 4 POLICY STATEMENT

### DUE DILIGENCE

Except where noted, the following sections 4 to 6 refer to delivery partners. See definition in Appendix 2.

- 4.1 As a minimum, Symbiosis International will only consider partnership with another organisation if:
- 4.1.1 They are a legally constituted or registered organisation
  - 4.1.2 The potential partner has a philosophy that is compatible with the vision, mission and values of Symbiosis International.
- 4.2 Symbiosis International will not consider or enter into partnerships with the following:
- 4.2.1 Organisations deriving the majority of their income from gambling or the sale of alcohol or tobacco
  - 4.2.2 Organisations which promote racism, violence or excessive use of drugs
  - 4.2.3 Organisations convicted of criminal activities or the misappropriation of funds
  - 4.2.4 Groups listed as a terrorist organisation on the Australian National Security website or those on the Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) consolidated list of sanctioned persons and entities.
- Section 4.2 applies to donors as well as delivery partners.
- 4.3 Prospective delivery partners must complete Symbiosis International's Due Diligence and Capacity Assessment. Where this assessment is unable to be completed due to low organisational capacity of the partner, Symbiosis International may assist them to complete the assessment, and the points outlined in 4.1 and 4.2 will still apply.
- 4.3.1 Symbiosis International at its discretion may waive the completion of some or all of the Due Diligence form where it deems a relationship to be low-risk or completion of information is immaterial to the nature of the relationship.
- 4.4 Partners must have Child Safe and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) policies or in the absence of their own policies adopt the requirements set out in Symbiosis International's.
- 4.5 At the discretion of Symbiosis International, a trial period may be required prior to greater roles and responsibilities being shared within the partnership, especially where a partner is in the process of building their compliance capability.

## AGREEMENT MAKING

- 4.6 Symbiosis International will formalise relations with partners through a partnership agreement document, clearly identifying the roles and responsibilities in a mutually accountable and respectful manner. In addition to delivery partners, formal agreements will be documented with partners who are on-going major donors and / or second staff to Symbiosis International.
- 4.7 The type of partnership agreement document developed and requirements and obligations must be commensurate with the nature and size of the partnership and capacity of each party.
- 4.8 Symbiosis International policy requirements that are instrumental to the successful and safe implementation of a partnership should be referred to in the partnership agreement document. Copies of the policies should be made available to the partner organisation prior to signature.
- 4.9 Partnership agreement documents should contain as a minimum:
- Expected outcomes
  - Monitoring and review processes
  - The contribution of each party - roles, responsibilities, resources, financial and non-financial contributions
  - Dispute resolution and Termination processes
  - Information sharing, communication and public promotion about the partnership.
  - Relevant obligations for partners listed in the ACFID Code of Conduct. (Refer to Section 7, Appendix 3 of this policy)

## TERMINATION

- 4.10 Symbiosis International reserves the right to immediately terminate discussions with a prospective partner or terminate a partnership agreement with a current partner if they are found to be connected with any of the activities or crimes listed in section 4.2 above.
- 4.11 Other grounds for termination and notification periods for terminating a partnership should be contained in the partnership agreement document.

*Note: Symbiosis International may enter into Memorandums of Understanding (MOU) with Community Based Organisations (CBO) in Bangladesh. As these organisations originate from low- literacy populations, it is imperative that the agreement making process conform to the principles of Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC). This may necessitate adjustments to the agreement making process while still upholding the principles and spirit expressed in this policy.*

## 5 RESPONSIBILITIES

### COMPLIANCE MONITORING AND REVIEW

- 5.1 Symbiosis International recognises it may need to support partners to uphold the standards expected by Symbiosis International policies, including those policies required by Symbiosis International's ACFID membership.
- 5.2 As a minimum, Symbiosis International will recommend to its partner an annual review meeting to discuss the progress of the partnership against the agreed outcomes.

### REPORTING

- 5.3 Symbiosis International is committed to meeting all reporting obligations in its partnerships. A reporting schedule should be developed as part of the partnership agreement document, clearly outlining the reporting expectations of both parties.
- 5.4 Where appropriate, it may be prudent for Symbiosis International and the Partner organisation to agree upon a reporting template which draws out relevant information relating to the partnership's expected outcomes.

### RECORDS MANAGEMENT

- 5.5 It is in the mutual interest of both Symbiosis International and the partner organisation to each maintain accurate records and versions of all partnership agreement documentation, templates, reports, correspondence and review meeting minutes.
- 5.6 Any partnership documentations and correspondence will be kept in accordance with Symbiosis International's privacy policy.

## 6 DEFINITIONS

### TERMS AND DEFINITIONS

**Agreement Making:** The process of developing a mutually agreeable partnership (usually documented) whereby parties will address how they would like to work together towards particular development outcomes.

**Capacity:** The ability of individuals, organisations, and whole societies to define and solve problems, make informed choices, order their priorities and plan their futures, as well as implement programs and projects to sustain them' ('Nurturing Capacity in Developing Countries: From Consensus to Practice', Capacity Enhancement Briefs, No 1. World Bank Institute). Capacity may also refer to facility in written communication or confidence in communication, and care must be taken to differentiate capacity to problem solve and make informed choices from the capacity to communicate these, especially where a power differential exists and the 'dominant' language is used.

**Due Diligence:** Research and analysis of an organisation done in preparation for a business transaction, prior to commencing a partnership.

**Free, Prior and Informed Consent:** Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC) is a specific right that pertains to indigenous peoples and is recognised in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UNDRIP). It allows them to give or withhold consent to a project that may affect them or their territories. Once they have given their consent, they can withdraw it at any stage within the parameters of any partnership agreement document.

**Partner:** Individuals, groups of people or organisations that collaborate with Symbiosis International to achieve mutually agreed objectives in development and humanitarian initiatives.

**Partnership:** An ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared (Partnership Brokers Association).

## 7 APPENDICES

### APPENDIX 1- REFERENCE DOCUMENT

[ACFID GUIDANCE ON COLLABORATION AND PARTNERSHIPS](#)

### APPENDIX 2- PARTNER TYPES

Symbiosis International currently has four different partner types.

1. **Community Based Organisations** - Are usually a product of the Symbiosis International group model, where representatives from mature Symbiosis groups come together to form entities which aim to register with the Bangladesh Women's Affairs Bureau. These higher level groups have a greater capacity to grow their capital, give bigger loans and act as agents for change on health and social issues in their community.
2. **Delivery Partners** - Organisations which implement projects. They may also contribute financial and non-financial resources to the partnership.
3. **Donor Partners** - Philanthropic bodies or individuals who contribute financial or human resources. They may specify the projects to which their funds will be allocated but are not involved in the day to day implementation of projects.
4. **Friends in Business** - Partners who are usually small to medium enterprise owners that contribute some of their profit as a donation to the work of Symbiosis International.

## APPENDIX 3 - POTENTIAL PARTNER OBLIGATIONS

Pending the nature of the partnership, the following ACFID member obligations and accountabilities covered in Symbiosis International policies may be required of partners as per the ACFID Quality Assurance Framework (Mar 2020 version):

Quality Area	Verifier
Child Protection	1.4.1
Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harrassment	1.5.1
Transparency	7.3.1
Counter Terrorism Anti-fraud and Corruption Anti Money Laundering Agreed use of funds financial record keeping and reporting	8.2.1
Whistleblowing	9.2.2
Ethical Procurement	8.1.3
Conflict of Interest	7.4.3
Regular Communication	5.2.1
Privacy	7.2.2
Confidentiality	-
Copyright	-
Incident Reporting	-
Progress Reporting	-