

# 2021

## Guidance on Partnership Arrangements



# ICSF

International Collective in Support of Fishworkers

This document intends to provide guidance on how to approach and establish partnership/consortium relations.

Version 1.0

Last updated/ revised on 20-Mar-21

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## 1. Preamble

The goals of ICSF are to strengthen fishery communities, fishers and others engaging in fishery all over the world with priority to small scale fisheries and others engaging in small scale fisheries. To achieve the goals ICSF collaborates with individuals and organizations across the globe. Such collaboration is founded on trust based on personal contacts amongst members, recommendations and common ground. While such working relationships with individuals and fishworker organisations helped in achieving activity specific results, it may or may not be in tune with ICSF's mission and vision. This is because such organisations,

- may not be representative of the sector in entirety
- may be controlled by particular interests
- may be poorly organised
- may mix political, developmental, personal and sector agendas
- have their own purposes

Further, the growing role of ICSF in the implementation of small-scale fisheries guidelines (SSF Guidelines) would require a different set of preparedness. These challenges would require ICSF to move from “trust-based partnerships” to “partnerships based on objective criteria” in line with ICSF's goal.

This policy is to set standard guideline for partnership work and responsibilities and to emphasis ICSF's approach to collaborative arrangements at national and international level.

## 2. Guiding Principles

ICSF may form working relationships, partnerships and consortium arrangements (hereinafter referred to as “partnerships”) with individuals, groups, networks, civil society organisations, non-governmental organisations, Government agencies and inter Government bodies (hereinafter referred to as “partner or partners”).

ICSF may enter into such partnership provided the relationship (a) is consistent with ICSF's mission and vision (b) the objectives of the partnership are clear and agreed to by partners (c) is in consultation with ICSF Members in the country or region where the prospective partner(s) is/are based (d) partners other than individuals have a legal status in the programme country (e) provides for equitable and genuine mutual benefits (f) provides an opportunity for capacity strengthening through learning from the relationship and valuing each other's idea (g) allows financial transparency, flow of information ideas and experiences. Further that such relationship does not (a) lead to any conflict of interests (b) undermine ICSF's credibility due to commercial

and other interests (c) jeopardise ICSF's independence and autonomy, or associate it with ideologies, party politics.

In forging partnerships ICSF shall give priority to partners who are committed to:

- support the livelihood struggles of small scale fishworkers and fishing communities
- represent fishworkers throughout the value chain.
- work with local communities to promote social justice, including gender equality in small scale fisheries, eliminating all forms of discrimination (especially against women), and improving gender relations in the public and private spheres.
- promote decent work and equality in the workplace, through compliance with local labour laws and the adoption of international best practices
- support a human right's-based approach to fisheries, which acknowledges the equal and inalienable rights of all peoples to be able to make strategic life choices for their own well-being
- the empowerment of fishing communities and FWOs to defend their rights and fisheries territories - lands and waters-, including their individual and collective human rights

ICSF shall not form partnerships or align with those organizations which a) promote or participate in processes for privatizing resources and territories that are the common property of communities who depend on fishery activities for their livelihoods; b) promote or engage in patriarchal practices and otherwise encourage unequal power-relations in society exacerbating social, cultural and economic inequity .

### **3. Kinds of partnership**

ICSF's collaborative arrangement with partners may be time bound or open ended. The indicative collaborative arrangements given below provide a broad understanding on the areas of partnership arrangements and the partners.

- a. A basic premise underpinning ICSF's work is that social transformation within the fisheries sector requires that small scale fishworkers get organized and empowered to participate in the decision-making process that affect their livelihoods. This requires that ICSF forms partnerships with small-scale fishworkers and support organizations to help fishworkers to get organized and empowered.
- b. ICSF's work to inform and influence international policy processes requires forming alliances with like-minded organizations and groups to form a critical mass of opinion, and to add weight and substance to ICSF's proposals for change, to challenge the status quo, and to

oppose conflicting proposals. ICSF therefore participates in alliances and platforms. ICSF may also wish to be identified and join with the campaigns and platforms organized by others as a strategy in line with its objectives.

- c. Issues being addressed by international processes in fisheries are often led by multi-lateral and inter-governmental organizations, and from time to time there may be strategic advantages in forming partnerships and alliances with these bodies around particular events and processes. Such bodies include the ILO, the FAO and other UN bodies etc.
- d. ICSF may need to engage consultants to carry out specific work viz. studies, reports, training, etc. where such consultants possess requisite expertise. Such arrangements will be specific, and time bound.
- e. In many cases ICSF members also work in local and national level NGOs and research organizations, CSO and fishworker organizations. ICSF may form time bound, event-oriented partnerships with these organizations for workshops, conferences, training events, research, studies etc.,
- f. From time to time there may be strategic advantages to forming partnerships and/or cooperating with governmental bodies to co-host events, participate in research and report writing and other time bound activities of short duration.
- g. A consortium is an ad hoc grouping between several NGOs with the aim of conducting a common programme or achieving a common objective. ICSF may enter into consortium arrangements with partners, with an aim to achieve common objective or conduct a common programme. Such arrangements may be time bound or open ended/long term.

#### **4. Evaluation and establishing a partnership**

The Board or a committee shall evaluate any proposal for a new partnership arrangement in consultation with ICSF Members in the programme country or region.

Such proposal shall be consistent with ICSF's goals and does not compromise ICSF's core principles nor restricts ICSF's ability to address relevant issues freely, thoroughly and objectively.

The arrangement does not violate conditions if any imposed by donor agencies in the utilisation of resources funded by them. Further, ICSF shall ensure that its compliance obligations viz. financial and narrative reporting on the project outcome, towards donor agencies are met comfortably and in a timely manner.

Unless precluded by the agreement between ICSF and Donor, ICSF may enter into partnership with partners who are funded by the same donor. However, without obtaining a clearance from the Donor, ICSF shall not venture such partnerships if the projects are same.

Where a partnership is with a partner funded by the same donor, it is important that the partner has a similar standard of governance, transparency and accountability as practiced by ICSF or higher standards. In the absence, the partner shall commit to move towards the standards practiced by ICSF.

An agreement shall be entered into between ICSF represented by Executive Director and the partner(s) represented by authorised person(s) of the partner organisation, defining the role responsibilities, timelines, deliverables etc.,

Appropriate monitoring, controls and periodic reporting mechanism shall be in place to ensure diligent utilisation of resources, monitor progress in the planned activity and to take corrective measures in case of any deviation, and various compliances in order to achieve planned objective.

Where the partnership is a consortium arrangement, the following mutually reinforcing components of a consortium arrangement be considered to conclude the partnership.

a. Goals:

- a common vision for the consortium, understood and agreed to by all levels of each partner
- common criteria for excellence in internal consortium management: programmatic, financial, and managerial
- accountability for service delivery to communities and/or project participants, compliance to donors, and to each other

b. Strategy: The leadership has mutually agreed to:

- appropriate financial, administrative, and managerial systems, based on consortium needs and each partner's strengths
- appropriate technical approaches, based on assessed need, aligned with community, national, and donor goals
- a contingency plan to address unforeseen shocks to the project or to the consortium

c. Structure: The consortium structures

- are documented by a formal and mutually agreed-to organizational chart representing all levels of the consortium and of each partner
- respond to the needs and requirements of project participants and donors
- ensure a high level of participation within the consortium
- guarantee and support efficiency at all levels of consortium in governance, project, and financial management

d. Roles: Consortium roles are:

- based on the capacities of each partner and the needs of the consortium

- linked with partner’s associated responsibilities
  - based on consortium needs and assigned to maximize service delivery
  - account for each partner’s non-negotiable organizational value, Code of conduct/Ethics or policy statements
  - agreed to at all levels of each partner and formally documented
- e. Process:
- an operations manual documenting administrative, financial, and human resource processes and procedures to remain in compliance with host nation law and donor requirements
  - an accountability-based performance evaluation process that balances performance with resources
  - conflict resolution, communication, and decision-making protocols that reinforce transparency and accountability at all levels of the consortium
- f. Interpersonal (interactions between individuals and partners)
- respect the human dignity of each person (consortium partners, project participants, stakeholders, and other) without regard for organization, job responsibility, or personal identity
  - conduct consortium business in a transparent, timely, and respectful fashion
  - when representing the consortium, put the needs and identity of the consortium ahead of individual organizational needs

## 5. Amendments

Amendments may be necessary, among other reasons, to maintain compliance with various regulations and/or organisational changes within ICSF.

Amendments to the policy due to changes in Law, maybe done at the earliest by the Board with ratification in the immediate following General Meeting of Members and any other amendments shall take effect upon confirming by the Members in the General Meeting of Members.