

**Grand Bargain  
Localisation Workstream**

**Guidance note on  
partnership practices for  
localisation**

**Issued May 2020**

## Guidance note on partnership practices for localisation

More than 400 humanitarian agencies contributed to identifying the priority partnership practices for localisation; approximately 85% of them were local/national actors. The basis of the guidance note is the findings of the research conducted in Myanmar, Nepal, Nigeria and South Sudan in 2018 as part of the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* programme<sup>1</sup>. It was further reviewed by participants of the regional and global Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream conferences in 2019 and Localisation Workstream members. This guidance note is a product of the Grand Bargain Localisation Workstream but does not necessarily represent the official position of Workstream members and co-conveners.

‘Local actors/partners’ refers to the full diversity of local and national government, NGOs, CSOs, CBOs, women-led organisations, youth groups and more. ‘International actors/partners’ refers to the full diversity of international NGOs and UN agencies. ‘Humanitarian actors’ refers to all those engaged in humanitarian action.

### Project and financial management

1. Local actors design projects and budgets or co-design with international actors who provide technical expertise on proposal writing and technical issues, including conducting joint needs assessments, where needed.
2. Local actors are treated as equal partners, not as sub-contractors presented with already agreed projects and budgets. Partnership agreements include roles and responsibilities of *both* parties, risks are shared, and mitigation measures are mutually agreed, including to ensure safeguarding is addressed.
3. Partners conduct joint monitoring visits to beneficiaries, providing opportunities for joint reflection on progress, obstacles and required modifications. Local partners maintain relationships with local communities, and international partners and donor agencies visit communities in agreement with, or when accompanied by, local actors when appropriate.
4. International actors and donors are open to discussions on findings from local partner monitoring and allow flexibility to adapt programmes and budgets in response to evidence of changing needs and community feedback as much as is practicable.
5. Project budgets include funds for local partners, relevant to the context and needs, for: 1) overheads including set-up costs; 2) indirect costs (as % of project budget); 3) assets vital for project implementation, safety and/or organisational financial sustainability; and 4) organisational strengthening. Budgets should clearly show core funding allocations.
6. All humanitarian actors follow ethical recruitment practices. International actors attempt to keep salaries/benefits within as close a range as practicable to local actors. Local actors strive to support staff to do their job effectively and treat them fairly and equitably.
7. All actors support the active participation of crisis-affected people in project design, monitoring, implementation and evaluation with particular focus on involving marginalised, minority and groups in vulnerable situations such as women, children, young people, and persons with disability.
8. All humanitarian actors identify their added value in any partnership and work on the basis of complementarity. International actors provide support to local partners based on demand (rather than supply) and ideally through longer-term strategic partnerships tailored to partner needs, with complementarity identified before crises.
9. International actors highlight the role their local partners play in external communications and media.

### Capacity strengthening and sharing – see also capacity guidance note [here](#).

10. Capacity assessments are conducted jointly for both local *and* international partners. Strengths are recognised, and gaps used to develop tailored, long-term, capacity strengthening/sharing plans which are shared with other partners to coordinate effective support and investment.
11. Capacity strengthening/sharing plans are contextualised, mutually agreed, long-term, based on project and institutional needs, and identify a range of training and mentoring approaches, such as secondments, shadowing, peer exchanges and on the job training, with follow up monitoring.

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<sup>1</sup> Funded by ECHO. For more about *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* visit: <http://caid.org.uk/54>.

12. International actors and donors include/allow capacity strengthening and organisational development budget line(s) in all projects and partnership agreements. Ideally an explicit % of budgets and/or specific funds are earmarked for this. Local actors commit time and other resources to invest in their own capacity and organisational development.
13. International actors assess their capacity strengthening skills, and address gaps by either strengthening staff skills or investing in local training providers and companions.
14. International actors articulate plans to adopt an advisory, backstopping or secondary role once adequate local capacity exists from the outset, including review and partner 'graduation' strategies.

**Financing** – see also humanitarian financing guidance note [here](#).

15. International actors and donors support local actors to build their sustainability (including retention of key staff) by providing multi-year funds, allowing core funds in project budgets, and supporting local actors in income-generating activities or generating local funds.
16. Local actors actively participate in meetings, communication and coordination with donor agencies to support relationship building, facilitated by international actors if needed.
17. International actors credit the role of their local partners in communications with supporters and donors, recognising the positive impact narratives on reframing perceptions of local leadership of humanitarian response.
18. Donor agencies coordinate to identify minimum standards for accountability and compliance, reforming processes where necessary. International actors and donors support local partners to meet these minimum standards, mitigate risks, and ensure safeguarding. Local organisations invest in meeting these standards.

**Coordination** – see also coordination guidance note [here](#).

19. International actors, particularly UN and cluster coordinators, promote and facilitate active participation of local partners and other local actors in relevant coordination fora, and ensure a diversity of organisations represented, including women and youth led organisations.
20. International actors highlight the role their local partners play in partnership-based / joint humanitarian response at cluster and other humanitarian coordination fora meetings.

**Safety and security**

21. Training, advice and timely information on security and risk management, and safeguarding is provided to local actors for operations in high-risk areas. Donors and international actors allocate funds/budget to establish and maintain sustainable national provision of such services.
22. Local actors are involved in decision-making about security risk management with their international partners, with adaptations made for local context as advised by local actors.

**Advocacy**

23. International agencies support local actors to engage with relevant governments, when requested and appropriate, to influence humanitarian response decisions to ensure effectiveness.
24. Local actors are facilitated to connect crisis-affected people with relevant international actors and government authorities for advocacy related to the humanitarian response, including safety of local aid workers.

For the *Accelerating Localisation through Partnerships* research reports, and global paper *Pathways to Localisation*, visit the webpage: [caid.org.uk/54](http://caid.org.uk/54). Refer also to: [Principles of Partnership](#) (Equality, Transparency, Results-Oriented Approach, Responsibility, and Complementarity); [Charter 4 Change](#); [NEAR Localisation Performance Measurement Framework](#) (Section 1: Partnerships); and [Core Humanitarian Standard on Quality and Accountability](#) (CHS).