# Partnership Policy

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# RISDA-Bangladesh

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## 1. Organization Background

RISDA-Bangladesh (Resource Integration and Social Development Association in Bangladesh) is a non-government voluntary development organization. The Organization came into existence in 1993. Since then as an outcome of the dedication, sincerity and tireless efforts of all irrespective of staff, volunteers, community people and development partners involved with RISDA-Bangladesh, the organization has grown into one of the reputed non-government development organization in Bangladesh and engaged significantly in transforming the lives of underprivileged, marginalized and hard to reach people in the country.

## 2. Vision of the organization

RISDA-Bangladesh envisions a society where deprived and discriminated people are living with sustainable development in their life and livelihood and with respect and dignity.

## 3. Mission of the Organization

Mission of RISDA-Bangladesh is to work with deprived and discriminated people, stakeholders in the society and state party for collective action to establish rights and entitlement for their life and livelihood.

## 4. Values

RISDA-Bangladesh is committed to values of mutual respect, equity, justice, rule of law, transparency, accountability, integrity and impartiality.

## 5. Strategic Objectives of the Organization

- ❑ To increase organizational capacity to become capable for quality management and institutional governance of RISDA Bangladesh for integrated development program.
- ❑ To strengthen and expand renewable energy base quality services and social business model for environment friendly economic sustainability of community and the institution.
- ❑ To increase income of the poor people with development of groups, awareness raising, accumulating savings and credit supports.
- ❑ To empower poor people economically for sustainable livelihood of individual or group of poor people to live in the family and society in improved living condition.
- ❑ To empower poor and discriminated people for establishing their rights to access to public resources and services for their improved life with dignity and respect in the society.

## 6. Introduction to Partnership Policy

RISDA-Bangladesh understand partnership as a working relationship based on shared objectives, rewards and risks. This Partnership Policy defines why and how RISDA-Bangladesh works in partnership with other organizations, which implies a joint conception of programs and projects, a shared commitment to contributing resources and mutual accountability.

This document provides the guiding principles, general framework and relevant tools which illustrate the key features of our partnering process. As such, it does not include detailed operational procedures, since every partnership occurs within specific circumstances and is highly context-specific.

## 7. Objective of Partnership Policy

RISDA-Bangladesh's Partnership Policy aims to actively participate in and promote partnerships and alliances at local, national and international levels with organisations with which it has shared aims and values. RISDA-Bangladesh always promotes partnership with like-minded individuals, groups or institutions that are willingly work together for the fulfilment of agreed objective or purpose. The relationship is based on shared values, principles, responsibilities, resources, decision making and a long-term commitment. In this partnership, there is a culture of negotiation, influencing and being influenced. RISDA-Bangladesh Partnership is a mechanism of working jointly in collaboration with others with specific responsibilities and accountability to maximize the impact of interventions.

## 8. Partnership principles

We realize that to achieve more results RISDA needs to partner with organisations, networks, institutions and groups with whom we share our passion and interest. Partners with whom we can design, act, learn and work better together. RISDA-Bangladesh always expect to collaborate with other organisations in order to contribute to lasting social changes. The principles underpinning:

a) **Mutual respect and listening:** Partnership building is an evolving process. To build trust, partners need to treat each other consistently with respect, to appreciate each other's differences and to challenge each other where collaboration may be inequitable. Partners should agree together how all major decisions should be taken, as well as implementing and reporting on their work together. They should understand each other's point of view.

b) **Knowing yourself and your partner:** Before entering the partnership, both parties should get to know each other as well as possible.  Partners, including RISDA-Bangladesh must always maintain a good understanding of each other's purpose, values, strategies, objectives and key staff – and the work they do.

c) **Clearly defined objectives for your relationship and non-negotiable:** The partnership should have a clear purpose that all partners agree on and understand. Partners must agree on what they want to achieve by working together, on the roles that they play in the partnership and on some basic rules for working together.

d) **Sharing responsibility and risk**: Partnerships require partners to be mutually accountable for achieving mutual goals and for their actions and behaviours. Each partner should commit to carrying out specific activities and ways of working. These are often best spelled out in written agreements but may also be established through other mechanisms, depending on the purpose of the partnership. Partners should also share the risks arising from the work they do together to achieve their mutual goals, rather than expecting any

one partner to bear most of the risks. "Do no harm" principles should be applied when assessing risks.

e) **Learning from each other and striving for mutual growth:** Partners should take the opportunity to actively learn from each other and to strive for continuous improvement of their efforts and in their relationship. Partners should understand each other's different skills and competencies and how these can contribute to achieving partnership goals.

f) **Good judgment:** RISDA-Bangladesh staff should use good judgement in how they apply these principles and guidance. We should make sure that our procedures and approaches are adapted to the size and skills of each partner. They should also be appropriate for the operating context, the scope of the partnership and the level of risk.

## 9. Types of Partnership

There are various types of organizations with which RISDA-Bangladesh may build partnerships. While the boundaries of different sectors are increasingly blurred, we may classify these organizations as follows:

**Community Based Organisations (CBOs):** It includes local groups of girls, boys, youths, women or men (formal or informal). CBOs are responsible for volunteer work while implementation of projects and programs, RISDA-Bangladesh will provide capacity building and resource support. RISDA-Bangladesh supports CBOs to influence others and to hold duty bearers to account and provides protection and resources.

**Local and national NGOs and civil society organizations (CSOs):** They are central to a community and to society's capacity to address social issues. They will work as co-implementers or organizations may implement on RISDA-Bangladesh's behalf. There is a focus with a view to building a stronger civil society in the country. We consider doing this in collaboration with other partners the organization may have. RISDA-Bangladesh provides financial resources, partners provide local knowledge, human resources and expertise. RISDA-Bangladesh develop strategic partnership with other local and national NGOs for resource mobilization and joint implementation.

**Government institutions at central and local levels:** RISDA-Bangladesh does not provide direct funding to government partners; however, we always work in close collaboration and coordination with them to promote Human Rights. This collaboration may be formalized through non-monetary contributions (technical or financial support, knowledge sharing and services, human resource, etc.) by signing a Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement. We will also implements projects of government institutions.

**Academic institutions and universities:** RISDA-Bangladesh may reach formal agreements with the aim of achieving common objectives through different forms of contribution (financial, technical, knowledge sharing and services, human resources, etc.). It focus on capacity of organization to deliver resources/research.

**Corporates/private sector institutions for shared value and influencing partnership:** It includes national and multi-national companies, small and medium enterprises and business

associations. RISDA-Bangladesh recognizes that business entities may and should play an important role in promotion and protecting Human Rights. As such, we entertain the prospect of collaborating with corporate sponsors who comply with mission and vision of RISDA-Bangladesh.

**International NGO:** RISDA-Bangladesh do partnership often as part of a consortium. Sometimes, it implements their projects on behalf of them. We focus joint programming and joint influencing.

**Global, bilateral and multilateral institutions:** We focus to increase our reach or provide resources that RISDA-Bangladesh doesn't have e.g. UNICEF provides infrastructure, RISDA-Bangladesh provides training for teachers. We work together to address marginalized issues.
**Coalitions/networks/alliances**: Groups of organizations which are formed to achieve a common goal. Their purpose is often to improve advocacy, mutual learning and information exchange among member organizations. They may have different levels of legal formalities, such as governing bodies, missions, legal registrations, membership requirements, etc. One example would be networks of child-centered organizations.

**Consortium: G**roups of organizations formed to achieve a specific, common one-time goal. For example, it may be formed in order to access grants. It may have different levels of legal formalities, such as governing bodies, missions, legal registrations, membership requirements, etc.

RISDA-Bangladesh may build partnerships with any of the aforementioned types of organizations, and these organizations may be categorized as follows:

### a. Strategic Partner

A Strategic Partner is an organization with which RISDA-Bangladesh establishes a formal collaboration agreement with the aim of achieving common strategic objectives in the medium to long term. The relationship is formalized through a multi-annual Memorandum of Understanding or Agreement and may involve diverse forms of contribution (financial, technical, knowledge sharing or services, human resources, etc.)

### b. Project/Program/Activity/Initiative Partners

A Program/Project/Activity/Initiative Partner is an organization with which RISDA-Bangladesh establishes a formal, more short-term agreement, with the aim of achieving specific common objectives through different forms of contribution (financial, technical, knowledge sharing or services, human resources, etc.).

## 10. Partnership Management

This section describes the different steps of RISDA-Bangladesh partnership management cycle.

**Step 1: Define the area of interest and map stakeholders**

RISDA-Bangladesh defines the initial scope and preferred intervention areas by identifying geographic, thematic and strategic priorities of the organization and map stakeholders. The availability of funding sources, such as existing or future grant opportunities, or potential sponsorship base, is also taken into consideration.

**Step 2: Identify and approach possible partners**

In this step, RISDA-Bangladesh assesses the viability of specific partnerships through a contextual analysis (areas of interest and stakeholder mapping). The following questions are explored:
- What are the most important criteria for selecting partners, with respect to the specific program/project/activity/imitative?
- Does the funding source/donor come with specific conditions attached (for example, specific grant or sponsorship requirements) which may have a bearing on our choice of partners?
- Is there any capacity or other gap? What technical skill set must the partner have in order fulfill its responsibilities?
- Do we have existing partners that fit the selection criteria?

In selecting potential partners, it is important to engage in dialogue with them through joint meetings and project-site visits. The following are key questions which should be addressed in these discussions:
- Do we share a common vision for achieving positive and lasting changes in the lives of the underprivileged people?
- Are our values, principles and work methodologies compatible?
- Would partnership enhance our respective organizational goals and give added value to our work?
- Would partnership create positive opportunities for future organizational development?
- Can our mutual expectations for partnership be realistically met?

**Step 3: Define scope and objectives jointly**

In this step, we define the principles and ground rules for partnership. The following are key questions which should be addressed in this regard:
- What is the purpose and what are the objectives and success indicators of the partnership? What are the deliverables and expected results?
- What are the roles and responsibilities of each party?
- What would be the decision-making process?
- What are the key milestones during the partnership?
- What type of engagement is there from other stakeholders?
- What type of monitoring and periodic evaluation will there be of the program/ project/ activity/initiative?

**Step 4: Formalize partnership**

Once both parties have accepted the program/project/activity/initiative proposal, the partnership will be formalized through the signing of an agreement. In case of a Strategic Partner, a framework agreement will be signed prior to signing a specific program/ project/ activity/initiative agreement.

**Step 5: Plan joint implementation and capacity building**

This step marks the beginning of the program/project/activity/initiative implementation. Potential capacity or other gaps should be reviewed (technical and financial, human resources, political influence, etc.) and a capacity development plan should be designed and implemented jointly.

**Step 6: Implement periodic monitoring and evaluation**

Program/project/activity/initiative implementation should be accompanied by periodic monitoring and evaluation (both technical and financial) with the aim of guaranteeing accountability and mutual learning. The monitoring and evaluation mechanism may take different forms, such as a joint monitoring committee, project-site visits, formulation of technical reports and training sessions. The following are key questions to be addressed during this step:
- Are we on the right track in terms of achieving the desired impact?
- Are we on the rights track with respect to what was set out in the agreement?
- How well are we doing in terms of executing the proposal? Are any adjustments needed?
- Are we adhering to the agreed principles for the partnership?
- What can we do to make our partnership even stronger and more effective?

The agreement may be terminated according to the particular terms established in the agreement signed by both parties, for instance in the case of a breach of the contractual terms and condition.

**Step 7: Conduct final evaluation and reflect mutual learning for defining the following steps**

The final evaluation should help us determine the following actions to take with respect to the partnership:
- **Closing:** involves implementing exit strategies.
- **Continuing:** involves continuance of the program/project/activity/initiative, after improving it based on acquired learning.
- **Scaling up:** involves expanding or reproducing the program/project/activity/ initiative, while improving it based on acquired learning.

The following are key questions to be addressed during this step:
- To what extent have the expected long-term objectives been achieved and what explains this level of achievement?
- To what extent have the parties lived up to their assigned roles and responsibilities in the partnership?

- Has the partnership been significant in improving the lives of children and has it added value to each organization and its respective work?
- Have both parties adhered to the agreed partnership principles and effectively tackled the challenges/obstacles encountered along the way?
- What have we learned and how can we apply this learning?
- Is it desirable to continue the partnership? If so, how can we make the partnership stronger and more effective?

## 11. Conclusion

Partnership Policy of RISDA-Bangladesh is not a static document, it is expected to review and update from time to time to be a living and evolving document. Therefore, with the change of requirements, it is imperative that this policy is also updated/ modified with approval of the Executive Committee. Fundraising and Partnership Management section shall notify changes to the manual. All pages are dated to ensure accuracy. The manual will have loose-leaf binding as the interim amendment (page) can be included easily. In each three year, RISDA-Bangladesh management will form a review committee or recruit an external consultant to review the whole documents and the committee/consultant will submit the proposed amendments to the authority of RISDA-Bangladesh. The employees of RISDA-Bangladesh can recommend any amendment/inclusion/exclusion to the committee/consultant. If possible, one female staff will be included in the committee. All types of amendment/ inclusion/exclusion will be done subject to prior approval of Executive Director.