



RAWCS Partnership Engagement and Collaboration Policy

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1. Introduction

1.1 *Who we are*

1.1.1 Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd (RAWCS) is a registered charity with the Australian Charities and Not-for-profits Commission (ACNC). We back doing good by supporting and facilitating a broad range of humanitarian and development projects, both in Australia and in developing countries. RAWCS administers three Tax Deductible funds:

1. **Rotary Australia Overseas Aid Fund (RAOAF):** This fund supports efforts by Rotary Clubs, Rotary Districts and other partners to deliver humanitarian assistance in developing countries. RAOAF focuses on both sustained development and immediate disaster response, working collaboratively with communities to deliver impactful, sustainable projects to meet identified needs.
2. **Rotary Australia Benevolent Society (RABS):** RABS supports Rotary Clubs, Rotary Districts and other partners to respond to specific community challenges within Australia. It offers an avenue for wider community involvement through tax-deductible donations. The Rotary Australia Compassionate Grants Projects within RABS uses matching funds from donations, such as those provided by Dick Smith's Trust, to assist Australians facing hardship.
3. **Rotary Australia Relief Fund (RARF):** This fund is dedicated to responding to national appeals and efficiently disbursing funds to appropriate aid projects. RARF's focus is on mobilising rapid support during national crises, such as natural disasters, providing a structured channel for public generosity to be transformed into effective aid. This fund acts as a hub for contributions from both Rotary and non-Rotary sources, ensuring swift and effective aid delivery to disaster-affected areas.

1.2 *Purpose*

- 1.2.1 RAWCS is dedicated to maximising the impact of Rotary projects through strategic partnerships both domestically and internationally. Our strategic partnerships reflect our dedication to making a tangible difference in the lives of individuals and communities, both locally and globally, by leveraging resources and expertise to address pressing challenges and advance Rotary's mission of service.
- 1.2.3 We are committed to ensuring that we engage with governments and organisations to achieve mutually agreed objectives in aid and development activities (this may include affiliates). The equal relationship with these partners will be characterised by mutual respect, transparency, accountability and by a commitment and openness to two-way learning and support.
- 1.2.3 The purpose of this policy is to guide RAWCS and our partners on the expected nature of our engagements with other organisations. This policy addresses our ACFID compliance obligations when initiating and maintaining partnerships and joint collaboration.

1.3 *Scope and Governance*

- 1.3.1 This policy applies to RAWCS and all of its administered funds and subsidiaries – referred inclusively within this policy as RAWCS.

- 1.3.2 This policy is intended to apply to all RAWCS partnerships. It applies to all RAWCS staff, volunteers, Board members, committee members, suppliers and contractors. Within this policy all of these are represented by the term: **“our people”**.
- 1.2.4 It also extends to all our partners and associated implementing organisations within Australia or overseas.

1.3 Policy References

- 1.3.1 This policy was developed with references to the following documents:
- ACFID Code of Conduct
 - ACFID Guidance on Collaboration & Partnerships
 - RAWCS Code of Conduct
 - RAWCS Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct
 - RAWCS Non-Development Activity Policy
 - RAWCS Commitment to Human Rights, Humanitarian Principles and Racial Justice Statement
 - RAWCS Equity, Diversity & Inclusion Policy
 - RAWCS Gender Equity Policy
 - RAWCS Disability Inclusion Policy
 - RAWCS Volunteer Policy
 - RAWCS Complaint Handling Policy and Procedure
 - RAWCS Whistleblower Policy and Procedure

1.4 Definitions

Term	Definition
Partner	Individuals, groups of people or organisations that collaborate to achieve mutually agreed objectives. This may include affiliates.
Partnership	An ongoing working relationship where risks and benefits are shared.
Collaboration	A process in which two parties contribute core competencies and share the risks and decision-making to achieve mutual objectives. Typically considered less formal than a partnership.
Partner Engagement	The active involvement, collaboration, and interaction between an organisation and its partners. These partners could be other businesses, individuals, government agencies, non-profit organisations, or any other entities with whom the organisation has a mutually beneficial relationship.
Partner Capacity	The abilities, resources, and strengths that a partner possesses to effectively contribute to a collaborative effort or partnership. It encompasses the skills, expertise, infrastructure, human resources, financial resources, and other assets that a partner brings to the table.
Partner Capacity Development	Collaborative arrangements that aim to empower and strengthen the capacity of partners to address common challenges or opportunities and achieve shared objectives effectively.

2. Principles

2.1 Guiding Principles

- 2.1.1 **Equity** - In any relationship, there will be divergences of power, resources, and influence. Equity recognises that all parties have an equal right to be part of, and benefit from collaboration, decision-making and outcomes.
- 2.1.2 **Transparency** - Sharing accessible information. Transparency is a precondition for accountability, and both are required for trust. Transparency will enable accountability to stakeholders, partners, and donors.
- 2.1.3 **Accountability** - Taking responsibility for our actions and commitments. Involves accountabilities to and amongst all stakeholders at all levels.
- 2.1.4 **Mutual respect** - The participants must respect each other's mandates, obligations and independence, and recognise each other's strengths, constraints, and commitments. Mutual respect must not preclude organisations from engaging in constructive dissent.
- 2.1.5 **Shared Interests** - This enables solidarity between parties and is critical to any form of collaboration. The degree of mutuality may differ with different types of collaborations from a shared interest or purpose, to fully negotiated and mutually agreed objectives and outputs.
- 2.1.6 **Mutual benefit** - This is linked to shared interests. While benefits for the various parties may differ, all parties should benefit in some way if they are contributing to the collaboration. Neither party should be just serving the purpose or interests of the other party.
- 2.1.7 **Autonomy and independence** - All parties should be able to determine their own identity and manage their own governance. These principles are linked to mutual respect. Be aware of power imbalances that might undermine autonomy and independence.
- 2.1.8 **Clarity of roles and responsibilities** - Trust and transparency come from understanding the expectations, roles, and responsibilities of all parties. These may differ depending on the relationship and the parties involved but it is important to have shared and clear understandings of expectations and accountability.

3. Policy Commitments

3.1 Partner Engagement and Collaboration

- 3.1.1 Through partnerships and collaborative relationships, we harness existing knowledge and expertise to enhance capacity for community needs to be met locally. We regard partnerships as mechanisms for realising positive, constructive change and will ensure all activities are carried out responsibly, honestly and with transparency. Our partnership agreements clearly define the expectations and responsibilities of all parties, ensuring that each partner upholds our shared commitment to legality, ethical integrity, and transparent operations.

- 3.1.2 Our partners must comply with certain standards set by the ACFID Code of Conduct. Wherever relevant, we will document how partners are held financially accountable, accountable for the protection of children and accountable for ensuring that funds do not reach terrorist organisations.
- 3.1.3 Partners must document in written agreements with subcontractors how they will manage financial, operational, and compliance accountabilities to ensure thorough oversight and adherence to standards.
- 3.1.4 Our people will support carrying out adequate research to be confident that the potential partner organisation is suitable. Research will verify that the organisation is financially viable and:
- has appropriate procedures to minimise the potential for fraud;
 - has appropriate processes to prevent transmission of funds to terrorist organisations;
 - shares our objectives and understands our vision, purpose and values;
 - is considered legitimate, locally;
 - has an accountable and democratic organisational structure and is financially transparent;
 - does not discriminate based on age, gender, religion, ethnicity, physical or intellectual ability or political affiliation;
 - will not engage in evangelising or proselytising;
 - has sufficient human and financial resources to achieve desired partnership outcomes;
 - is accountable to communities and donors;
 - is not on the DFAT and National Security Australia lists of terrorist organisations and proscribed persons or entities;
 - abides by our Code of Conduct and Child Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct;
 - promotes greater equality within staff and community;
 - promotes equal participation of people with disability or marginalised groups; and
 - promotes gender equity.
- 3.1.5 We will formalise relations with partners, clearly identifying roles and responsibilities in a mutually accountable and respectful manner.
- 3.1.6 We will ensure that partner contributions and mutually agreed outcomes are adequately documented and monitored.
- 3.1.7 We will build partners' capacity and where partners do not have the capacity to meet organisational commitments for partnership, we will support them to strengthen their systems and procedures to ensure that they meet national, and where relevant international, good practice standards.
- 3.1.8 We will ensure that partner organisations only enter partnerships that are compatible with local cultural needs and values, and which are aligned with our purpose and values.
- 3.1.9 We will clearly identify roles, responsibilities and guidelines to ensure the partnership remains mutually beneficial and effective in achieving agreed outcomes and take responsibility for ensuring roles, responsibilities and guidelines are agreed and documented when partnerships are established and that these are reviewed and adapted as partnerships evolve.
- 3.1.10 We will ensure that partner organisations maintain environmental sustainability through safe practices which are in line with country guidelines.

3.2 Partnership Journey Model

- 3.2.1 Our partnership journey model provides a structured framework that guides our people through the process of establishing, nurturing, and managing partnerships effectively, aligning expectations, managing risks, optimising resources, fostering continuous improvement, and building strong relationships.



- 3.2.2 **Pre-check alignment of interest:** Before formalising a partnership, ensure that the parties involved share common goals and interests. This step involves initial discussions and assessments to gauge compatibility and alignment of objectives.
- 3.2.3 **Due Diligence:** This step involves researching and evaluating relevant information about the prospective partner, such as financial stability, reputation, and legal standing.
- 3.2.4 **Agreed purpose and objectives:** Once alignment of interests is confirmed and due diligence is completed, the next step is to define the purpose and objectives of the partnership. This includes clarifying the goals, expected outcomes, and mutual benefits for all parties involved.
- 3.2.5 **Agreed resources and transactions:** Establishing clear agreements regarding the allocation of resources and transactions involves determining each party's contributions, responsibilities, and any financial or non-financial transactions involved.
- 3.2.6 **Partnership structure and team:** This step involves outlining the organisational framework, roles, responsibilities, and decision-making processes within the partnership.

- 3.2.7 **Review and monitor:** This step involves regular assessments, performance evaluations, and adjustments as needed to optimise the partnership's outcomes. This process relates to the partnership as distinct from the program or initiative it was established to achieve.

3.3 Governance of the Partnership

- 3.3.1 It is an ACFID Code of Conduct requirement to have partnership agreements in place to govern formal partnerships. Once the foundation for a partnership has been established, we will develop a documented agreement. Depending on the partnership, it can take the form of an MOU, an agreement or a contract. At a minimum the agreement should cover:

- value and contribution of each party;
- shared goals, roles and responsibilities of all parties;
- financial and non-financial resources and support offered by, and required of each party;
- dispute resolution process;
- mutual accountabilities for reporting, sharing information and communication;
- specific statements about child protection, prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment, and incident reporting.

(See Partnership Agreement Template at Appendix 1)

4. Exiting a partnership

- 4.1 We will jointly discuss the timing and process of exiting from a partnership with all parties involved. This will be done well in advance of the completion of the partnership to ensure good management including possible alternative funding sources, adequate staff and technical capacity, communication with other external stakeholders and primary beneficiaries etc. We will document these plans and share them with all parties to ensure transparency.
- 4.2 In circumstances where a rapid exit from a poor performing partnership is necessary, or where there are significant/serious breaches of contractual arrangements, for example with regards to safeguarding or compliance issues, the process for doing this will be enunciated in the partnership agreement negotiated at the outset of the partnership.

5. Roles and Responsibilities

Roles	Responsibilities
National Board of Directors	• Overall responsibility for ensuring this policy complies with our legal and ethical obligations. • Approving this policy and holding the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) accountable to how effectively this policy is implemented.
CEO	• Accountable to the Board for overall implementation and monitoring of this policy. • Ensuring this this policy is communicated to our people and this policy is upheld.
National Manager Projects & Volunteers	• Ensuring all project participants are aware of, and comply with this policy. • Fostering a culture of integrity by actively promoting and supporting whistleblowing channels to report unethical behaviour or policy violations.

All our people	• Meet the obligations in this policy. • Not encouraging others (directly or indirectly) to breach this policy. • Reporting any breach to your manager/supervisor.
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6. Policy Distribution

- 6.1 This policy will be available on our website and disseminated to all our people and partners. We will ensure that all our people and partners are notified of and made aware that they are required to comply with the policy.

7. Review

- 7.1 We are committed to continuous improvement to our policy, procedures and practices. This policy will be reviewed at least every three years by the CEO and approved by the National Board of Directors to ensure it is working in practice and updated as required.
- 7.2 Feedback on this and other policies is openly encouraged from our people, partners, stakeholders and the communities we work with. Feedback, as well as emerging good practice and collaborative lessons learnt across the development sector, will be used to strengthen this and related policies and procedures.

8. More information

- 8.1 If you have a query about this policy or need more information, you can contact us via:
- email: info@rawcs.org.au
 - phone: +61 2 8833 8306
 - post: Rotary Australia World Community Service Ltd
25/1 Maitland Place
Maitland Place
Norwest NSW 2153
Australia

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Appendix 1: ACFID Partnership Agreement Template

Partnership Agreement Template

The purpose of a partnership agreement is to express the shared intent of the partnership and the roles and responsibilities of different parties. The formality and nature of the partnership will determine how prescriptive the agreement between the parties needs to be.

It is an ACFID Code of Conduct requirement to have partnership agreements in place to govern formal partnerships. The Compliance Indicators which members must extend to partners through MoUs or similar are listed below. The verifier for each of these requirements in the Quality Assurance Framework provides further advice on how ACFID members can demonstrate compliance.

1.4.1 Members demonstrate their organisational commitment to the safeguarding of children.
1.4.2 Members have a code of conduct that advances child safeguarding behaviours and applies to all personnel, partners and project visitors.
1.4.3 Members have a documented child safeguarding incident reporting procedure and complaints handling procedures that aligns with principles of privacy and promotes safety and dignity.
1.5.1 Members demonstrate their organisational commitment to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, through a survivor-centred approach.
7.3.1 Members demonstrate an organisational commitment to operating transparently with all stakeholders.
7.3.2 Members development initiatives consistently demonstrate the separation of development activities from non-development activities.
7.3.3 Members enable stakeholders to make complaints to the organisation in a safe and confidential manner.
8.2.1 Members can control and manage their financial resources and risks.

Partnership Agreement Template

Those areas of the template which are considered necessary to demonstrate compliance with the ACFID Code of Conduct are marked with a double hash - ## and the associate Compliance Indicator reference.

1. PARTNER ORGANISATIONS	Partner A: [Name, Contact details, Contact person] Partner B: [Name, Contact details, Contact person] Partner C: [Name, Contact details, Contact person] Etc.
2. STATEMENT OF INTENT/ PURPOSE OF THE PARTNERHSIP	This Agreement sets out the commitments, responsibilities and contributions of each of the above parties in regards to [name of program or initiative] The goal of this Agreement is: [state shared goal] ## (5.2.1)
3. DURATION	This Agreement will take effect from the date of its signature by the above parties and will be deemed to have commenced from that date and will expire by [insert date]
4. BACKGROUND	PARTNER A – [when it was established, what is its vision and focus, and where does it work.] PARTNER B – [as above] PARTNER C – [as above] [If relevant, also provide brief overview on program/initiative that the partners are working on together]
5. PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES	This Agreement is based on the following principles of partnership: [List and define agreed principles]. For example: • mutual respect: • equity • transparency

6. PARTNER ROLES NB: Governance of the partnership could be a separate clause if required.	[Describe any governance structures that help to govern or advise the partnership] Each partner will contribute to the partnership in the following way(s): [List and detail financial and non-financial contributions] ## (5.2.1) Partner A... Partner B... Partner C... All partners...
7. PARTNER OBLIGATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITIES	Each partner commits to the following obligations and accountabilities: [List and detail as appropriate]. For example: • child protection ## (1.4.1) • prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse ## (1.5.1) • counter terrorism ## (8.2.1) • anti-fraud and corruption ## (8.2.1) • anti money-laundering ## (8.2.1) • transparency ## (7.3.1) • separation of development and non-development activities ## (7.3.2) • complaints handling ## (7.3.3) • whistleblowing ## (9.2.2) • ethical procurement ## (8.1.3) • conflict of interest ## (7.4.3) • regular communication ## (5.2.1) • agreed use of funds ## (8.2.1) • financial record keeping and reporting ## (8.2.1) • privacy ## (7.2.2) • confidentiality • copyright • incident reporting • progress reporting [Specify in more detail as appropriate].

8. PARTNERSHIP REVIEW	The parties to this Agreement agree: • to review the partnership every [nominate period] ## (5.3.2) • to make available all information relevant to the partnership as necessary • to make adjustments to the partnership should either a review or an audit indicates that this is necessary for the partnership to achieve its objectives
9. DISPUTE RESOLUTION	If the parties to this agreement are in dispute, they shall first endeavour to resolve the documented dispute through direct negotiation. If this is unsuccessful, they may refer the dispute to an independent, qualified mediator, agreed between the parties. [Adapt as appropriate] ## (5.3.2)
10. TERMINATION	Either party may terminate this Agreement by giving [nominate period] written notice to the other party. [Adapt as appropriate]
11. ANNEXES	[Consider including further detail of obligations related to a project in a separate agreement or annex] For example: This Agreement is supplemented with a project/program agreement that outlines the goal, objectives, deliverables for each partner, and expected outcomes of that project/program.