



IAS Guidelines for Partnerships

1. Overview

- 1.1 Scope of guidelines
- 1.2 IAS mission, vision, and values
- 1.3 Partnership definition
- 1.4 Partner definition
- 1.5 Strategic partner definition

2. Guiding principles

- 2.1 Added benefit
- 2.2 Low risk
- 2.3 Conflict of interest
- 2.4 Transparency
- 2.5 Eligibility
- 2.6 No exclusivity
- 2.7 Endorsement
- 2.8 No corporate influence

3. Partnership activities

- 3.1 In-kind exchange
- 3.2 Mutual promotion
- 3.3 Grant
- 3.4 Sponsorship

4. Partnership process

- 4.1 Partnership process coordination
- 4.2 Partnership initiative
- 4.3 Partnership establishment
- 4.4 Partnership review



IAS Guidelines for Partnerships

1. Overview

1.1 Scope of guidelines

These guidelines define the principles and procedures for the establishment of partnerships across all sectors (public, non-profit, private sector) by the International AIDS Society (IAS). They are intended to ensure that IAS partnerships are mutually beneficial relationships built on trust and that potential conflicts of interest are transparently addressed. The guidelines clarify opportunities and limitations within partnership arrangements across the organization.

1.2 IAS mission, vision, and values

The mission of the IAS is to lead collective action on every front of the global HIV response through its membership base, scientific authority, and convening power. To work towards its vision of ending the global HIV epidemic, the IAS relies on collaboration with partners. As specified in the [five IAS values](#), the IAS seeks partnerships and facilitates collaboration, bringing together people and organizations from all fields and all levels to drive progress.

All IAS partnerships must be aligned with the mission, vision, values and [strategy](#) of the organization.

1.3 Partnership definition

A partnership is a formal relationship between the IAS and at least one other organization.

The parties agree to work together and share resources, skills, and experience in the pursuit of common goals. They sign an agreement that commits each organization to defined principles, and to a set of responsibilities for a specified period of time.

The IAS strives for partnership exchanges that are equitable, meaningful and beneficial to both parties.

1.4 Partner definition

A partner is any organization, institution or corporation with whom the IAS establishes a formal partnership (as defined in Article 1.3 above). Partners include, but are not limited to, international organizations, non-governmental organizations, academic institutions, foundations, networks, associations, and private sector corporations.



The IAS can establish multiple partnerships with the same partner. These partnerships can recur over a number of years or be active at the same time. Each agreement specifies timeframe, subject, and activities.

1.5 Strategic partner definition

IAS strategic partners are those who:

- Are essential to the achievement of the IAS's goals as defined in its [organizational strategy](#). With these strategic partners the IAS collaborates extensively across multiple activity areas of the organization; or
- Are key to the substantial development or advancement of specific IAS programmes or activities. Their contribution to the respective project or programme is unique or challenging to replace.

Strategic partners are identified on an ongoing basis. The collaboration with strategic partners focuses on outcomes and impact rather than outputs (as can be the case with other partners). With strategic partners, the IAS has a strong, preferably long-term, relationship that translates into recurrent agreements or multiple agreements active at the same time.

The IAS nourishes collaborations with strategic partners by investing resources and time in maintaining the relationship productive and dynamic. In particular, the IAS engages these partners in regular partnership reviews (in-person or virtual meetings) to assess progress and identify future areas of collaboration.

2. Guiding principles

2.1 Added benefit

In a partnership, the value of what the entities create together is higher than what they would do separately. In particular, the partnership is expected to increase the relevance of the IAS's work and to amplify its reach.

2.2 Low risk

The IAS will enter only into partnerships that it considers to carry low reputational or financial risk.

2.3 Conflict of interest

In all partnerships, the IAS will carefully consider the potential for conflicts of interest at both the institutional and individual staff member levels, and put appropriate mitigation measures in place.



2.4 Transparency

The IAS is committed to the principle of transparency of partnership processes and related decision making.

The IAS discloses the names of partners and the nature and scope of the partnership in relevant sections on its website, in printed materials and other documents.

2.5 Eligibility

The IAS aligns to the [Ten Principles](#) of the United Nations Global Compact that describe responsible business practices based on universal principles of human rights, labour, environmental sustainability and anti-corruption. The IAS collaborates only with organizations from the public, non-profit and private sector that commit to adhering to these principles.

Additionally, the IAS works only with partners that do not actively or implicitly support:

- Discriminatory workplace practices that include, but are not limited to, real or perceived HIV status, sexual orientation, gender identity, mental or physical disability, age, race/ethnicity, marital status, family or care giver's responsibilities, pregnancy, and religion;
- Political views that would negatively impact people living with HIV and the International AIDS Conference, IAS Conference on HIV Science and the HIV Research for Prevention Conference, including their respective delegates.

The IAS does not enter into partnerships with the tobacco industry and corporations engaged in arms/weapons manufacture or trade.

2.6 No exclusivity

The IAS does not grant exclusive partnerships to one organization, institution or corporation in any project or programme. Every activity for which cooperation is invited will be open to multiple partners.

2.7 Endorsement

In principle, the IAS does not endorse any particular private sector entity, its products or services. However, if the IAS determines that a specific product, item or service can carry an important public health benefit, it may decide to publically endorse it. Such endorsement will always be based on an independent, appropriately published scientific assessment.

2.8 No corporate influence

The IAS's private sector partners will not have the opportunity to exert influence over the IAS's strategic direction or programmatic priorities, including the structure and content of its conferences and other convenings, or its advocacy positions.



3. Partnership activities

3.1 In-kind exchange

An in-kind exchange of goods or services does not entail payments or financial contributions, as any fee usually required is waived through the partnership.

In-kind exchange includes the organization of joint activities: in this case, the IAS works with at least one partner to shape and deliver an event or activity, and no transfer of funds takes place. In this collaboration, the partnership agreement specifies the commitments and responsibilities of each partner.

3.2 Mutual promotion

The promotion of events, activities or organizations can be included in partnership agreements as long as the promotion is reciprocal. Mutual promotion includes partnerships established with media organizations.

3.3 Grant

Partners (donors) award grants in cash to the IAS based on a proposal or request developed by the IAS. Grants are usually restricted to a specific programme or project. The objectives and implementation approach of each project are defined by the IAS. Once a grant has been approved, the IAS will implement the project or programme based on the scope, workplan and timeline agreed with the donor. The partner will be duly acknowledged as a donor. Should the grant be made by a private sector entity, grantor representatives will not have decision-making authority with regard to specifics of project/programme implementation other than adjustments the IAS proposes to make to the original scope, workplan and timeline of the grant-funded project.

In some instances, the IAS may be the grantor and award sub-grants to partners. In this case, the partnership focuses on technical support or a division of labor in the context of a larger project or programme activity. A sub-grant agreement specifies deliverables and payment schedules.

3.4 Sponsorship

The IAS offers sponsorship opportunities related to some of its activities, in particular but not limited to the International AIDS Conferences, the IAS Conferences on HIV Science, and the HIV Research for Prevention Conferences. In return for a defined, non-earmarked contribution to the activity the partner (sponsor) receives visibility, branding opportunities and commercial benefits such as complimentary conference registrations or exhibition space. The sponsor has no decision-making authority over the structure, objectives and implementation of the activity.



4. Partnership process

4.1 Partnership process coordination

The Development and Performance team is responsible for partnership process coordination and tracking across the organization and leads specific elements of partnership management.

Donors and sponsors - The team leads strategic engagement, coordinates donor and sponsor relations across the organization, manages proposal development, negotiates contracts, and ensures compliance.

Partners (in-kind exchanges, mutual promotion, technical collaboration) - The Partnerships Project Manager tracks partner relationships and provides professional support to colleagues at every stage of the partnership process including guidance on compiling the Partnership Assessment Form (Annex 1) or review form (Annex 3) as well as advice on the appropriate type of agreement to conclude to formalize the partnership.

Strategic partners - Working closely with colleagues across the organization, the Development and Performance team coordinates the establishment, management and review of strategic partnerships.

4.2 Partnership initiative

The establishment of a partnership can be initiated in the following ways:

1. *Ad hoc*. Externally, when a potential partner proposes a collaboration or internally, through the initiative of any IAS staff member. The IAS staff member interested in the partnership completes the Partnership Assessment Form (Annex 1) or in case of private sector partners, the Due Diligence Form for Private Sector Partners (Annex 2), and shares it with their Director to determine whether to pursue the partnership.
2. *During regular partnerships consultations*. The Partnerships Project Manager engages IAS teams and staff members responsible for key projects in regular meetings to review the performance of existing partnerships, identify additional partnering needs, upgrade partners to strategic partners and vice versa, and brainstorm possible new partners. For any potential new partners identified in the process, the relevant team or staff member together with the Partnerships Project Manager gathers relevant background information and completes the Partnership Assessment Form (Annex 1) or, in the case of private sector partners, the Due Diligence Form for Private Sector Partners (Annex 2) to facilitate decisions on whether to pursue the partnership.

If the assessment identifies a potential partner that is not strategic as per the definition in section 1.5, the team pursuing the partnership moves to establishing the partnership as per section 4.4 below.



If the assessment identifies a potential strategic partner, the Partnerships Project Manager takes the lead in working with all relevant teams to define the goals and scope of the partnership, coordinating communication with the partner, and negotiating an agreement as per section 4.4 below.

4.3 Partnership establishment

A partnership becomes active through the signature of an agreement, which can be developed using an IAS or partner template. The Partnerships Project Manager will provide guidance on the appropriate IAS template to use. Should a partner template be used, the team pursuing the partnership reflects the negotiated terms in the document and shares the final draft with the Partnerships Project Manager for review, to ensure consistency with other partnerships. The signatories are the Executive Director (or Deputy Executive Director in his/her absence) and a Director.

The IAS has four template agreements that define the purpose of the partnership, each partner's responsibilities, timelines etc. These are:

- 1) Letter of Agreement (if there is an exchange of financial resources);
- 2) Memorandum of Understanding (if there is no financial contribution involved);
- 3) Sponsorship Agreement;
- 4) Grant Agreement (for grants awarded by the IAS).

Donors regularly provide their own template agreements for grants to the IAS which are reviewed by the Development and Performance team to ensure that the scope and activities of the proposed project are reflected accurately, that the guiding principles for partnerships as per section 2 above are adhered to, and that donor compliance requirements can be met.

For in-kind exchanges and mutual promotion, the recommended duration of the agreement is two years maximum. The duration of other agreements should reflect the nature of the partnership activities.

Directors signing partnership agreements share copies with the Development and Performance team to facilitate partnership tracking.

4.4 Partnership review

Staff are encouraged to review partnerships and assess their effectiveness on a regular basis by using the Partnership Review Form (Annex 3). The review results are used to determine if a partnership should be renewed.

The regular review of strategic partnerships is coordinated by Partnerships Project Manager.