

How Good are your Partnerships ?

How can the AIN Partnership Guidelines help ?



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Background

The Association of International NGOs (AIN) was formed in September 1996 by INGOs working in Nepal, with the shared goal of poverty reduction and sustainable development. The members believe that protection from human rights abuses, physical threats, violence and extreme economic, social and environmental risks are a necessary precondition to achieve this shared goal and to make lasting, positive improvements in the lives of all Nepali people. AIN plays an important role in the development sector of Nepal through its members' support of people-centered development programmes throughout the country.

Today AIN is comprised of more than 80 INGOs, working on a wide-range of issues and sectors to contribute to the development of Nepal.

In 2005 AIN developed Partnership Guidelines to help AIN members work with their NGO partners to strengthen their contribution to Nepal's development. The guidelines aimed to set higher, more transparent and more democratic standards of governance and performance for both INGOs and their NGO partners. The guidelines are not prescriptive and they provide guiding principles and basic partnering requirements for INGOs who are working in partnership with NGOs in Nepal. INGOs, as well as their NGO partners, will both work towards these principles and requirements, and as such each partnership will set out the steps and speed with which the partnership will move towards achieving the standards set out in the guidelines.

The objectives of the working group

AIN formed the Task Force on Capacity Building with NGO Partners in May 2006 to promote and disseminate the AIN guidelines and to create an enabling environment for the implementation

of AIN's principles and practices in INGOs and NGOs. Current objectives are:

- To increase awareness about the AIN Guidelines so INGOs and NGOs are actively using them.
- To advocate with NGO networks and relevant government institutions and donors on INGO and NGO good governance and its application.

Activities of the Working Group

- Collection and compilation of materials related to capacity building, organization development and partnership.
- INGOs visit to share AIN partnership guidelines.
- Orientation of new AIN members on partnership guidelines.
- Meetings and workshops to discuss on practical ways to implement the guidelines.
- Baseline on the use of the partnership guidelines by AIN members.

Purpose and Benefits of the AIN Partnership Guidelines

The aim of this brochure is to show how the guidelines and the principles behind them have helped INGOs and their NGO partners to be more effective in their work. By building strong partnerships based on mutual trust and by building the capacity and good governance of NGO partners, INGO & NGOs are better able to address the needs of marginalised people. More information and case studies are available on the AIN website: www.ain.org.np.



The guidelines apply to both INGOs and NGOs equally and each INGO-NGO partnership decides the steps and speed with which the partners can move towards achieving the standards set out in the guidelines.

The purpose of the guidelines is to state explicitly the standard of partnership which AIN seeks to work towards with its NGO partners, so as to strengthen the NGO sector's contribution to Nepal's development. The guidelines seek to improve governance and management, and thereby enhance the capacity of the INGOs and NGOs to reduce poverty and increase equity and inclusion.

Progress on Implementing the AIN Partnership Guidelines

In a recent survey of AIN members, 54 (75%) of the INGOs contacted, from a total of 72 which responded all said that they had knowledge of the guidelines. Many stated the AIN guidelines have already assisted them in developing their own guidelines, and 40 INGOs have developed their own tools in line with AIN's guidelines.

A number of the AIN members have incorporated the guidelines within their NGO Good Governance trainings/workshops and some have included them as one of the clauses in their partnership agreements. Others have mentioned that they have disseminated the guidelines to NGO partners who in turn are cascading the guidelines down to their beneficiaries, partner organizations and other organizations. INGOs are also using the guidelines as a means of assessment during the partnership renewal process and also when entering new partnerships.

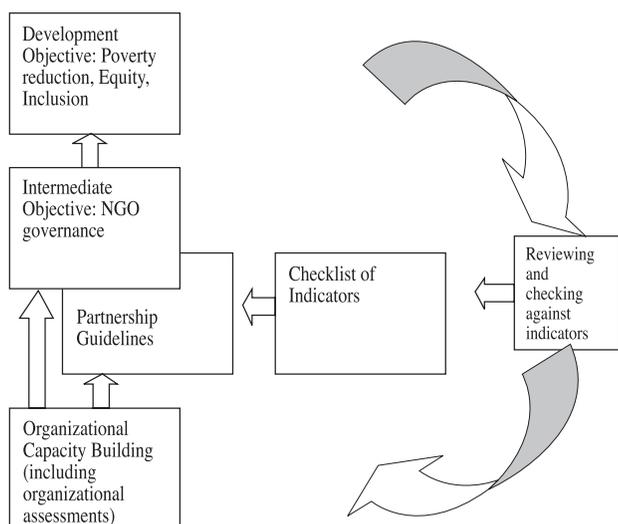
Many INGOs and NGOs are now practicing and promoting social audits and public audits which have increased accountability and transparency towards beneficiaries and other stakeholders.

Relating the Guidelines to the End Objectives and to Organizational Capacity Building

A review of a range of definitions of organizational capacity building reveals some common features or dimensions of capacity building, which include: it is an ongoing process; it aims

to increase the ability of an organization to carry out its functions and achieve its objectives; and it aims to increase the ability of an organization to learn and solve problems, and therefore enable the organisation to deal with the issues of today and also to remain relevant in the future.

If INGOs and partner NGOs are to effectively apply the guidelines and achieve good governance and more effective poverty reduction programs then organizational capacity building is essential. Just following the guidelines and checklist may result in compliance, but not in enhancing real organizational capacity and the attainment of good governance resulting in effective programming. To ensure effective programming takes place, it should be a cyclical process and one that encourages and supports reflection and regular review.



How partnership principles helped

The following case studies indicate how INGO and NGO have used the principles and basic requirements of the AIN Partnership Guidelines.

Grounded in Civil Society

Participation of Partners in Planning Process – MS Nepal

The Policy Advisory Council (PAC) of MS Nepal is an example of NGO partners participating in the policy development of the program of their partner INGO. It provided an opportunity for the NGO partners to be

directly and actively involved in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs. MS Nepal's practice of having a PAC reflects the principle of Grounded in Civil Society that AIN has recommended in its Partnership Guidelines.

MS-Nepal is a Danish INGO working to support sustainable development efforts in Africa, Asia and Central America. The objective of the PAC is to establish a mechanism in the country of operation with the aim of facilitating dialogue among partners, development workers, the civil society and MS. On the basis of the PAC dialogue, ideas are developed and policy advice is provided as the framework within which the general MS policies at the country/regional level are implemented. The main characteristic of the PAC is to be a consultative body. The PAC discusses and provides advice on issues related to the program policies and other general policy guidelines.

The PAC has a diverse composition - it has an equal representation of men and women, a range of types of partners which reflects the composition of the MS Nepal programs their wide range of geographic locations. The PAC members are 3 (three) elected partners representatives, 3 (three) elected DW (Development Worker) representatives and 3 (three) independent advisors. In addition substitutes for each partner member and for each DW are elected. The independent national advisors are appointed by the Country Director in consultation with the staff and the PAC. Those who are eligible for PAC election are; partner representatives who carry a mandate from their organization and long term Development Workers who hold a contract with MS at the time of the election. The PAC year begins after the MS Nepal Annual Meeting and ends with the following Annual Meeting, normally in February every year. The Country Director serves as the secretary of the PAC and is responsible for a thorough introduction to MS Nepal program for new members. The position of Chairperson and Vice Chairperson can be held by either a partner organization representative or an independent member. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson serve for a two year period and may run for re-election once. The Chairperson and Vice Chairperson are elected on alternate years.

The Chairpersons from each MS Country Program attend the Global Policy Advisory Council (GPAC) meeting which is held in MS Denmark every year and they will discuss the Global MS programs and planning. MS Nepal has already incorporated the AIN Partnership Guidelines into its Partnership Agreement Document with NGO partnerships, and initiated orientation on the AIN Guidelines with all its partners.

Accountability

Organization Development Program to Strengthen NGO's Governance- Experience of Save the Children US

The AIN partnership guidelines set the basic organizational standards for AIN members and their partner NGOs to ensure that their work is managed transparently, and organizations are themselves responsible for developing internal guidelines for implementing the standards defined by AIN. As a member of AIN, Save the Children USA (SC) has been taking a number of steps to implement the principles outlined in the AIN partnership guidelines. To set organizational standards in partnership work, to make partnership work transparent and also improve the institutional governance of partners, SC has developed and is abiding by internal partnership guidelines when



entering into the new partnerships and working with continuing partners by developing a timeframe for them to come into compliance with these guidelines. An orientation on the guidelines has also been conducted for SC staff and partners in Kathmandu and around Nepal. SC's partnership guidelines uphold the organization's values of accountability and transparency, which are supported by a team of senior SC staff responsible for ensuring their implementation. These partnership

compliance guidelines serve as a capacity building tool to help improve the governance and management systems within partner organizations, and are implemented by mutual agreement. These guidelines have also been widely shared among partners, stakeholders and AIN members as a reference to develop similar guidelines for their own use, which have helped SC's partnerships achieve greater transparency and sustainability.

SC has been actively working to implement the AIN Partnership Guidelines in governance, transparency and organizational development through a number of approaches.

To increase transparency and participation in agencies partnership work, SC trained and supported 35 partners to conduct social audits in 2007. Partners found the social audit process to be an inspiring tool for translating the principles of the AIN guidelines into practice and rewarding in terms of building trust and ownership among project participants and stakeholders. The social audit training guidelines have been widely disseminated among AIN members and bi-lateral agencies.

Since 2003, SC has been implementing an NGO strengthening project call SANDEEP, which directly supports the objectives of the AIN partnership guidelines. SANDEEP supports partners to strengthen their institutional capacity by improving their governance, financial and operational management systems, which are the main areas the AIN guidelines seek to impact. In 2007, SC trained 253 NGO staff and board members on NGO governance in 40 NGOs on the separation of board-management roles, the construction of board development plans, help form sub-committees on the executive board and prepared strategic plans with a clear vision, mission, goals and objectives.

Accurate Financial Accounting and Transparent Reporting and Policies

A way to resolve disputes in an organization.

Real change requires a new level of thinking that is powerful enough to construct a new reality. Nepal Chelibeti Disabled Women Society (NCDWS) is an NGO working especially with disabled women and their families in Sunsari

District. The main activity of the organization is to collect savings and provide small loans to the members. At the start 70 members were involved in that program. After two years, more than 50 % of members had left the organization due to internal conflict arising from a lack of transparency on the part of the executive committee.

At this point the organization came into contact with UMN (United Mission to Nepal) and formed a partnership for their capacity building. During the Participatory Organization Assessment and preparation of an action plan, the members asked UMN to help address the transparency and governance issues first. UMN were faced with many challenges and NCDWS started working on organizational capacity building and they received a significant amount of training and had received many visits. The capacity building programme helped them to develop a good document management system and instruction on how to write reports on all their events - this second skill ultimately enabled them to publish an annual report. The Executive Committee member's capacity was enhanced to keep accounts systematically and manage documents in an appropriate and effective way. As a result for the first time it became possible to develop the saving and credit guidelines in a more participatory way. Transparency between the members has increased and the organization is receiving positive feedback from stakeholders and their beneficiaries. This is a good example of a system of internal and external transparency being important in minimizing disputes within the organization.

Transparency

Social Audit a tool for Ownership for a Project to be successful

Ownership by the local community of any program and the work undertaken by the implementing organization is an important element. UPCA (Under Privileged Children Association) established in 1993 B.S is a Non-Governmental Organization, social development organization working with poor and marginalized children and women. UPCA is dedicated to the protection and promotion of Child Rights and believes in good governance practices as an essential part of running their organization in today's



changing context. Transparency (one of the AIN Partnership Guideline principles) helps to establish a mechanism in an organization to enable concerned stakeholders to access information. UPCA undertakes social audits to maintain transparency within the organization and to ensure there is ownership within the community towards the work of the organization. UPCA gives credit to Action Aid Nepal in supporting them in initiating the process of social audit. Social audits have helped their organization's members minimize the local community's criticism towards the organization. The audit process has also helped to build trust between the organization and community people. The social audit process is used also as a tool to provide an opportunity to the local community for raising their main issues. This process has led to the organisation considering the local community feedback and then considering how they can bring about change for the future. The social audit process also helped in the implementation of the program during the conflict situation and helped the community to develop the feeling of ownership towards the final outcomes.

Guidelines on Social Audit used by different INGOs and Government Organization are posted on AIN website: www.ain.org.np.

Participation of the Community

Building up Trust in the Partnership

Building trust within the organisation, the community and amongst stakeholders helps to enhance the capacity of the organization. It increases the feeling of ownership of the organizations members and staff members and helps to mobilise resources.



Banke UNESCO Club in Nepalgunj is a non-governmental organization established in 1990 and it works at a District and community level. The organization has experience that in order to maintain accountability in the organization program planning needs to be community based and focussed. The program is planned and implemented through a participatory approach with the Board members, staff, donors, community people, beneficiaries and other stakeholders. To achieve a successful program a community management team is formed of; community volunteers, members of staff, Board members and other stakeholders – this ensures that the organization's is practicing good governance. This has helped the organization to build trust with the community and increase the feeling of ownership of the community people towards the organization and the final outcomes of the programs.

The organization conducts social audits to maintain transparency and develop trust of the organization. The Result Oriented Leadership Development Program (ROLDP) of ADRA and SANDEEP program of Save the Children US helped the organization to strengthen the leadership and management capacity of the organization. This approach helped to develop administration policies, a strategy plan, a financial policy, other program guidelines and skills to mobilize the existing resources. The organizational development program also helped them to strengthen their capacity to raise fund and mobilize resources at a local level. The organization clearly explains that they could feel the differences before and after the capacity building program and they have been successful in increasing the funds required for the program in the organization.

AIN has recommended participation of the community as one of the basic partnering requirements in the Partnership Guidelines. Maintaining this approach will

help to promote the need for marginalized and disadvantage people to participate actively and directly in the planning, implementation and evaluation of the programs.

How have the AIN partnership guidelines helped

Partnership Guidelines Help to Improve Partnership Relations-Aperion

The AIN Partnership Guidelines helped the organization to improve its relation with partners, when the organization faced challenges with its partners in maintaining their relationships. In the light of the AIN guidelines Aperion amended its guidelines and then shared the revised version with their members of staff, partner NGOs and with their HQ members of staff. The process of amendment of their own partnership documents helped a lot in the organization's internal development. The organization fully reviewed their internal procedures and their way of working and it took them a while to get used to the new system. Whilst the organization still faces many challenges in sharing the guidelines with their established partners they have started to use the guidelines for the assessment of new potential partnerships.

Aperion is committed to facilitate their partner NGOs so that they can meet the guidelines standards. Aperion wants to make organization development one of the integral parts of each project and to work more closely with organizations who are working in the area of organization development of NGOs.

Organization Development Program to Strengthen the Capacity of Partners-UMN

The AIN Partnership Guidelines helped UMN to develop its own formal partnership guidelines and to change its primary way of working from direct implementation to one of working in a partnership approach. It helped them to guide the partnering process and how it developed its relationships with implementing partners. The AIN guidelines helped UMN to reflect back on its own partnership processes and to assess the level of compliance. It is good to note that UMN has a high degree of

compliance with the AIN guidelines. The AIN guidelines have been shared with all UMN programme staff members. The guidelines have also been disseminated to its partners so that there is a growing awareness in order that fair and transparent partner relations are established.

It is important to appreciate that in order for these guidelines to be fulfilled, considerable resources, both financial and otherwise, must be devoted to build the many facets of the organisational capacity of the implementing partner. In light of this, UMN has committed resources for organisational development to each of its partners in all of its working areas. Each partner goes through an initial organisational assessment, then a phase-wise personalised and incremental organisational development programme. UMN is committed to building both the organisational and technical capacities of its implementing partners believing that to do so greatly enhance long-term sustainability of their programs in Nepal.

Partnership Guideline to Develop Strategic Planning- CCS Italy

The AIN recommended partnership guidelines helped CCS Italy in realizing the importance of having adequate support in the organization's (INGO) structure to work with partners. It helped them to understand that partnering is not only about a common agreed and jointly established framework of rules but it is also about human resources within the INGOs. For this reason, it is important, even in small organizations like CCS Italy, to have people who will follow the principles and basic requirements contained within the AIN Partnership Guidelines.

Preparing and implementing the Partnership Guidelines is about formally recording the working modality you have with partner organization and it's something you do together with the partners. The effort which is required by the INGO is to implement the principles and basic requirements of the AIN Partnership Guidelines. From the partner's perspective, their capacities, skills and ability in delivery should be kept in mind while following the guidelines. Partnership must be highly visible and must be something that really makes good sense to both parties and not seen as a further layer of bureaucracy imposed upon the partners.

CCS Italy is currently undertaking a process which is aimed at putting together their strategic plan and a plan for organization development. They are also at the same time launching the challenges to their partners for setting the new working modality with a multi year Organization Development (OD) plan for each partner.

Using Partnership Guidelines to Improve Good Governance within an INGO-VSO

VSO Nepal is the country programme of Voluntary Service Overseas. The working module of VSO is to place experienced and skilled volunteers with NGO partner organisations to assist in organisational development, provide management advice and institutionalise good governance. Other placement works include; education, and HIV/AIDS.

VSO has been working on building the capacity of their NGO partners and promoting good governance for many years. VSO has used the guidelines to show that partners need to be committed to the principles of good governance and that NGOs can use the guidelines to highlight improvements needed in the INGO as well as within their own organisation. This approach makes the partnerships which are formed more equal. VSO have asked their partners to assess them against the guidelines by giving VSO a score against certain criteria and then suggesting ways in which they may need to change. VSO have published the results of this exercise in its annual report and has made a number of changes to its practices as a result.

Coordination with NGO networks, and bi-lateral donors to promote the principles and basic requirements of AIN Partnership Guidelines:

AIN is working alongside NGO networks to develop a common understanding of the AIN Partnership Guidelines, and an example of this is the NFN's Institutional Good Governance Guidelines (IGGP). Both the guidelines have been useful in helping to address issues of good governance in the development sector. At the national and regional workshops the concepts, process of implementation, best practices and challenges to implement the Partnership Guidelines and the Institutional Good Governance Guidelines have been discussed in different forums.

Regional Workshops- To develop a common understanding of the AIN Partnership Guidelines

The Workshops were organized at Biratnagar and Nepalgunj on October and November 2007 to develop a common understanding of the AIN recommended Partnership Guidelines. A total of sixty regional INGOs staff members from 25 NGOs working in the Western



and Eastern Regions participated in the workshops. The workshops covered discussion on the general understanding of good governance, INGO, and NGO network's good governance policies and the AIN recommended partnership guidelines. In the workshop issues, concerns, and current practices on INGO good governance and best practices were discussed. The workshop highlighted the need to enhance the capacity of INGO's to enable them to meet the principals and basic requirements of the AIN Partnership Guidelines

The contents of the AIN Partnership Guidelines were considered to be the key guiding principles for INGO-NGO partnerships. Application of the approach suggested would help INGOs to develop their own partnership guidelines and ultimately contribute to the INGO good governance. The characteristics of INGO good governance were described as: an institutional process that builds on the rule of law; accountability; openness and effective leadership; and the space which encourages equal and meaningful participation.

Presenting NFN's (NGO Federation of Nepal) Institutional Good Governance Policy, the role of INGOs was highlighted as one of supporting and mentoring agencies in the area of social development work. INGOs work in

coordination with NGOs and other stakeholders to implement the principles of the AIN's partnership guidelines. This should lead to changes in attitudes and behaviours as well as sharing equal power for stronger partnership.

The basic features of NGO good governance have been featured in both the AIN's Partnership Guidelines and NFN's institutional good governance policy. These include principles of: accountability, transparency, participation, effectiveness, performance orientated, equity, inclusion, and policies that are grounded in civil society. Issues which were discussed in the workshop as the challenges faced in implementing both the Partnership Guidelines and Institutional Good Governance policy were: the categorization of NGOs, coordination, common understanding, capacity building of NGOs and commitments for long term partnership. NGO networks were found to be conscious of promoting and ensuring good governance among their member organizations and were proactive in formulating the appropriate policies.



There was a common understanding of the nature INGO work and there was acceptance and recognition of their work. It was agreed that there was a positive image of INGO which had been nurtured in the recent past and there were now many opportunities to effectively implement both the AIN Partnership Guidelines and the NFN Institutional Good Governance policy. Suggestions from the participants to enforce the partnership guidelines were: creating space and finding an appropriate niche for regular dialogue between NGO and INGO, regularity in social audits, providing support costs to NGOs and lobbying for one door policy for registration.

Learning from Case Studies

Approach/Tools that helped the I/NGO to implement the principles of the guidelines:

Tools /Approach	Description
Social Audit/Public Audit	Social audit as a process/tool have helped to minimize community people's criticism towards the organization. The audits have helped to build trust of the organization and helped the community to develop the feeling of ownership towards the organization and the final outcomes of the program. It provides an opportunity to the community to raise their issues which have also helped to bring change within the organization as per demands of the community - ultimately making organization more transparent and accountable.
Participatory Approach	The inclusive and participatory approach (rights based) has helped to internalise the issues of accountability and transparency to rights holders. Examples of this approach are including community people on procurement Boards and on the main Executive Board as well as being part of the decision making process. The posting of financial reports on community notice board has also increased participation.
Monitoring	Systematic and close monitoring by INGO's of their partner NGOs is one of the important aspects of strengthening the capacity of the organization. However it needs to be done in such a way that allows the NGO to continue to deliver its normal business.
Relationships	The existence of good a relationship between INGO and their NGO partner and between NGO and their local communities (including other rights holders) helps to maintain the principle of mutual learning and sharing
Membership Criteria	The existence of flexible and open membership criteria for the organization increases the representation of members of the local community and of diverse groups within the organization's structure.
Partnership Requirements	Having a common understanding of the INGOs and donors requirements for of partnership i.e partner selection criteria and process leads to stronger and more effective partnerships.
Organizational Development	Successful use of organizational capacity building tools is required if INGOs and partner NGOs are to effectively apply the guidelines and achieve good governance and more effective poverty reduction programs. This approach will help the organization to develop their strategic direction, and to improve their internal governance and management, and thereby their efficiency, effectiveness and accountability.
Community Demand	Enhancing awareness of the need for a greater ownership by the local community towards the organization and for the community to create a demand to the organization to become transparent will lead to improved good governance.
Leadership	Best leaders use the principles of good governance in all the work their organisation carries out. This approach makes for stronger organizational representation within the civil society.
Partnership Period	Longer term partnerships provide NGO with greater stability. (This approach requires a greater emphasis on a strategic approach with common goals, strong partnership criteria and for a process of monitoring)
Coordination	A greater level of coordination between the INGO, donors and Government Offices to minimize the current level of duplication of resources and requirements for reporting and monitoring.
Advisory Policy Council	Introduction of a Policy Advisory Board to make the organization inclusive, participatory transparent and for the feeling of ownership of the right holders towards the organization to be increased.
Assessment of the organization.	Carry out an assessment of the work of the partners by the funding agencies and by their partners of the funding agencies to increase levels of accountability of the program. (VSO example)

Quotes on NGOs Experiences

At the start of the organization we came into association with NGO/CBO Capacity Building Project funded by DFID and managed by Action Aid Nepal and Plan International which helped the organization to enhance its capacity in the areas of policy advocacy, governance, rights-based approach and project cycle management. Since then the organization has been following the component of good governance in all of its programs.

Krishna Prasad Bhattaraj, Abhiyan Nepal.

When there are professional members on the NGO's Board who have a great deal of experience it becomes easier to run the organization and to follow the principles of transparency, accountability, performance orientated and governance.

Sambhu Adhikari, Chairperson PMC.

During the conflict situation it became difficult to implement the program within the community. Since the cessation of the conflict the organization has started to be more accountable and transparent within the community and then it began to implement the program with the full support of the community. BNMT supported us to develop a strategic plan, systems, and procedures and policies in the organization so that we could become more accountable, transparent and performance orientated.

Yadu Bista, General Secretary

NGO's should be supported during their capacity building of their organization. Most of the donors/INGOs are focused on the program delivery work and do not look for the capacity building of the organization which is an equally important aspect. Capacity building programs of the NGOs are important to develop policies, procedures and systems within the organization.

The local community started to raise questions about the transparency of the organization after that we considered making changes to the way the organization worked and then we could be more transparent and accountable for the community with which we work.

When there are professional members with experience on the Board of an NGO it becomes easier to run the organization and to follow the principles of good governance. INGOs should facilitate NGOs to develop professional Boards and to mobilize the knowledge and the skills of Board members. This is one of the greatest challenges faced by all NGOs.

Sambhu Adhikari, Chairperson PMC (Participatory Mobilization Centre).

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Association of International NGOs in Nepal
http://www.ain.org.np

AIN Recommended INGO-NGO Partnership Guidelines for working in Nepal

We, the INGO (International Non Governmental Organization) community, have shared goal of Poverty Reduction and of Sustainable Development in Nepal. We believe that protection from human rights abuses, physical threats, violence and extreme economic, social and environmental risks, and territorial and sovereignty threats are a necessary preconditions to achieve our goal and to make lasting, positive improvements in the lives of all Nepali people.

We believe that a real strength of the International Non- Governmental Organization (INGO) sector in Nepal is our diversity.
We are encouraged that each agency has its own specific goals, objectives, values, policies and methods of working.

We believe in the purpose of the global NGO movement and its essential diversity.

In this poster, AIN wishes to outline some guiding principles and basic partnering requirements recommended for INGOs working in partnership with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Nepal.

Guiding Principles for INGO-NGO partnership in Nepal:

- **Common Purpose** of our organizations is working for poverty reduction, sustainable development, and protection and promotion of human rights.
- **Commitment to equity and diversity** of people both within our organizations and among those we work with, in terms of age, caste, class, ethnicity, gender and religion.
- **Grounded in civil society** we honestly represent and respect the interests of the members of civil society we work with and they actively participate in the development, implementation and evaluation of our programs.
- **Accountability to stakeholders**, including rights-holders, for the effectiveness and efficiency with which we use the resources we mobilize, and they are able to openly express their rights, choices and concerns.
- **Transparency to stakeholders** about who we are and how we raise and use our resources, maintain records and make decisions that affect all rights holders involved in our work.
- **Performance oriented** to achieve the best results possible based on targets and achievements agreed with those we work for/with and those we mobilize resources from.
- **Mutual learning and sharing** with implementing and funding partners to ensure benefits are maximized for the sustainability of communities and organizations.
- **Longer term partnerships** to assist communities and organizations develop their capabilities to improve the implementation and sustainability of their programs.
- **Coordination between donors, projects and local implementers** to ensure support provided to partners is well-coordinated and used efficiently so that resources are not duplicated, wasted and misdirected.

Basic Partnering Requirements:

- **Legal registration** of our organizations and our partner organizations with the government in order that administrative and financial transactions are in full compliance with all relevant legislation and regulations, including taxation and labor laws.
- **Selection of partners** by our organizations is transparent and based on clear selection criteria.
- **Written contractual agreement** drawn up together by the partners in a language understood by all, which specifies the minimum standards agreed, including the program objectives of the partnership, the agreed indicators, time-bound targets for performance, and the resources to be mobilized.
- **Active Board (executive committee)** which is independent of the management of our organizations, and exercises oversight according to the letter and spirit of each organization's constitution, including holding regular assemblies and elections.
- **Vision, goal and objectives** are publicly established by our organizations and we monitor our performance through clearly defined indicators, measurements and targets.
- **Representation of community diversity** on the board (executive committee) and among the staff of our organizations.
- **Non-partisan, non-party political, non-religious, and non-violent.**
- **Participation of community** in planning, implementation, monitoring, and evaluation of the programs of our organizations.
- **Stakeholder consultations and evaluations** are conducted regularly with key stakeholder to improve the effectiveness and impact of the program.
- **Accurate financial accounting** of our complete financial transactions within the organization and with others.
- **Transparent reporting and policies** concerning the operations of our organizations and the progress of our programs are made available to stakeholders.
- **Human resource management best practices** are applied to ensure personnel are clear on their responsibilities and their rights.

We will seek every opportunity to enter into constructive dialogue with all key stakeholders in the districts, villages and communities where we work. Indeed, we hope that discussion of these stated principles and operating guidelines, especially the internationally defined principles and standards of human rights that underpin them, will contribute to building stronger, more meaningful, and more lasting and more successful partnerships in the best interests of Nepal, its people and its future development.

AIN, (Association of International NGOs in Nepal) is an association of more than 70 International NGOs working in Nepal.

