

# PARTNERSHIP

## Typologies of Relationships

### Introduction

CRS enters into relationships with many organizations and institutions. **Some of these relationships are partnerships and some are not**, depending on the nature of the relationship.

In all of our relationships CRS approaches the organizations with which we work in the context of our guiding principles and values. Our partnerships are additionally based on mutual commitment and complementary purposes and values. This typology of relationships intends to help CRS staff reflect on the nature of relationships and how to relate to organizations accordingly.

The recommended terminology reflects the nature, not the quality, of the interaction. The relationship typology proposed here is not a strict categorization – it aims to help us think about how we live out these relationships. We may be engaged in different types of relationships over time or situations with the same organizations. This typology is intended to improve on the earlier typology, in particular to replace the existing normative terminology in existing guidance and tools (e.g. ProPack II). This typology does not intend to introduce hard and fast definitions for different types and nor it is a tool for categorizing partners. The intention of this typology is to help distinguish between partnerships and relationships and describe different types of partnerships. It is important to note that this typology is not a legal document and does not define “partner” and “partnership” in a legal or contractual sense.

### Partnership

CRS defines **partnership** as "a relationship based on mutual commitment and complementary purpose and values that is often supported by shared resources and which results in positive change and increased social justice." If CRS is in a relationship with another organization that fits within the partnership definition, then that organization is CRS's partner. CRS establishes, builds, and maintains partnership based on CRS partnership principles<sup>1</sup>. Entering into partnership should be based on agreed-upon shared principles and an understanding of WHY we are doing so: What is the purpose of the partnership? What are the expected benefits and costs for each partner? What are the expected contributions of each partner? This is more than

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<sup>1</sup> <https://global.crs.org/communities/Partnership/Community%20Documents/Forms/byContenttype.aspx>

identifying a win/win proposition; it is about being transparent and intentional about purpose, roles and responsibilities, expectations, costs and benefits.

## Relationships

Relationships with organizations such as donors and vendors are generally not partnerships according to CRS's understanding of the term. The partnership is distinguished from a vendor relationship by how CRS engages with the organization; it includes mutual commitment and complementary purposes and values, whereas a vendor relationship is an exchange of goods or services for payment and normally does not rely on discussions of commitment. Similarly, CRS might be in friendly relationships with a number of organizations in an association, but in partnership with only some, depending on the level of mutual commitment and complementarity.

As shown above, the distinction between “partnership” and “relationship” is based on the nature of the interaction between CRS and the other organization. It does not depend on the type of organization. For example, one university may enter into a long-term partnership with CRS, while another university may enter into a medium term partnership to conduct a research study of interest to both parties. A third university may have a relationship with CRS when it provides a one-time weeklong training. All of these relationships are valuable and useful.

CRS enters into a number of relationships with (among others) Catholic Church organizations, other faith based organizations (FBOs), international and local nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), civil society organizations (CSOs), governments, businesses, trade associations, and universities. Broad categories of partnerships are proposed, which are applicable overseas and in the US, for both current and future organizations. Although only some relationships will be partnerships, when working with any of the above categories of organizations, CRS's partnership principles should always be applied, as these reflect how we relate to other organizations in line with our values.

## Typologies of Partnerships

### Organizational partnerships

- The partnership is long-term and based on complementary organizational identities, which transcend a specific project or program.
- There is a commitment from both partners for mutual growth and learning – we are engaging jointly on a journey.
- There may be mutual capacity strengthening.
- A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), a verbal agreement, or a signed agreement defines the scope and nature of the partnership. Organizational partners might also participate in project implementation, within which a project agreement is signed.

- The partnership might also include joint action or advocacy around shared social justice concerns.

### **Implementing partnerships**

- The partnership is more likely to be short- or medium-term and for a specific purpose, primarily projects or collaboration on joint action and advocacy.
- Often based on a specific project or program or learning alliance.
- Usually, neither organization is the overall leader (legally one organization may be the prime in a consortium, in which case aspects of the partnership will be guided by the project agreement).
- Capacity strengthening, as appropriate, may be a specific objective of the partnership.
- There is a signed project agreement, or contract, that defines the scope and nature of collaboration on the project or program and a verbal or written partnership agreement.

### **Functional partnerships**

- The relationship is typically short-term, for a specific, well-defined and time-bound task or purpose.
- The relationship is often contractual, for specific deliverables, skills, and capacities. The contract defines the scope and nature of the partnership and activities implemented.
- The level of capacity strengthening may vary depending on the respective capacity of partner and CRS, and depending on the specific situation.

### **Cross sector engagement**

A cross sector partnership involves the intentional sharing of goals, responsibilities, effort, resources, and outcomes among governments, businesses, universities, foundations, research institutes and NGOs to achieve programming impact, innovation, scale, and sustainability that no one organization could achieve on its own. Cross sector engagement may be with Organizational, Implementing, or Functional partners.

## **Conclusion**

According to the CRS definition, all partnerships are relationships, but not all relationships are partnerships. CRS may have different types of partnerships with an organization over time. Strong relationships with vendors and donors or other institutions and successful partnerships with NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, government, universities and other partners aim for sustainable development and social justice in countries where we work in together.