

# Steering Document for SCS' global CSO-programme: Partner portfolio

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This document outlines criteria and provides guidance for partner scoping and selection at country and regional level with the aim of having a well-balanced, comprehensive and relevant mix of partner organisations within each programme as well as at global level. The criteria aim to ensure that the composition of the partner portfolio is relevant to achieve the programme goal of a strong civil society that demands and support the fulfilment of children's rights. Furthermore, the criteria ensure fulfillment of requirements for programme quality perspectives and sustainability of the programme outcomes.

It does not provide methods or approaches – for these please refer to “CSO partnerships: Principles, approaches and modalities” in the global application (page 15).

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## 1. Eligible partners

Only civil society actors are eligible partners in this programme. Within the programme, we refer to the below actors. It is recommended that each programme achieves a mix of these into their portfolio:

- **Civil Society Organisation** – national, registered and independent civil society organisations. Within national legislation, these may be referred to as non-governmental organisations, foundations, non-profit organisations etc. These are expected to make out the bulk of the partner portfolio.
- **Network/coalition/alliance** – National, regional or international structures, where civil society organisations and actors collaborate around common working areas or strategies to enhance the fulfilment of child rights.
- **Child- or youth led organisation or initiative** – These may be led by children themselves, or alternatively, organisations with a significant focus on supporting child-led initiatives or high level of children's participation integrated into decision-making and operational processes.
- **Technical partner** – Civil society organisations with specific technical expertise who can support other partners within the programme to develop their capacity within crucial programme components.
- **Informal actors** – Primarily non-registered child-led organisations, networks or movements, including online mobilisation of children and youth.

## 2. Criteria for selection of individual partner organisations

All partners that enter into the programme need to fulfil the following criteria:

1. In general, the programme aims to partner with **change-makers**, not service-deliverers.
2. The civil society organisation applies a human rights-based approach to programming and

3. The civil society organisation is a **child- or child rights focus** or commitment to work for children's rights within their area of expertise (women, indigenous, environment, taxation etc.).
4. The civil society organisation's **voice and legitimacy** is more important than size, scale and operational systems. The civil society organisation has legitimacy, demonstrated for example through a strong constituency, representation of their target group, relevant expertise, contextual knowledge, community acceptance, ability to represent the views of children and that their initiatives are well anchored in the reality of children and their communities.
5. The civil society organisation is or has the potential and commitment to become, a **strategic child rights actor** in the long-term perspective with **capacity to advocate** for child rights.
6. The civil society organisation has a commitment to **dedicated efforts** within organisational capacity development (OCD)
  - The partner demonstrates **willingness to engage** in a long-term, mutually beneficial partnership that evolves over time. The modality, scope of collaboration and funding levels may not be constant over time.

### 3. Considerations for partner portfolio composition

The final partner portfolio composition should enable synergies and wide representation, and create pre-conditions for Save the Children to deliver on the programme outcomes at country, regional and global level. The partner portfolio composition must ensure that the following considerations are balanced across each region (if not in each programme).

- **Integration of the five programme quality perspectives**

The selection of the partner portfolio is one of the venues for integrating competence on the five mandatory programme quality perspectives into the programme.

The application of a rights-based approach includes working for gender equality and addressing inequality and discrimination, thus covering three of the five programme quality perspectives. In order to significantly increase knowledge and integration of gender equality, and to ensure that we move from being gender sensitive towards gender transformative programming, SCS strongly recommends the inclusion of a technical partner on gender within all programmes.

Gender equality organisations are organisations with an organizational mission and/or vision explicitly focusing on the advancement of gender equality and the rights of women and girls. A document with definitions relating to gender equality is part of the instructions package. This document contains a more comprehensive definition of different types of gender equality organisations.

Environment and climate change, can both be integrated into programming or a result in itself. Partnering with a child- or adult-led climate and environmental expert organization can speed up the process of integrating climate and environment and/or to include it as a result. The assumption is that environment and climate change will be high on the agenda for child-led organisations and networks, and likely to lead development of programmes and approaches in the coming years.

Climate and environmental CSO partners may be child-led and work on topics including but not limited to: climate and environmental justice, awareness and campaigning, environmental education, environmental rights and policy, national or regional level research and citizen science, community disaster risk reduction and climate change adaptation. Crucially, they need to have a strong understanding of the impacts from climate change and environmental hazards on children and their communities in the region, country or a specific area of the country."

To ensure a conflict sensitive approach in the programme the partner portfolio composition should be diverse and inclusive, taking into account potential tensions between different groups in society based on for instance; gender, age, ethnicity, religion and political views.

- **Proportion of partnership modalities**

Within the global programme, SCS will gradually increase the proportion of partners with programme or core support, moving away from project-based support.

During the programme period, it will be expected that SCS offices gradually move away from project-based support towards programme and core support, since programme outcomes are more likely to be sustained when local leadership and ownership is increased.

Programme support is also part of the trajectory towards core support, and intentionally bridging the gap between the two modalities.

Through this gradual shift, from project to programme and core support, we aim for the modalities to be divided as follows in year 3:

1. Project support: A maximum of 30% of partners will receive project support.
2. Programme support: An estimated 40% of partners will receive programme support.
3. Core support: It is mandatory that within each region, a minimum of 1/3 (one third) of the partners are engaged through core support.

In order to achieve the goal of 1/3 of partners engaged through core support, it is important to start this work when the programme starts and SCS recommends the COs to plan for how to reach this goal gradually. For informal actors, other types of support should be explored outside of the three modalities. This can be through support channelled through another CSO, or through the setting up of a basket fund or small grants fund, with clear requirements for how to obtain funding.