

**COMPLEMENTARY CAPACITY STRENGTHENING OF NATIONAL RESPONDERS IN UGANDA**

**(December 2018)**

Contents

[**1.** **Purpose** 3](#_Toc532217539)

[**2.** **Background** 3](#_Toc532217540)

[**3.** **Rationale** 4](#_Toc532217541)

[A. High Commissioner’s Dialogue 5](#_Toc532217542)

[B. World Humanitarian Summit 2016 5](#_Toc532217543)

[C. The Grand Bargain 5](#_Toc532217544)

[D. Uganda workshop on capacity strengthening of national responders (Nov 2018) 6](#_Toc532217545)

[**4.** **Sustainable Partnerships: Implementing Through National responders** 6](#_Toc532217546)

[A. Partnering with local governments 7](#_Toc532217547)

[B. Partnering with local NGOs 8](#_Toc532217548)

[C. Build On refugee and Host Community capabilities: Partnering with CBOs 8](#_Toc532217549)

[**5.** **Conclusion** 11](#_Toc532217550)

[**Annex 1: Partnership Guidelines: The PECA Approach** 12](#_Toc532217551)

[1. Twinning Guidelines 12](#_Toc532217552)

[2. Identification and assessment capacity building gap analysis (expertise, project management, financial management and procurement, skills and personnel) 13](#_Toc532217553)

[3. Programme Design and Implementation Arrangements 14](#_Toc532217554)

[4. Monitoring of Progress and Feedback from Partners 14](#_Toc532217555)

[5. Time-Frame 15](#_Toc532217556)

[6. Role of UNHCR 15](#_Toc532217557)

[7. Role of the National NGO twinning Partner 15](#_Toc532217558)

[8. Role of the International NGO twining Partner 15](#_Toc532217559)

[**Annex 2: DRC Capacity Assessment tool** 17](#_Toc532217560)

# **Purpose**

The purpose of these guidelines is to elaborate UNHCR approaches to complementary capacity strengthening of national responders in Uganda.

UNHCR partnerships and collaboration with Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) and Community‐Based Organizations (CBOs) are vitally important, and increasingly so with National NGOs (NNGOs) to effectively assist refugees and host communities.

UNHCR in 2017 issued public Calls for Expression of Interest for 2018-2019 for Partnership. This led to over 142 NGOs responding to the call with Concept Notes of which 39 were National NGOs that responded. After conclusion of the validation and review process some 5 National NGOs were further identified by UNHCR and OPM based on their performance in the evaluation process and already active involvement in the refugee response to be intertwined with an International NGO through an approach locally known as “twinning” in Uganda for capacity strengthening and support in various area and fields.

The Ugandan refugee policy provides a uniquely supportive environment for empowering refugee communities. The government is well established in pursuing a comprehensive approach to refugees and is applying many of the principles set out in Annex I of the New York Declaration for Refugees and Migrants.

# **Background**

UNHCR Uganda’s vision as articulated in the 2016-2020 Protection and Solutions Strategy and Multi-year Multi Partner strategy is to ensure that, through Uganda’s Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) approach, refugees are protected by the Government, live in safety and dignity with host communities, and progressively attain lasting solutions. The aim is to transition emergency response into sustainable solutions and government-led actions in refugee-hosting districts.

CRRF in Uganda will continue to form the over-arching policy and strategic coordination guiding all aspects of the refugee response, which fall under respective pillars of the CRRF. The CRR Framework is aiming to help direct the attention of key stakeholders and puts emphasis on sustainable innovative approaches to refugee protection and assistance, particularly for resilience and self-reliance of refugees and host communities, inclusion of refugees into social service delivery and inclusion in the national development plans. With support from UNHCR, CRRF in Uganda is led by the Government, who assumes full leadership of the process, through heading the CRRF Steering Group and the CRRF Secretariat. The roadmap which guides the implementation of CRRF in Uganda 2018-2020 was adopted in January 2018. The humanitarian refugee response in Uganda will continue to be led and coordinated by the Government of Uganda, represented by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM, Department of Refugees) and UNHCR, with broad participation of UN and NGO partners, consistent with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM). This coordination arrangement is geared towards achieving an effective and integrated protection response, involving members of the refugee and host communities, Government, UN agencies, national and international NGOs.

# **Rationale**

UNHCR Uganda aims to improve efforts and design and implement programmes targeted at refugees and hosting communities, and at refugee women and refugee children and the most vulnerable in particular. As shown during the recent refugee crises in Uganda, which currently hosts 1.1 million refugees and asylum seekers), national and local NGOs played an important role in the emergency refugee response. Partnerships established between international and national actors proved to be an effective model in addressing the needs of communities affected by the refugee situation. National responders are often the first ones that access and provide essential assistance to refugees, owing to their understanding of local languages and culture, access to areas, trusted relationship with communities and knowledge of regional dynamics. Also, local NGOs, aware of local realities and needs, have a crucial role to play in moving from relief to development, and in all aspects of promoting sustainable development in Uganda.

Additionally, UNHCR’s primary role is to support host governments to protect and assist refugees and other persons of concern. Consequently, before developing parallel arrangements, UNHCR must always consider the capacities of existing national, regional and local systems to meet the needs of persons of concern (e.g., national education and health systems). If an additional intervention by UNHCR and/or its partners is required, it should be implemented by strengthening existing mechanisms wherever possible. As a result, capacity strengthening of the Government of Uganda and its different structures at central and local levels cannot be overlooked and should be prioritise whenever possible, especially after the emergency phase.

UNHCR recognises the need to undertake joint UNHCR-National Responders training in all areas, to establish improved mechanisms for dialogue, particularly with government agencies and local NGOs as part of the organizational commitment to the Grand Bargain.

As part of this commitment, UNHCR aims to maximize the effective use of resources, achieve greater value for money, support and fund local and national responders in Uganda. Support to the national responders is also aligned to UNHCR’s commitment aimed at reaching an allocation of 25% of its programme resources to local and national responders (including Government Partners) by 2020.

UNHCR, in cooperation with other UN agencies and international NGOs, recognizes the need to assist institutional capacity-building of national responders and strengthen and enhance their response capacity, to enable them to take on and effectively manage initiatives in responding to emergency crises, and conduct their own fund-raising activities towards humanitarian and development programmes.

The UNHCR Representation in Uganda strategy for building the capacity of national NGOs will be achieved through a set of activities defined as Partner, Equip and Coach Approach (PECA) with more experienced NGO Partner organizations and through a phased approach with each phase having its own deliverables and performance targets to show progress in building the capacity.

Partnership with local responders is further being promoted for the complementarity advantages they bring to the response, such as

* NNGOs being geographically, culturally and linguistically closer to the assisted populations and communities
* Having close and longstanding contacts with government and civil society, and persons of concern –refugees/host communities.
* Being more flexible
* Being less costly
* Being present on the ground before and after a crisis – and hence their ability to ensure the sustainability of a project’s intended impact.

## High Commissioner’s Dialogue

Recommendation 6 on capacity strengthening from the High Commissioner’s structured dialogue held in December 2012 between UNHCR, IFRC and NGOs, reiterated that UNHCR cannot meet the needs of its persons of concern alone and it requires strong partnership with the NGO community. UNHCR, the IFRC and NGO partners recognize the need for a more comprehensive, strategic and systematic approach to strengthening capacity for collective response, involving the mutually reinforcing roles and capacities of UNHCR, international and national NGOs. During the dialogue a clear recommendation outcome was that UNHCR will seek to strengthen its institutional strategy for capacity development of national NGOs, on the basis of a trilateral partnership and to build on their respective capacities and roles.

## World Humanitarian Summit 2016

Among the UNHCR Commitments at the World Humanitarian Summit were to empower national and local humanitarian action. UNHCR committed to expand its investment in institutional capacity building of national partners, and to support effective emergency preparedness and response by engaging proactively with first responders at the local level as leaders and equal partners and fostering their participation in the coordination mechanisms. UNHCR committed to minimize the links in the humanitarian funding chain and transfer at least 25 per cent of its programme expenditures to the national first responders by the end of 2020.

Learning from existing initiatives, UNHCR will seek to strengthen its institutional strategy for capacity development of national NGOs, on the basis of a trilateral partnership - UNHCR, International NGOs, and National NGOs, and to build on their respective capacities and roles. UNHCR and the NGO community will develop plans which ensure specific capacity strengthening is built into partner agreements where needed.

## The Grand Bargain

The Grand Bargain was officially launched during the World Humanitarian Summit in May 2016. Governments and agencies endorsed the engagement with local and national responders in a spirit of partnership, with the aim to enforce rather than replace local and national capacities - an outcome of the World Humanitarian Summit (2016). It was also an agreement between more than 30 of the biggest donors and aid providers, which aims to get more means into the hands of people in need.

The Grand Bargain includes a series of changes in the working practices of donors and aid organisations. These changes include gearing up cash programming, greater funding for national and local responders and cutting bureaucracy through harmonised reporting requirements. The Grand Bargain committed donors and aid organizations to providing 25 per cent of global humanitarian funding to local and national responders by 2020, along with more un-earmarked money, and increased multi-year funding to ensure greater predictability and continuity in humanitarian response, among other commitments.

**Grand Bargain Commitments – National and Local Responders**

* Increase and support multi-year investment in the institutional capacities of local and national responders. Incorporate capacity strengthening in partnership agreements.
* Remove or reduce barriers that prevent organizations and donors from partnering with local and national responders.
* Include local and national responders in international coordination mechanisms.
* Achieve by 2020 a global, aggregated target of at least 25 per cent of humanitarian funding to local and national responders as directly as possible.
* Develop a localization marker.
* Make greater use of funding tools which increase and improve assistance delivered by local and national responders.

## Uganda workshop on capacity strengthening of national responders (Nov 2018)

In line with its objective to strengthen national responders’ capacity, UNHCR organized on 21 and 22 November 2018 a workshop on capacity strengthening. Participants at this workshop included OPM, District Local Governments, the Uganda Red Cross, the International Council of Voluntary Agencies (ICVA), the Humanitarian Platform for Local National Organisations in Uganda and National and International NGOs. The objectives of the workshop were to share different initiatives and strategies implemented by different stakeholders aiming at support the Uganda localization Agenda, and to learn further about the UNHCR current Twinning Arrangements and how they can be improved further. This workshop, as well as different meetings that took place prior to it, have been crucial to develop this strategy.

It is important to remark that capacity strengthening of national responders is not a UNHCR commitment but a global commitment to which UNHCR is contributing. UNHCR Uganda recognised therefore the efforts that other organizations have already made in Uganda on this subject, such as OXFAM, through its program “Empowering Local and National Humanitarian Actors”[[1]](#footnote-1), the Danish Refuge Council, whose Capacity Assessment and policy [[2]](#footnote-2) have guided the current UNHCR Twinning arrangements, and Catholic Relief Services, to name just a few of the organizations working on the Uganda Localization Agenda.

# **Sustainable Partnerships: Implementing Through National responders**

Through complementary capacity strengthening with national responders (the Government of Uganda, international NGOs, local/national NGOs, and refugee and host communities), UNHCR will achieve sustainable partnerships, leading to more effective delivery of services to refugees and other persons of concern.



### Partnering with local governments

Historically, UNHCR has worked principally with OPM Department of Refugees in conjunction with some line ministries. This internal transformation requires engagement with the government line ministries, agencies and departments mandated to carry out relevant sectoral responsibilities. UNHCR will align with the Ugandan sectoral policies and strategies by:

* developing working relationships with relevant government ministries, departments and agencies at central and local level;
* engaging in information and knowledge exchange and sharing;
* understanding legal and policy frameworks relevant for refugee response;
* identifying opportunities for joint assessments, planning, implementation and resource mobilisation (for basic infrastructure and social services, job creation, environment protection etc.); and
* providing technical and advisory support at central and local levels (e.g. secondments, joint missions).

UNHCR’s primary role is to support host governments to protect and assist refugees and other persons of concern. UNHCR’s priority programming must be guided by a clear understanding of the organization’s protection mandate. Consequently, before developing parallel arrangements, UNHCR must always consider the capacities of existing national, regional and local systems to meet the needs of persons of concern (e.g., national education and health systems). If an additional intervention by UNHCR is required, it should be implemented by strengthening existing mechanisms wherever possible. This applies even in the emergency phase.

Uganda is by no means a fragile state and government systems and structures are quite strong but often lack the necessary resources to coordinate or implement a given intervention.

UNHCR Uganda should first consider implementation through government entities when feasible, taking a risk-based approach when planning, identifying threats and taking mitigating measures in interventions. The government agency should demonstrate proven capacity to implement and adhere to similar accountability standards as other partners.

### Partnering with local NGOs

Partnerships established between international and national actors have proven to be an effective model in addressing the needs of communities affected by the refugee situation. National responders are often the first ones that access and provide essential assistance to refugees, owing to their understanding of local languages and culture, access to areas, trusted relationship with communities and knowledge of regional dynamics. Also, local NGOs, aware of local realities and needs, have a crucial role to play in moving from relief to development, and in all aspects of promoting sustainable development in Uganda.

UNHCR recognises the need to undertake joint UNHCR-NGO training in all areas, to establish improved mechanisms for dialogue, particularly with local NGOs as part of the organizational commitment to the Grand Bargain. As part of this commitment, UNHCR aims to maximize the effective use of resources, achieve greater value for money, support and fund local and national responders in Uganda. Support to the national responders is also aligned to UNHCR’s commitment aimed at reaching an allocation of 25% of its programme resources to local and national responders (including Government Partners) by 2020.

The UNHCR’s Representation in Uganda strategy for building the capacity of national NGOs will be achieved through a set of activities defined as Partner, Equip and Coach Approach (PECA). More experienced NGO Partner organizations will, through a phased approach, each phase having its own deliverables and performance targets, show progress in building the capacity. There should be an understanding between all parties involved in any twinning arrangement that once the local partner has been sufficiently capacitated, UNHCR funds should be channeled to the local partners rather than to the international organizations. Please refer to the Annex 1 for more information on the PECA Approach.

PECA aims to increase and strengthen the capacity of selected local/national NGOs in Uganda in a consistent, phased and measurable way, in order to provide national partners with opportunities to enhance their management systems and skills, efficiency, credibility and ability to function, within the goals and the mandate of the partners and with the focus on the persons of concern to UNHCR.

### Build On refugee and Host Community capabilities: Partnering with CBOs

All current protection assessments or reports highlight the issue of refugee youth exhibiting anti-social behaviour including alcohol and substance abuse due to the lack of opportunities to engage in productive activity. For youth who are socialized in warring contexts which are characterized by ethnic rifts, emptiness or despondency in asylum become triggers for explosive tensions and do not augur well for the future. Interventions are needed to ensure dignified asylum, promote social cohesion, and improve protection for both refugees and the communities that host them. However, we still do little to provide meaningful opportunity to refugees to make good use of their time. Furthermore, the current focus of humanitarian agencies on life saving needs results in minimal attention to resilience and self-sustaining activity and the existing capabilities of refugees. The result is an ever-increasing level of dependency syndrome in refugee communities. Findings are demonstrating that refugees now require financial incentives to participate in activities that would be to their own benefit.

To reverse this dependency trend and provide opportunities to youth, UNHCR will support/encourage the formation of Community Based Organizations within the settlement and refugee hosting areas by developing Youth-led protection Projects.

Over the last five years, this UNHCR Global Youth Initiative Fund has highlighted time and again – through its unique approach of youth-led protection projects – that when provided with support, training and resources, young people can be creative problem solvers, and are able to design, lead and implement successful projects that benefit, not only themselves, but their entire communities. Working together in groups to develop projects provides a strong basis for young people to share ideas, develop positive relationships and share learning. They also provide a platform to voice their concerns and views on issues that are important to them and move for positive change.

UNHCR Country and Sub Offices will explore the feasibility to allocate funds for youth-led protection projects following a similar methodology as UNHCR global Youth Initiative Funds. Ideally, these projects will replace existing projects run by NGOs such as Child Friendly Spaces, recreational activities in the camp, sensitization and awareness campaigns[[3]](#footnote-3).

#### D. UNHCR Approaches for capacity strengthening of Local Responders

* **Umbrella Agreements: implementing through the formation of consortia and sub-contracts**. UNHCR recognised that the Uganda Government prefers national NGOs to partner as much as possible compared with multi-sector NGO ‘monopolies’, which are almost always international NGOs. At the same time, UNHCR recognises that it does not have the capacity to enter into small partnership agreements, which will increase the number of partnerships that UNHCR needs to manage. As a result, UNHCR will facilitate such process by providing the opportunity for an international NGO to enter into an implementation coalition with national NGOs, thereby tasking the national NGO to sub-implement activities in a settlement or settlements under the oversight of the primary NGO. This partnership arrangement seeks to further increase the expertise of national NGOs and promotes greater opportunities for resource mobilisation. All such sub-contracting arrangements shall be clearly defined and agreed by the coalition parties.

Although the focus of this approach is building expertise of national NGOs, some exceptional cases of regional and international NGO partnerships will be considered if they reduce administrative costs and improve coordination and quality of a given intervention.

* **UNHCR Partner selection Process:** During any UNHCR selection process in Uganda, UNHCR will favourably assess proposals based on capacity building for the national responders and their willingness to twin with local NGOs. This will be proposed as one weighted criteria through the respective Call for Expression of Interest (EoI).

UNHCR Selection and Retention of Partners based on the Implementing Partnership Management Guidance Note No. 1 should be implemented taking into account the affirmative action towards promoting National NGOs. The criteria of local experience, presence and community relations can be included in the CEOI to include NNGOs because they have local knowledge, engage refugees and other persons of concern, gain trust from local communities, and have local presence. Therefore special preference and affirmative action will need to be accorded to National NGOs in order to promote them during the Call for Expression of Interest. There is need to ensure that criteria are included that promote NNGOs as part of the CEOI including possible preferential scoring for NNGOs.

* **Mapping:** Identification of local grass-roots NGOs in the localities of the settlements: There is need to carry out a proper mapping of the NGOs in the localities of the settlements as well as assessment of their capacity. If there are available and capable indigenous NGOs in the field, then indeed efforts must be made to identify and bring them on board, rather than bringing an NGO from another part of the country, although the latter might be unavoidable especially at the initial and midterm stage of the emergency response.
* **Secondment:** NGO plants its expert staff into the recipient local NGO or staff of the recipient local NGO are seconded to work with the international organisation in order to build their capacity in such fields as financial management, project management, sector experts e.g. shelter, WASH or any other particular area of weakness. A substantive review of the secondment needs to take place after the initial period. During the second period, gaps are carefully analysed and remedial actions take place. The secondment itself should not be less than a minimum of 6-12 months.
* **Twinning:** There are currently over 10,500 national NGOs in Uganda, and there is no need to create additional ones. Through a careful review, solid national NGOs can be selected from this consortium and entrusted with implementation of some small scale projects under supervision of an experienced international NGO.
* **Response Grant Facility:** Some agencies have a fund for small projects for national/grassroots NGOs that would enable them to implement a small project and benefit at the same time from some capacity building inputs (training, equipment, furniture etc.) from the international organisation.
* **Coaching:** UNHCR needs to engage in continuous coaching of the national partners including regular visits to partner offices and on-the-job training for certain staff. As a minimum, only established NGOs with existing capacity must be identified for further capacity building. This is to ensure the partner understands what is expected of it and to transfer the same knowledge to their staff and other organisations they sub-contract to.
* **Inclusion of budget for capacity building in the PPAs:** Many partners cited lack of budget for capacity building of their staff. In cases where such a budget exists, it is often too small to enhance staff capacity to the required levels. For those UNHCR partners engaging in twinning arrangements, UNHCR will contribute with limited funds (noting that the localization agenda is not only a commitment of UNHCR but of the international partner) as long as a full capacity assessment and capacity building plan is developed and there is a common understanding that after a given period of time the national responder will take over such activity for the international organization.
* **CBO Funds:** UNHCR Country and Sub Offices will explore the feasibility to allocate funds for Youth-led protection projects following a similar methodology as UNHCR global Youth Initiative Funds. Ideally, these projects will replace existing projects run by NGOs such as Child Friendly Spaces, recreational activities in the camp, sensitization and awareness campaigns, etc.
* **Other approaches:** Other forms of capacity building being practiced by humanitarian organisations in Uganda includes simulations, mentoring, evaluation and organizational learning, transfer of knowledge and skills, sharing manuals, procedures and materials, participatory and inter‐agency assessments and planning, strengthening project and financial management, and building internal control systems.

# **Conclusion**

With this strategy, UNHCR seeks to contribute to strengthening the capacity of national responders and therefore support the Uganda Localization Agenda. UNHCR in Uganda is also committed to UNHCR global commitment of transferring at least 25 per cent of its programme expenditures to national responders by the end of 2020. National responders includes the Government, local NGOs, the Uganda Red Cross and CBOs. UNHCR Uganda recognised the importance of strengthening the capacity of local NGOs, and has therefore developed a number of actions to contribute to such process. Among these actions are the twinning arrangements, the establishment of specific criteria to assess the best fit partner during any partner selection process or the establishment of a small fund for youth-led protection projects.

The Uganda Operation is also committed to its guidance principle for UNHCR programming of supporting host governments and avoid the development of parallel arrangements (either implemented by international or local organizations). As a result, UNHCR’s main priority is the reinforcement of government agencies at central and/or district level. In fact UNHCR, as a United Nations entity can play a bigger role on strengthening government capacity while International NGOs can focus on local NGOs. In this regard, UNHCR plans to partner with different ministries such as Ministry of Local Government and District local Governments, Ministry of Water & Environment, Ministry of Education and Ministry of Health, Office of the Prime Minister and the CRRF Secretariat.

# **Annex 1: Partnership Guidelines: The PECA Approach**

### Twinning Guidelines

* + **Principles of Partnership** should be upheld by all parties (Equality, Transparency, Result‐orientated approach, Responsibility, Complementarity).
  + **Voluntariness**. Any twinning arrangement should be done on a volunteer basis. Both organizations should agree on such arrangement and it should not be imposed by UNHCR or any other party. UNHCR will encourage and support such a twinning arrangement.
  + **Accountability**. The NGO partner receiving funds from UNHCR remains fully responsible and accountable to UNHCR as per PPA enshrined clauses during the twinning approach. UNHCR strongly recommends that both twinned partners sign an MOU, defining the scope of partnership, objectives, inputs, outputs, work plans and measurable deliverables. The MoU will also establish minimum reporting requirements (content and periodicity) as well as guidelines and scheduled disbursement of funds and financial and performance monitoring of use of funds. At all times transfer of funds between PECA partners will be effected through banking institutions.
  + Under the twinning approach, fund management including reporting and accountability shall remain the role of the mentoring partner that will be signing a PPA with UNHCR. Local partners selected for the twinning approach will be required to discuss with the mentoring partner the twinning arrangement including purpose of the scheme.

The local NGO under the twinning arrangement adheres to the UNHCR Code of Conduct and the UN’s commitment to the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA)

* + **Capacity Assessment.** Due diligence assessments of legal status, past experience, financial and internal control systems, together with capacity building needs must be undertaken prior to formalising any twinning arrangement. For those UNHCR partners that do not have a robust assessment tool, UNHCR encourages them to utilize the DRC Implementing Partner Toolbox. The Implementing Partner Toolbox provides formats for identifying and scoring new or existing Implementing Partner organizations in terms of relevance, vetting and capacity (Annex 2).
    - Implementing Partner Relevance Tool: The Partner Relevance assessment is by default done by the UNHCR partner staff alone and not jointly with the partner. The aim of the assessment is to evaluate the overall strategic relevance of partnering with a potential partner.
    - Implementing Partner Vetting Tool: The Partner Vetting tool is a joint assessment tool and must be done together with the partner.
    - Implementing Partner Capacity Tool: The Partner Capacity tool is a joint assessment tool and must be done together with the partner.
  + **Capacity Building Plan.** Partners must fully engage in addressing capacity gaps of the local NGO that will require strengthening. A capacity building plan is therefore required. The partners should design and demonstrate a rigorous monitoring and evaluation of the agreed upon capacity building priorities with the paired partner. Periodic review of progress of capacity building will be defined to inform if the local partner can be a graduated partner capable of meeting international due diligence criteria on its own.

* + **Voice.** Strengthening local responder capacity should not only focus on capacity building but also on providing the voice and power to influence the humanitarian agenda in their country as well as to make the local/national responder more visible to donors, and other humanitarian stakeholders.
  + **Space.** To the extent possible, once the local responder has been capacitated and therefore has graduated, the international organization should provide the necessary space to the local responder to take over and implement such intervention. The implementing partner could continue providing support to the local responder in other areas that both agencies consider important, for instance support on resource mobilization or building their public profile by introducing them to donors, coordination structures and other humanitarian and development stakeholders.
  + **Cost Sharing.** UNHCR recognizes potential added costs that might arise from the twinning arrangement and thus shall complement UNHCR Implementing partner by covering part of such costs. In order for UNHCR to provide such financial support a capacity assessment, a capacity building plan and an exit/hand over strategy should be developed.

### Identification and assessment capacity building gap analysis (expertise, project management, financial management and procurement, skills and personnel)

* + Taking into consideration the voluntarily principle of the twinning approach, the selection of national responders for twinning arrangements should be done by the UNHCR implementing partner. UNHCR, OPM Department of Refugees (OPM DOR) or other relevant stakeholders may recommend certain local responders as potential twinned partners, based on their knowledge of the context and local NGOs in a specific area (for instance local responders participating in the RRP or concept notes submitted to UNHCR). However, any recommendation should be treated as a suggestion and not as a unilateral decision. Such type of recommendation does not replace the vetting process and the capacity assessment of the national responder, which will have to be done by the UNHCR implementing partner.

* + Under the PECA approach, it is recommended that the Uganda Operation will adopt the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Assessment tools (annex 2) to be modified and adopted as assessment methods and tools by INGOs as minimum criteria and requirements. However partners will be allowed to use their own additional assessment criteria as may be required before entering into partnerships or sub granting.
  + UNHCR will aim to solicit services of the Certified Public Accountants in Uganda in order to provide additional quality assurance to the capacity building process.
  + Whereas UNHCR implementing partners will aim to strengthen the twinning partner’s financial and management systems, the implementing partner will also undertake to ensure that UNHCR’s project management, financial, budgetary, procurement and reporting requirements are clearly understood and applied by the twinning partner.

# Programme Design and Implementation Arrangements

* + For a successful partnership and proper management of expectations, both agencies should agree on the **purpose** of this twinning arrangement during the inception of the partnership.
  + Design and implementation should be through a phased manner or **graduation approach** with clearly spelled out and measurable deliverables. Coaching elements from the INGO partner need to be clearly defined, in terms of organizational development as well as development of any sectoral expertise, as per agreed outcomes of the partnership.
  + The INGO partner will guide the National NGO on parameters for proposal submission including budget based on assessed needs, capacity of the National NGO and operational priorities.
  + There will be a clearly defined process for agreeing on the content of the requirements.
  + Implementation arrangements of the agreed activities should be done in a joint Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between PECA partners.
  + Local and National NGOs shall also seek for complementary funding elsewhere.
  + The focus should be area of expertise and limit to 1-2 objectives with selected activities determined jointly.
  + Partners will agree on budget support provided depending on activity selected and have a limit of administrative support costs (not more that 20% of activity requirements).
  + Partners will minimise support to overhead costs like office rent, as these are not sustainable. Some capacity support, however, such as equipment and furniture, could be provided towards the achievement of the project objectives.
  + The programme structure design will need to be aligned to the UNHCR PPA design from the Goal, Objectives, Outputs and Planned Activities agreed in the PPA.
  + As much as possible, procurement under the twinning partner should be limited unless the INGO Partner has established and satisfied itself with assessed procurement capacity.
  + The threshold of financial engagement should be limited during the first year. Such limit should be based on the level of risk identified. During the following year(s), the level of engagement will depend on the progress made in the first 12 months, as well as a careful assessment of partner improved capacity and risks.
  + Both partners need to be present and part of sector coordination working and inter-agency coordination.

# Monitoring of Progress and Feedback from Partners

* + A performance monitoring plan with clear benchmarks to track and measure progress will be established as early as possible in the partnership. A monitoring schedule and sequence should be agreed from the start and clearly indicated in the MOU/Annexes. A monitoring plan needs to be based on risk analysis and assessed capacity needs and priorities.
  + Quarterly appraisals/assessments will be conducted, with documented results and agreed follow up actions.
  + The INGO partner is responsible for initiating monitoring procedures, as well as conducting routine monitoring and coaching activities. The twinning organization should be able to provide feedback as well on the content and quality of the coaching and capacity building activities.
  + A clear checklist of what entails graduation and success of the NNGOs will be further jointly developed by the UNHCR implementing partner and the local responder with the support of UNHCR.

# Time-Frame

* + The Partner, Equip and Coach Approach (PECA) will at a minimum last from 1 year to a maximum of 2-3 years after signing of the MOU, after which period, the twinning partner is expected to graduate. It is anticipated that the process of identification, assessment, and negotiations may take up to a period of 6 months before signing of the MOU.
  + The implementation duration should be benchmarked on the capacity gap analysis and planned activities.
  + Initial duration of activities will be aligned within the PPA timeline and ensure feasible activities that can be implemented. Thus all activities must be terminated within the calendar year, i.e. not later than 31 December.

# Role of UNHCR

* UNHCR will contribute financially and technically to the process of capacity building through the INGO. UNHCR recognizes the fact that capacity building and coaching require additional time from the existing partner staff and will identity ways to contribute for such costs for this additional activity.
* UNHCR will participate in joint periodic review monitoring. If necessary, and if so requested by the INGO partner, UNHCR can be involved to some extent in conduct of the due diligence process.

# Role of the National NGO twinning Partner

* The National NGO has the responsibility to meet its administrative costs. It is assumed that the NGO is an existing and viable organization, operating from its established offices.
* The National NGO has to concretely demonstrate efforts and undertake resource mobilisation of complementary funding to the refugee response.
* The National NGO will abide to the clauses and terms set forth in the MOU with the INGO Partner including accountability and timely reporting obligations towards for both financial and narrative reports.
* The National NGO will report directly to the INGO partner on all operational and administrative issues relating to the twinning approach.

# Role of the International NGO twining Partner

* The INGO partner will sign a Project Partnership Agreement with UNHCR, containing the provisions for PECA.
* All project resources as stipulated in the PPA will be channelled to the main Partner in the approved instalment.
* The INGO will deliver all of its commitments in support of the twinning partner, in terms of the objectives of the PECA partnership.
* The INGO will seek additional resources to complement the PECA initiative.

# **Annex 2: DRC Capacity Assessment tool**

In order for a UNHCR Implementing partner to enter into a twinning arrangement (using UNHCR funds), it is imperative that a thorough assessment is conducted and a **capacity building plan** is developed to ensure that there is complementarity of roles of both organizations and a structured and controlled partnership process. This process will lead, to the extent possible, to the local national responder to implement such intervention by themselves.

For those UNHCR partners that do not have a robust assessment tool, UNHCR encourages to utilize the DRC Implementing Partner Toolbox. The Implementing Partner Toolbox provides formats for identifying and scoring new or existing Implementing Partner organizations in terms of relevance, vetting and capacity.

* **Implementing Partner Relevance Tool:** The Partner Relevance assessment is by default done by the UNHCR partner staff alone and not jointly with partner. The aim of the assessment is to evaluate the overall strategic relevance of partnering with a potential partner.
* **Implementing Partner Vetting Tool:** The Partner Vetting tool is a joint assessment tool and must be done together with the partner.
* **Implementing Partner Capacity Tool**: The Partner Capacity tool is a joint assessment tool and must be done together with the partner.



1. Please refer to OXFAM study “Fresh Analysis of the Uganda humanitarian capacity”, July 2016 which provides an analysis on the Uganda Context and plans for strengthening local/national humanitarian capacities. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. DRC Implementing Partner Policy. Operations Handbook, May 2017. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. UNHCR is currently developing at Headquarter level a new agreement to channel funds to Community based Organizations that will greatly facilitate this type of partnerships. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)