

- **Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC)**

# PARTNERSHIP COMMITMENT POLICY

Version 2.0

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## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this Partnership Commitment Policy is to articulate the guiding principles, objectives, and operational standards that underpin how the **Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC)** initiates, builds, maintains, and exits partnerships. This policy is intended to ensure that all BCDC partnerships are ethical, effective, equitable, and aligned with our organizational values and strategic goals.

BCDC recognizes that partnerships—whether with grassroots community organizations, diaspora networks, government entities, educational institutions, service providers, or international NGOs—are essential to achieving positive, inclusive, and sustainable outcomes for the communities we serve in Australia and Myanmar.

This policy seeks to:

- **Define partnership** in the context of BCDC’s mission, highlighting that we view partnerships not as transactional arrangements but as collaborative, long-term relationships grounded in shared vision, mutual respect, and joint responsibility.
- **Establish clear standards** for partnership development, including due diligence, joint planning, role clarity, transparent communication, and participatory decision-making.
- **Ensure mutual accountability** by fostering mechanisms for ongoing feedback, learning, and reflection, enabling both BCDC and its partners to meet their respective commitments and improve practices over time.
- **Promote equity and inclusion** by elevating the voice and leadership of local actors, ensuring that power imbalances are acknowledged and addressed, and enabling context-specific approaches to partnership design and delivery.
- **Ensure alignment with the ACFID Code of Conduct**, by upholding truthfulness in all communications—ensuring that BCDC’s public materials accurately reflect the nature of our partnerships and properly acknowledge the roles, contributions, and perspectives of our partners. These materials should be developed in collaboration with those they portray.
- **Promote respectful, transparent, and mutually accountable relationships** that support shared planning, open communication, and co-ownership of outcomes. All partnerships should be built on trust, fairness, and shared responsibility for results, and avoid any practices that create or reinforce unequal power dynamics.
- **Support BCDC’s strategic objectives across its diverse areas of work**—including humanitarian response, long-term development, aged care service delivery, diaspora engagement, refugee advocacy, and community empowerment initiatives.

The Partnership Commitment Policy reflects BCDC's core values:

- **Collaboration** – We co-create solutions, recognising that collective effort yields greater impact.
- **Respect** – We value the knowledge, perspectives, and autonomy of our partners.
- **Empowerment** – We prioritise local leadership and capacity strengthening in every partnership.
- **Inclusion** – We ensure that our partnerships uphold the rights and dignity of marginalised groups.
- **Transparency** – We are open about our intentions, processes, expectations, and limitations.

This policy applies to all BCDC partnerships, regardless of size, duration, geographic location, or sector. It is intended to be a living document, reviewed regularly to remain relevant and responsive to evolving best practices, partner feedback, and emerging challenges in the development and humanitarian landscape.

## 2. SCOPE

This Partnership Commitment Policy applies to all partnership relationships that are initiated, formalized, or actively maintained by the Burmese Community Development Collaboration (BCDC). These partnerships span the full spectrum of BCDC's strategic and operational activities, encompassing work in humanitarian response, international development, community-based aged care services, refugee protection and resettlement assistance, and diaspora-led initiatives in both Australia and across international settings, particularly in Myanmar and Thailand.

This policy is binding on the following categories:

- **BCDC Personnel:** All staff members, Board Directors, and volunteers who contribute to the initiation, negotiation, design, implementation, management, monitoring, or closure of partnership arrangements. This includes program officers, executive management, field workers, and governance advisors.
- **Partner Organizations:** Any entity that collaborates with BCDC under a written partnership agreement, memorandum of understanding (MoU), sub-contract, or other formal arrangement. These entities may include but are not limited to:
  - Local civil society organizations (CSOs) in Australia, Myanmar, and Thailand
  - Community-based organizations (CBOs)
  - Faith-based organizations (FBOs)
  - International non-governmental organizations (INGOs)
  - Academic and research institutions
  - Private sector partners and service providers
  - Diaspora networks, coalitions, and informal mutual aid groups
- **Forms of Partnership:** This policy governs all types of partnership modalities, including:
  - **Collaborative program design and delivery** (co-creation of interventions, joint implementation)
  - **Financial resource sharing** (grants, sub-grants, donations, or cost-sharing agreements)
  - **Technical collaboration and capacity strengthening** (training, mentoring, peer learning)
  - **Joint advocacy and public engagement efforts** (coalition building, campaigns, policy influence)
  - **Shared infrastructure and services** (office space, logistics, procurement, technology)

The policy is applicable throughout the entire **partnership lifecycle**, which includes:

- Initial engagement and relationship-building
- Context and capacity assessment
- Risk screening and due diligence
- Co-design and formalisation of agreements
- Joint implementation and performance monitoring
- Periodic review, renewal, or renegotiation
- Transition or respectful closure of the partnership

This policy must be read and applied in conjunction with BCDC's other core governance and programmatic policies, including but not limited to:

- Safeguarding and Protection Policies (including Child Safeguarding and PSEAH)
- Human Resources Management Policy
- Financial Wrongdoing and Anti-Fraud Policy
- Complaint Handling and Whistleblower Policy
- Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) Policy

Together, these documents provide the operational framework necessary to uphold the integrity, accountability, and impact of BCDC's partnerships.

### 3. DEFINITIONS

To ensure clarity and consistency in understanding, the following definitions apply within the context of this policy:

#### **Partner**

A *partner* is any organisation or entity that BCDC collaborates with under a formal or informal agreement to deliver shared objectives. This includes those engaged in project co-implementation, service delivery, advocacy, capacity building, or shared research.

#### **Partnership**

A *partnership* is a collaborative relationship based on mutual respect, shared goals, and reciprocal responsibilities. Unlike contractor relationships, partnerships emphasize co-ownership, long-term engagement, and joint decision-making.

#### **Local Partner**

A *local partner* refers to an organization that is rooted in and operates within the context where a program or activity takes place – particularly community-based organizations in Myanmar, Thailand, or Australian migrant and refugee communities.

#### **Strategic Partner**

A *strategic partner* is an organization or institution that contributes to the long-term vision and capacity of BCDC through advisory, funding, research, or sectoral collaboration.

#### **Partnership Agreement**

A *Partnership Agreement* is a formal document such as a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), contract, or Letter of Agreement (LoA) that defines the scope, roles, responsibilities, and mutual commitments of the partnership.

#### **Due Diligence**

*Due diligence* refers to the process of assessing a potential partner's ethical standing, governance systems, safeguarding measures, financial accountability, and alignment with BCDC's mission and values before entering into a partnership.

## **Reciprocity**

*Reciprocity* in partnership means the mutual exchange of knowledge, resources, and support, ensuring that both BCDC and its partners benefit from the relationship.

## **Exit Strategy**

An *exit strategy* refers to a mutually agreed-upon process for responsibly concluding a partnership while ensuring continuity of support, minimal disruption, and the documentation of lessons learned.

## **4. PRINCIPLES OF PARTNERSHIP**

BCDC is committed to building partnerships that are ethical, inclusive, and grounded in mutual respect. The following core principles guide all of BCDC's partnership engagements:

### **4.1 Mutual Respect and Equity**

BCDC recognizes that all partners bring unique strengths, perspectives, and experiences to the relationship. Partnerships are based on a recognition of equal value and contribution, regardless of size, funding capacity, or geographical location. Power imbalances are acknowledged and actively addressed through transparent dialogue and inclusive processes.

### **4.2 Shared Vision and Goals**

Successful partnerships are built on a shared understanding of the purpose and intended outcomes of collaboration. BCDC works with partners to co-design programs, agree on priorities, and commit to common objectives that reflect the needs and aspirations of the communities we serve.

### **4.3 Accountability and Transparency**

Partnerships must be accountable to one another, to the communities involved, and to relevant donors or regulators. BCDC upholds open communication, financial transparency, and honest reporting practices in all partner relationships.

### **4.4 Cultural Sensitivity and Local Leadership**

BCDC respects and adapts to the cultural, political, and social contexts in which our partners operate. We promote local leadership, support Indigenous and ethnic minority organizations, and prioritize local voices in program design and decision-making.

### **4.5 Safeguarding and Protection**

All partnerships must adhere to BCDC's Safeguarding, Child Protection, and PSEAH policies. BCDC only partners with organisations that demonstrate a clear commitment to the safety and wellbeing of vulnerable populations.

### **4.6 Reciprocity and Learning**

BCDC views partnerships as opportunities for mutual learning and capacity exchange. We commit to two-way knowledge sharing, shared reflection, and joint evaluation processes to strengthen both our own organization and those we work with.

## **4.7 Sustainability and Long-Term Thinking**

Where possible, partnerships are developed with a long-term view, enabling sustainable outcomes, institutional growth, and community resilience. Exit strategies are planned in advance and carried out responsibly.

## **4.8 Non-Discrimination and Inclusion**

Partnerships must reflect a commitment to inclusion and non-discrimination, particularly regarding gender, disability, ethnicity, and sexual orientation. BCDC partners are expected to uphold human rights and respect diversity in all forms.

## 5. PARTNER SELECTION AND DUE DILIGENCE

BCDC recognizes that selecting the right partners is fundamental to achieving program effectiveness, upholding shared values, and meeting our safeguarding and accountability obligations. To this end, BCDC follows a structured and transparent partner selection and due diligence process to assess the capacity, integrity, and alignment of potential partners before entering into formal agreements.

### 5.1 Partner Identification

Potential partners may be identified through a range of channels, including:

- Community consultations or recommendations from trusted local actors;
- Referrals from sectoral networks, coalitions, or established peer organizations;
- Continuation or expansion of previous informal or pilot collaborations;
- Responses to open calls for proposals or expressions of interest.

BCDC gives priority to prospective partners that:

- Demonstrate legitimacy and credibility within the local context and maintain community trust;
- Exhibit a strong alignment with BCDC's values, including transparency, inclusion, social justice, and equity;
- Have a verifiable track record of impact in humanitarian response, development practice, or grassroots community work;
- Operate with a commitment to safeguarding, ethical conduct, and social accountability;
- Are able and willing to comply with shared standards for monitoring, reporting, and risk management.

## 5.2 Due Diligence Process

Before finalizing any partnership, BCDC conducts a comprehensive due diligence assessment. The aim is to evaluate the potential partner's organizational capacity, governance, risk exposure, and ethical practices. Key areas of assessment include:

- **Legal Status and Governance:** Verification of legal registration, governing documents, leadership structure, and organizational legitimacy.
- **Financial Capacity and Integrity:** Review of financial statements, funding history, internal controls, audit reports, and banking information.
- **Safeguarding and Protection:** Existence and implementation of child safeguarding, PSEAH, and broader protection policies and complaint mechanisms.
- **Ethical and Human Rights Record:** History of ethical conduct, human rights compliance, and grievance resolution capacity.
- **AML/CFT Compliance:** Risk screening for anti-money laundering and counter-terrorism financing vulnerabilities, particularly for international transactions.
- **Political and Conflict Risk:** Evaluation of any known political affiliations, risk of influence by armed groups or authorities, or evidence of exclusionary or discriminatory practices.

BCDC's standard **Due Diligence Checklist** (Annexed to this policy) must be completed in full, signed, and reviewed by the designated Partnership Manager, Program Coordinator, or Executive Committee delegate. A risk rating is assigned (Low/Medium/High) and, if necessary, mitigation measures are documented prior to approval.

## 5.3 Conflict of Interest Declaration

All BCDC personnel involved in the assessment, vetting, or decision-making process for partnerships must declare any actual, perceived, or potential conflicts of interest. This includes familial, financial, or political affiliations that may influence objectivity.

In cases where a conflict of interest exists and cannot be effectively mitigated, the staff member or Board Director will be excluded from the review process. All conflict declarations are documented in the organizational Conflict of Interest Register.

## 5.4 Partner Vetting Outcomes

Following the due diligence assessment, a potential partner may receive one of the following outcomes:

- **Fully Approved:** The partner meets all requirements and may proceed to agreement finalisation.
- **Conditionally Approved:** The partner may proceed under specific conditions, such as capacity-building requirements, closer monitoring, or short-term probation.
- **Declined:** The partner does not meet essential eligibility or risk standards. BCDC will provide a clear justification, and the outcome will be documented for reference and audit purposes.

All vetting outcomes are recorded and stored securely. These records support organizational accountability, transparency to donors, and verification in audits and external reviews.

## 6. ESTABLISHING PARTNERSHIPS

Once a partner has successfully completed the due diligence process and been approved for collaboration, BCDC proceeds to formalize the relationship through clear and accountable agreement mechanisms. This stage ensures that both parties understand, accept, and uphold the terms of collaboration.

### 6.1 Types of Agreements

The form of agreement used depends on the nature, scale, and intent of the partnership:

- **Memorandum of Understanding (MoU):** Used for non-financial collaborations or strategic alliances aimed at cooperation, shared advocacy, knowledge exchange, or joint representation without direct transfer of funds.
- **Partnership Agreement:** Applied to programmatic partnerships that involve co-design, co-delivery, or joint resource mobilisation. These may include roles in project implementation, budget management, and shared accountability for outcomes.
- **Subcontract or Service Agreement:** Used when a partner is contracted to deliver specific services or outputs on behalf of BCDC with funding provided. These include clear performance metrics and deliverables.

All agreements must be based on mutually respectful negotiation and must be approved and signed by authorised representatives of each party. The type of agreement selected must be appropriate to the risk, scope, and intended outcomes of the collaboration.

## 6.2 Core Elements of the Agreement

Each formal partnership agreement must contain at least the following elements:

- Clear purpose and joint objectives of the partnership
- Defined roles, responsibilities, and contributions of each party
- Duration of the agreement, including key milestones and review periods
- Financial provisions (if applicable), including disbursement schedules, reporting expectations, and allowable expenditure
- Governance and decision-making arrangements, including how disputes or adjustments will be handled
- Communication protocols between partners and with external stakeholders
- Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) expectations and indicators
- Safeguarding clauses, including child protection and prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse
- Risk assessment responsibilities and mitigation measures
- Dispute resolution procedures and termination conditions
- Signature page with names, titles, and dates

BCDC maintains and periodically updates agreement templates, which must be used unless alternative formats are approved by legal counsel or the Executive Team.

## 6.3 Community Engagement and Consent

As part of its commitment to ethical, inclusive, and rights-based programming, BCDC requires that all partners uphold the following community engagement standards:

- Community members must be consulted during project planning and design, ensuring their voices shape objectives and strategies.
- Informed consent must be obtained from individuals or groups before data collection, participation in activities, or provision of services.
- Local leadership and traditional knowledge should be respected and incorporated into project design and delivery.

Particular attention must be paid to inclusion of marginalised populations, such as women, children, persons with disabilities, LGBTQI+ individuals, ethnic minorities, and displaced or stateless persons. BCDC expects its partners to adopt culturally responsive and participatory methods.

## **6.4 Orientation and Onboarding**

Prior to the commencement of joint activities, all new partners are to receive an orientation package that provides a foundation for collaboration and shared compliance. This includes:

- A copy of the BCDC Partnership Commitment Policy
- Safeguarding policies including Child Protection and PSEAH
- Financial Wrongdoing and Anti-Fraud Policy
- Complaints and Whistleblower mechanisms
- A guide outlining key points of contact within BCDC, escalation pathways, and reporting formats

An introductory meeting (virtual or in-person) is encouraged for each new partnership. The goal of this session is to:

- Establish rapport and shared understanding
- Clarify expectations, timelines, and deliverables
- Discuss risk management and dispute resolution processes
- Ensure the partner is fully informed of BCDC's compliance and safeguarding standards

The orientation is documented and archived as part of the partnership file.

## 7. MANAGING AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS

BCDC is committed to nurturing active, equitable, and long-term partnerships built on mutual trust, transparency, and continuous learning. Partnership management is understood as an ongoing process that requires sustained dialogue, adaptive planning, and shared accountability across the project lifecycle.

### 7.1 Joint Planning and Decision-Making

BCDC encourages inclusive, participatory planning processes to ensure that partners play a meaningful role in shaping:

- Program and project design, including theory of change, goals, and strategies
- Annual work plans, activity schedules, and deliverables
- Budget allocations and resource mobilisation strategies
- Identification of risks, opportunities, and mitigation plans

Co-leadership and joint decision-making mechanisms are especially encouraged in projects led by or benefiting local communities. Where relevant, advisory committees or task forces may be established to formalise shared governance.

### 7.2 Ongoing Communication

Effective communication is central to strong partnerships. BCDC and its partners must:

- Hold regular coordination meetings (monthly, quarterly, or aligned with project phases)
- Use documented communication channels (email, messaging platforms, cloud-based collaboration tools)
- Maintain transparent and timely information exchange on project status, risks, and updates
- Foster respectful communication, using culturally appropriate language and modes

All partnerships must designate at least one focal point from each party to serve as the main liaison. These focal points are responsible for scheduling meetings, circulating key documents, and escalating concerns when necessary.

### **7.3 Financial Oversight and Resource Sharing**

Where financial resources are shared, the following principles must be observed:

- Clear documentation of financial commitments in agreements, including disbursement timelines
- Use of standardised financial reporting templates and periodic review of financial statements
- Joint monitoring of expenditure against budgets and identification of financial risks
- Full compliance with anti-fraud, financial wrongdoing, and audit policies

Partners receiving funds from BCDC must maintain accurate records, provide receipts where required, and cooperate with any financial verification or audit processes.

### **7.4 Capacity Strengthening**

BCDC promotes partnerships that are based on reciprocal learning and capacity development. As part of this approach:

- BCDC offers training, technical assistance, or mentoring on areas such as safeguarding, financial systems, governance, and MEL (Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning)
- Capacity strengthening needs may be identified during due diligence or joint reflection sessions
- Learning resources and tools may be co-developed and disseminated among partners
- BCDC encourages knowledge exchange where both BCDC and partners contribute expertise

This process recognizes and builds upon the strengths and leadership of partners, particularly community-based and local organizations.

### **7.5 Addressing Disputes or Grievances**

In the event of a dispute or grievance between BCDC and a partner:

- An initial informal resolution should be attempted through respectful dialogue and mediation
- If unresolved, the issue may be escalated to a mutually agreed-upon third party (e.g., a mediator, advisory body)
- Serious concerns such as breaches of safeguarding, fraud, or misconduct must be referred directly to BCDC's Executive Committee for formal investigation under the appropriate policy

All disputes, whether resolved informally or formally, must be documented, with outcomes filed securely. Confidentiality, protection from retaliation, and fair treatment of all parties must be ensured throughout the process.

## 8. MONITORING, EVALUATION, AND MUTUAL ACCOUNTABILITY

BCDC is committed to developing and maintaining partnerships that are effective, transparent, and grounded in shared learning. Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) is not simply a reporting requirement, but a joint process of reflection and improvement. Through collaborative evaluation and open communication, BCDC aims to ensure mutual accountability, foster evidence-based decision-making, and enhance program quality.

### 8.1 Shared Monitoring and Evaluation

Partnerships must embed M&E from the outset, ensuring both BCDC and the partner are actively involved in planning, implementation, and review. Each formal partnership should include a joint Monitoring and Evaluation framework that outlines:

- **Co-developed indicators** that reflect shared objectives, results, and compliance requirements.
- **Base-line and end-line assessments** (as appropriate) to measure progress over time.
- Regular joint reviews (e.g., quarterly or biannual) to track performance against agreed outputs and outcomes.
- **Use of disaggregated data** to ensure that the partnership reflects and responds to the experiences of different groups, including women, children, people with disabilities, and displaced populations.
- **Learning mechanisms** such as After Action Reviews, Reflection Workshops, or Learning Circles to evaluate what worked, what didn't, and why.

BCDC's Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) Policy provides a structured approach and minimum expectations for M&E in all partnership activities.

### 8.2 Reporting Responsibilities

Timely and accurate reporting is a key component of mutual accountability. Partners are expected to submit reports based on the terms outlined in their partnership agreement. These may include:

- **Narrative Progress Reports** that describe key achievements, challenges, changes in context, and adaptations made.
- **Financial Reports and Acquittals** that reconcile expenditures against budgets and include appropriate supporting documentation.
- **Safeguarding and Incident Reports** (where applicable), detailing any protection concerns or breaches and the steps taken.
- **Case Studies and Beneficiary Feedback**, especially those that highlight outcomes, innovations, or community impact.

BCDC commits to reviewing submitted reports constructively and promptly, and to providing written feedback and follow-up actions as needed. Templates and reporting schedules are provided at the start of the partnership.

### 8.3 Mutual Accountability

Accountability in partnerships must be two-way. BCDC not only holds partners accountable for quality, transparency, and impact, but also accepts its responsibility to act with integrity, responsiveness, and support. Key principles include:

- **Joint ownership of results**, with all parties sharing responsibility for successes and challenges.
- **Reciprocal obligations**, such as timely payments, fair communication, respectful engagement, and clear feedback mechanisms.
- **Equal voice in evaluation processes**, ensuring partner perspectives are reflected in both formal assessments and internal reviews.
- **Inclusion of partner feedback** in BCDC's strategy development, policy reviews, and learning reports.

Accountability is reinforced through shared planning, agreed expectations, transparency in resource use, and opportunities for partners to assess BCDC's performance as well.

### 8.4 Learning and Adaptation

BCDC sees monitoring and evaluation not only as a mechanism for oversight but also as a tool for transformation. Partnerships must facilitate continuous learning and flexible adaptation to changing needs. BCDC commits to:

- **Sharing findings from evaluations and reviews** openly with all partners and, where appropriate, with stakeholders and donors.
- **Supporting partners in learning uptake**, including training on M&E tools, lessons-learned sessions, and access to good practice resources.
- **Amending strategies or activities** when data and partner insight reveal the need for change.
- **Celebrating innovation and success**, and disseminating promising practices within the partnership network.

By embedding reflection and improvement into the heart of each partnership, BCDC ensures that collaboration leads to sustained, inclusive, and high-impact change.

## 9. ENDING OR TRANSITIONING PARTNERSHIPS

BCDC recognizes that partnerships may naturally conclude or be prematurely terminated due to a range of circumstances. Whether driven by project completion, evolving organizational strategies, capacity limitations, or breaches of agreement, all transitions must be managed in a manner that upholds transparency, dignity, and the best interests of communities involved. The process of ending or transitioning a partnership should prioritise clear communication, risk mitigation, and accountability.

### 9.1 Planned Completion

In cases where the partnership concludes as scheduled—due to the fulfilment of objectives, successful project delivery, or expiry of the agreement—the following steps must be followed:

- **Joint Closure Review:** BCDC and the partner organization will co-conduct a formal review to evaluate the partnership's achievements, challenges encountered, and lessons learned.
- **Final Deliverables:** The partner must submit all agreed final reports, including narrative, financial, and safeguarding documentation, in line with the partnership agreement.
- **Outstanding Obligations:** Both parties must ensure that all contractual, financial, and legal obligations are completed, including disbursements, acquittals, and acknowledgment of contributions.
- **Transition or Exit Planning:** If the services provided will continue (e.g. handed to local actors or phased out), a written transition plan should be developed to ensure continuity or a dignified wind-down of activities.

Closure in such instances should be treated as an opportunity for shared celebration, reflection, and relationship strengthening.

## 9.2 Early Termination

Unanticipated or premature termination of a partnership may occur in the event of serious concerns such as:

- Breach of contract
- Non-compliance with safeguarding, financial, or governance standards
- Deterioration in partner performance or commitment
- Reputational risk or ethical violations
- Force majeure (e.g. political crisis, disaster)

In such cases, BCDC will:

- **Issue a Formal Concern Notification:** Providing written documentation of the issue(s), and a reasonable timeframe for the partner to respond or address the concerns.
- **Conduct a Partnership Review:** Involving relevant BCDC staff, the Executive Committee, and the partner organization to assess the situation and explore solutions.
- **Decide on Termination:** If the concerns remain unresolved, or the breach is determined to be severe, BCDC reserves the right to terminate the partnership unilaterally. This decision will be documented and approved by the Executive Team.

All efforts will be made to manage early terminations constructively and respectfully, with emphasis on limiting disruption to program participants and stakeholders.

## 9.3 Exit Principles

Regardless of whether the partnership ends as planned or is terminated early, BCDC is guided by the following exit principles:

- **Respect and Fairness:** All closure activities should preserve the dignity, reputation, and contributions of the partner.
- **Minimization of Harm:** BCDC and the partner should jointly consider the potential impact on community members, beneficiaries, and project outcomes, and take steps to reduce negative consequences.
- **Transparency:** Communications about the closure should be timely, factual, and sensitive to local dynamics and expectations.
- **Responsibility Fulfilment:** BCDC will ensure that all outstanding payments, acknowledgments, and reporting requirements are met, and will expect the same from the partner.
- **Future Relationship Preservation:** Even in cases of termination, the tone of closure should leave open the possibility for future collaboration if circumstances allow.

## 9.4 Closure Documentation

To ensure institutional learning and accountability, all partnership closures must be formally documented. The designated BCDC staff member managing the partnership must prepare a **Closure Report** or **Exit Note** for internal review. This must include:

- A summary of partnership activities, deliverables, and outcomes
- Status of final financial reconciliation and any outstanding payments
- Minutes from any exit meetings, partner feedback forms, or community consultations
- A narrative account of the reason for closure (if not a planned conclusion)
- Recommendations for strengthening future partnerships

This documentation must be reviewed by the Executive Team and stored in accordance with BCDC's records management protocols.

## 10. POLICY GOVERNANCE AND REVIEW

BCDC is committed to ensuring that this Partnership Commitment Policy remains a living document—applied consistently, reviewed regularly, and refined in response to feedback, evolving best practices, and the dynamic nature of our partnerships. Strong governance of this policy ensures that it contributes meaningfully to effective collaboration, risk management, and program quality.

### 10.1 Responsibility for Implementation

The successful application of this policy requires leadership from BCDC’s Executive Committee and active engagement from all relevant staff. Responsibilities are assigned as follows:

- **Executive Committee / Chairperson**
  - Provide strategic oversight for partnership practices and endorse formal agreements.
  - Ensure institutional alignment with BCDC’s values, standards, and external commitments.
- **Executive Director / Program Director**
  - Lead the operationalization of this policy across all program areas.
  - Ensure that all new and existing partnerships are established and maintained in line with policy standards.
  - Oversee the due diligence process and final approval of partnership documentation.
- **Program Officers / Project Managers**
  - Manage the implementation of partnership agreements on a day-to-day basis.
  - Facilitate regular communication, joint planning sessions, and review meetings with partners.
  - Support partners in meeting reporting requirements and strengthening internal systems.
- **Safeguarding and Compliance Officers**
  - Monitor adherence to safeguarding standards, anti-fraud measures, and other compliance requirements.
  - Address any concerns or incidents in accordance with BCDC’s complaints handling and safeguarding protocols.
  - Provide support for conflict resolution and assist in early identification of partnership risks.

## 10.2 Capacity Building for Staff and Partners

To ensure that this policy is well-understood and consistently applied, BCDC will provide ongoing learning opportunities for staff and partners. This includes:

- **Orientation for New Staff and Partners** on the principles and processes outlined in this policy.
- **Training Modules and Workshops** on good partnership practice, accountability mechanisms, conflict sensitivity, and inclusive collaboration.
- **Guidance Materials and Tools** such as templates, checklists, and case studies to assist in practical implementation.
- **Peer Exchange and Learning Forums** where partners and BCDC staff can share experiences and insights related to effective partnership.

Capacity-building efforts will be integrated into annual work plans and reviewed as part of organizational learning and performance reviews.

## 10.3 Policy Review and Revision

This Partnership Commitment Policy is a dynamic document and will be reviewed regularly to ensure continued relevance and compliance with external standards. Specifically:

- **Review Frequency:** The policy will be formally reviewed every three years, or sooner if:
  - There are major changes in the ACFID Code of Conduct or relevant legal frameworks.
  - BCDC experiences significant organizational changes or new partnership risks.
  - Substantive partner feedback or audit findings suggest the need for revision.
- **Review Process:**
  - Led by the Executive Director with support from Program Managers.
  - Inclusive of feedback from current partners, where feasible, to ensure the policy reflects practical realities.
  - Updates submitted for approval to the BCDC Executive Committee and endorsement by the Board of Directors.
- **Documentation:**
  - A version history and change log will be maintained as an annex to this policy.
  - Significant changes will be communicated to all staff and existing partners in a timely manner.

## 10.4 Related Policies and Reference Frameworks

This policy is part of BCDC's broader governance and program quality framework. It must be read in conjunction with the following internal policies and external guidance documents:

### **BCDC Organizational Policies:**

- Code of Conduct
- Safeguarding Policy (including Child Safeguarding and PSEAH)
- Complaint Handling and Whistleblower Policy
- Financial Wrongdoing and Anti-Fraud Policy
- Human Resources Management Policy
- PMEL (Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning) Policy

### **External Reference Frameworks:**

- ACFID Code of Conduct (notably good practices for partnership management)
- DFAT's **Principles for Partnerships with Civil Society**
- OECD-DAC **Principles on Aid Effectiveness** (e.g. alignment, harmonization, ownership, mutual accountability)

These resources together ensure that BCDC's approach to partnerships remains consistent with national and international standards, while being grounded in local realities and responsive to community needs.

## CONCLUSION

The **BCDC Partnership Commitment Policy** reaffirms our conviction that respectful, equitable, and accountable partnerships are fundamental to achieving sustainable and meaningful change in the communities we serve. This policy outlines BCDC’s intentional approach to building and maintaining relationships that are not only effective and ethical, but also grounded in shared values, mutual learning, and locally led development.

We recognize that genuine partnerships are cultivated over time—through dialogue, transparency, empathy, and a shared commitment to impact. Whether working with grassroots community-based organizations, regional civil society actors, diaspora alliances, or international stakeholders, BCDC prioritizes collaboration models that elevate the dignity, voice, and leadership of local communities.

This policy offers more than procedural guidance; it embodies the values that BCDC holds at its core—**collaboration, respect, empowerment, inclusion, and transparency**. It is a practical framework to ensure that all partnerships are designed and managed with care, co-ownership, and accountability, and that all stakeholders involved feel heard, valued, and respected.

By consistently applying this policy, BCDC aims to:

- Strengthen mutual accountability and trust with partners;
- Improve the quality and relevance of our programs;
- Minimize partnership-related risks;
- Fulfil our obligations to donors and community stakeholders;
- Contribute to a more just, inclusive, and resilient society.

This Partnership Commitment Policy will continue to evolve as we learn from our experiences, listen to our partners, and respond to the changing contexts in which we operate. It is both a roadmap and a commitment—guiding our efforts to build partnerships that drive lasting, community-cantered change.

## REFERENCES

### A. International and Sectoral Frameworks

- ACFID Code of Conduct – Australian Council for International Development.
- Particularly relevant: Principles and Commitments under Quality Principle 6: Communication and Partnering. <https://acfid.asn.au/code-of-conduct>
- DFAT Principles for Partnerships with Civil Society Organizations – Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (Australia), 2014. <https://www.dfat.gov.au>
- OECD Principles for Effective Development Cooperation – Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD), High-Level Fora on Aid Effectiveness. <https://www.oecd.org/dac/effectiveness>

### B. BCDC Organizational Policies (Internal)

- BCDC Code of Conduct
- BCDC Safeguarding and Child Protection Policies
- BCDC Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (PSEAH) Policy
- BCDC Financial Wrongdoing and Anti-Fraud Policy
- BCDC Complaint Handling and Whistleblower Protection Policy
- BCDC Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation and Learning (PMEL) Policy
- BCDC Human Resources Management Policy

### C. Additional Resources Consulted

- ACFID Partnership Guidance Notes and Tools (2021-2023)
- “Good Partnership Principles” – Partnership Brokers Association  
<https://partnershipbrokers.org/>
- BOND (UK) – Partnership Effectiveness Framework  
<https://www.bond.org.uk/resources/effective-partnerships>