



# Consortium Toolbox

Terms of Reference –  
Global Policy and tool development  
2024

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# 1 Background and purpose

NPA has increased capacity to participate in and lead consortia in a responsible, accountable, sustainable and effective way.

## 1.1 Background

In a world with increasing humanitarian needs and insufficient aid funding, it is of key importance for NPA to remain competitive to ensure it can continue delivering on its unique approach to partnership and to assistance in the complex contexts it works in.

Though multilateral donors have comparatively less funding to share around the growing number of crises and in the face of increased domestic challenges, they still aim to achieve the greatest possible impact for the populations they assist. Some donors thus increasingly chose to prioritize the funding of larger scale multi sectoral projects implemented by consortia of both international and national aid agencies, in order to be able to meet more of the needs of populations in crisis, with the broadest possible aid package. This also reduces the administrative burden and cost for these donors, who only need to relate to one overall contract holder – the consortium lead, or lead agency – transferring much of the administrative burden – and risk – to this consortium lead.

“The consortium model has emerged relatively recently as an approach to delivering development programmes and is becoming increasingly popular – particularly with donors. Currently, there is not an agreed definition of the term ‘consortium’, which would distinguish it from other types of multi-stakeholder collaboration. Typically, however, a consortium is led by an international nongovernmental organisation or research organisation, which receives funding and channels this to a group of implementing agencies, which work together with the lead organisation to design and deliver a programme. This formal structure offers greater control and predictability for donors.

The consortium model is one of a huge range of collaborative arrangements within the overall concept of partnership. Collaborative working has become increasingly common in the fields of international development and humanitarian aid, with all sectors forming partnerships to address complex development challenges and achieve common aims. Pooling resources and working across sectors can enable more participatory processes and ambitious outcomes, as well as potentially generating more sustainable and relevant long-term impacts.” (Effective consortia working: Literature review and priorities for future research; Bond – TPI; [learningfromconsortia.literaturereview.pdf \(bond.org.uk\)](https://www.bond.org.uk/learningfromconsortia.literaturereview.pdf))

NPA has gained some experience on consortium work through its participation in a number of consortia as a supporting partner but has also recognised that it still lacks significant internal capacity to put together, organise, manage and lead consortia itself.

It is one of NPA’s strategic priorities to increase overall funding volume and to diversify its donor base – in order to meet these objectives, the organisation will need to improve its capacity to engage in consortia, both as a supporting partner, and as a consortium lead. This implies developing a greater understanding of the complexities and risks inherent to working in consortia, as well as putting in place the necessary mechanisms, guidance and tools that will allow this to happen as responsibly and efficiently as possible. There is significant experience and guidance on the organisation and functioning of consortia available in the public domain and NPA aims to build on this and other existing industry standards.

This work is of key importance to the development of NPA’s international work and needs to take into account the nature and structures of the organisation’s two international departments.

## 1.2 Purpose

This consultancy will aim to draw on existing NPA experiences at country level as well as on policies and tools developed by other like-minded organisations to develop NPA's own global mechanisms, guidance and tools on working in consortia. The expectation here is not to "reinvent the wheel" but to build on already existing tools and policy within NPA and more broadly, within the industry.

The consultancy will map previous and ongoing NPA consortium experience across the country programmes – to collect experiences, both positive and negative, and to identify and compile the guidance and tools used and/or needed to ensure responsible and accountable consortium management and participation. These will necessarily be tools and guidance developed by other agencies.

The consultancy will also review how key donors relate to consortia and to what extent they set specific requirements which may impact on NPA's minimum standards: how consortia are organised, how they work, document and report, etc. Key amongst these donors are ECHO; more broadly, the EU's different funding instruments; US Department of State; FCDO; UNOPS. These are traditionally the most demanding donors – working towards putting in place systems that meet these donor requirements will likely increase our ability to successfully attract more funding.

The consultancy will develop formats and mechanisms to inform decision making around the setting up of consortia, and develop the guidance and tools required for the setting up and management of consortia. Where necessary, the consultancy will propose updates to existing policy which may be required.

A small working group including relevant field and HO staff will be created to serve as an advisory board to the consultant, in order to ensure adequate anchoring of the project in the organisation and its organisational culture. The group's members will represent different and relevant functions in order to best build on existing policies and practices. The group will be put together in time for the start of the consultancy.

## 1.3 Users of the recommendations

The primary user(s) of these recommendations are the international departments of NPA – as global guidance and tools on the setting up, use and management of consortia will support country programmes across both departments in their participation in or establishment of effective consortia in response to specific donor calls and requirements, or as a driver for improved programme growth, delivery and / or impact.

Given the legal complexity of working in consortia, and how this engages the responsibility of the organisation as a whole, all the same organisational structures and functions involved in the development, quality control, vetting and approving of donor proposals and contracts, will be engaged in the development of these guidelines, tools and standards.

The international departments will use the recommendations to work with the support departments to align the tools with existing policies – and suggest alternatives when and where this is not possible.

## 2 Consultancy Implementation

### 2.1 Scope

The consultancy will look at previous NPA consortium experience, relevant donor requirements, industry standards and best practices and build their recommendations on these. Recommendations must take into consideration the variety of contexts, implementation modalities used by NPA's international departments (including working with partners and through self-implementation) as well as the various donor standards which apply to our programmes.

### 2.2 Key components of Consortium set-up and management Toolbox

The key components of the NPA Consortium Toolbox which the consultant will develop and/or compile will include:

- Consortium decision tree
  - o Go-No Go checklist and guidance
  - o Risk assessment – financial, reputational, programme (sensitivity) risk, etc.
  - o Capacity assessment (in country, HO, etc.)
  - o Partnership discussion and negotiations guidance – incl. on partner assessment and programme and geographic complementarity
  - o Funding volume and duration
- Programme conceptualisation and design with partners
  - o Description of process, tools.
  - o Build on NPA programme handbook and partnership policy.
- Partnership contract formats:
  - o Teaming agreement for proposal development process.
  - o Partnership contract for project implementation
- Partner due diligence:
  - o assessment process description,
  - o assessment matrix/criteria,
- Cost sharing of Indirect Cost Rate for Consortium lead
  - o Short survey of industry
  - o Proposed policy/negotiation process
- NPA policy package – for sharing with partners (based on donor requirements), incl.
  - o PSEA, Code of Conduct
  - o Anti-corruption
  - o Environment
  - o Due diligence
  - o Gender equality
- Consortium leadership guidance:
  - o Consortium governance and structure (and staffing)
  - o Role descriptions (incl. on chief of party role)
  - o Planning – calendars, process mapping, with templates / tools
  - o Policies in place – decisions on own policies, joint policies
  - o Joint Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) and Beneficiary Complaints and Feedback Mechanism (BCFM)
- Joint proposal development guidance
  - o Tools (Gantt charts, budget formats, etc.)
- Financial management,
  - o budgeting and reporting tools,
  - o role descriptions,
  - o funding transfers
  - o monitoring the supporting partners' spending and compliance with donor rules and regulations

- M&E
  - o Minimum standards to put in place
  - o Consortium structure for M&E
- Consortium project management
  - o Timeline management
  - o Donor relations

This list may not be complete and the consultant may suggest additional elements for inclusion into the NPA Consortium Toolbox.

### 2.3 Methodology

In their consultancy proposal, the consultant will propose a methodology in order to achieve the consultancy objectives – this should include 1) mapping of key donor positions; 2) a mapping exercise of NPA country operations to compile learning and tool from previous or ongoing consortia; 3) a mapping of relevant NPA policies and systems, and 4) the development / adoption / adaptation of required elements in the consortium toolbox. In addition, the consultant will benefit from the advisory capacity of the working group to be set up. The consultant may be called upon to help in determining the composition of this group.

### 2.4 Deliverables

- Inception report to include preliminary Consortium toolbox content (after 2 weeks?)
- Mapping of consortium experience in country programmes
- Facilitation of working group consultation
- Draft report including recommendations to NPA (after 2 months?)
- Final report describing new Consortium toolbox with guidance and detailing relevant tools and templates, as well as making recommendations for eventual policy adaptation or new policies
- Power point (or other) presentation of results

### 2.5 Qualities of the evaluators

NPA is looking for an individual, or a team, with significant humanitarian and/or development experience and specific experience of working with consortia in all phases of project cycle management (PCM). The consultant should have experience of designing organisational systems, guidance and tools as well as being able to document hands-on experience of organisational development and change processes. The consultant(s) should have proven experience of previous assignments with systems analysis, development of policy, procedures and tools of similar nature as well as engaging organisations through using participatory methodologies.

The consultant(s) should demonstrate ethical consideration including respectful attitude towards NPA partners and their constituency, as well as other stakeholders.

In addition, the consultant must have the following qualifications:

- Relevant advanced degree in social science in a related discipline.
- Minimum 5 years' experience either in or supporting international organisations with similar tasks
- Strong writing and communication skills
- Fluency in English is required

## 2.6 Instruction for submission of bids and timeframe

The timeframe for the consultancy is approximately 3 months, with a tentative timeline as follows:

- A proposal of no more than 2 pages with a brief summary of the proposed approach and relevant experience, as well as a CV is to be submitted to NPA by 10<sup>th</sup> May 2024
- An inception report is to be submitted to NPA by 25<sup>th</sup> May (Inception report shall include the methodologies chosen, data collection plan, time frame, summary of the read literature and other findings so far)
- A draft report is to be submitted to NPA for comments by 1<sup>st</sup> August 2024. This should include draft sets of guidelines and tools as well as policy recommendations.
- A final report, including an executive summary listing the main findings and policy recommendations for further action, is to be submitted to NPA by 31<sup>st</sup> August 2024 This should include the finalized new Consortium Toolbox, with a complete set of guidelines, templates and tools.

**Proposals should be submitted to: [tenders@npaid.org](mailto:tenders@npaid.org) with the title “NPA Consortium Toolbox”. Questions relating to the tender may be sent to Jane Filseth Andersen – [jfan@npaid.org](mailto:jfan@npaid.org).**

## 2.7 Resources

The total budget for the evaluation should not exceed NOK 300 000 + VAT (25%) inclusive of all fees and costs, for approximately 45 days of work. The consultancy is expected to be conducted remotely, with possible travel to Oslo, depending on identified needs and available resources (to be determined with the consultant and based on additional available funds).

The NPA point of contact responsible for coordination of the consultancy is [Jane Filseth Andersen](#).

## 2.8 Literature reads

All necessary internal background documents will be provided at the start of the evaluation. These will include:

- NPA Strategy 2020-2023
- NPA Partnership Policy
- NPA Humanitarian Policy
- NPA Programme Handbook
- NPA Financial Handbook
- NPA Logistics Handbook

The consultant will in addition identify relevant industry literature. This may include the some of the following:

- [067 Working in Consortia.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)
- [learningfromconsortia.literaturereview.pdf \(bond.org.uk\)](#)
- [Topic-Three-NGO-Fora-and-Consortia-Briefing-Paper.pdf \(icvanetwork.org\)](#)
- [h2020-guide-cons-a\\_en.pdf \(europa.eu\)](#)
- [https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ba8ceed915d1311060abb/working\\_in\\_a\\_consor\\_tium.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7ba8ceed915d1311060abb/working_in_a_consor_tium.pdf)
- [DGEcho WebSite \(dgecho-partners-helpdesk.eu\)](#)