

Addendum: IPPF Partnerships

February 2024

Introduction

The paper sets out the principles, typology and model for developing and maintaining external partnerships in IPPF. It further delineates the boundary between IPPF affiliation and external partnerships. The paper is drawn from the review and recommendations performed by *Banks, Benson and Norgaard Consulting*.

The model was presented to DLT on 4 July 2023.

List of Acronyms

AMA	Associate Member Association
LO	London Office (previously, Central Office)
CP	Collaborative Partner
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DLT	Directors Leadership Team
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Association
LGBTQI+	Lesbian, Gay, Bi-sexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, and other allied identities
MAP	Movement Accelerator Platform
MA	Member Association
MoU	Memorandum of Understanding
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
RO	Regional Office
SRHR	Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights
UN	United Nations

1. Partnership Definition

A partnership involves two or more parties, in a mutually agreed relationship. The relationship must be founded on a shared goal or goals *and* each party must derive some benefit from cooperating. A partnership must, at a minimum, entail the following:

- **Commitment:** demonstrating a level of real *attachment*; these are not relationships that are dropped or abandoned as soon as difficulties arise.
- **Investment:** a combination of one or more investments of time, energy, care, attention, ideas, and/or other resources, including money. A financial investment *alone* does not constitute partnership.
- **Depth:** an understanding that the relationship is more than merely instrumental – we may use our relationships (including our partnerships) to achieve our goals, but a partner is more than a tool, a conduit, or a target of influence; we have some concern for their agency, interests, and concerns, beyond our own specific agendas/interests.
- **Impermanence:** partnerships may be (and often are) long-term, but they are not permanent and structural. They are situational; they can and should change or end as conditions change, and as the needs and interests of the partners themselves shift.

According to this definition, a federation is, by its very nature, a ‘species’ of partnership. It is made up of several constituent parts that collaborate towards a common mission. Being member of a federation is a specific kind of relationship which is intimate and highly entangled. Being member of a federation implies a *merging* of identity, strategy, and capacity to form a single effective system that has qualities, capacities and reach that is more than the sum of its parts.

For the purposes of this paper, however, Member Associations (MAs) the Secretariat, and the Board of Trustees (BoT) are not considered partners; they are IPPF. Partners, here, are considered formal entities that are not integral to the structure of the federation. IPPF has distinguished between two forms of such partnerships: the internal and the external partnerships.

2. Internal Partnerships

IPPF is over 70 years old. It has developed a number of consequential and deeply rooted partnerships over the years. Many of these have become integrated into the functions and operations of the federation. These are known as Collaborative Partnerships (CPs). A collaborative partner is recognised within the broader IPPF affiliation model. It has clear commitments to the federation that are long term and strategic. But it holds no voting rights and has reduced access to shared resources and opportunities. It does not meet the full set of criteria for membership. Importantly, being a Collaborative Partner can be considered a significant step on the pathway to membership.

The collaborative partnership represents a ‘lighter’ form of relationship than membership. It is less entangled, less about merging, and more about alignment, mutual interest, common strategic intent, leveraging joint capacity towards shared aims. These partnerships offer the potential for reach, scope, and impact without the accompanying

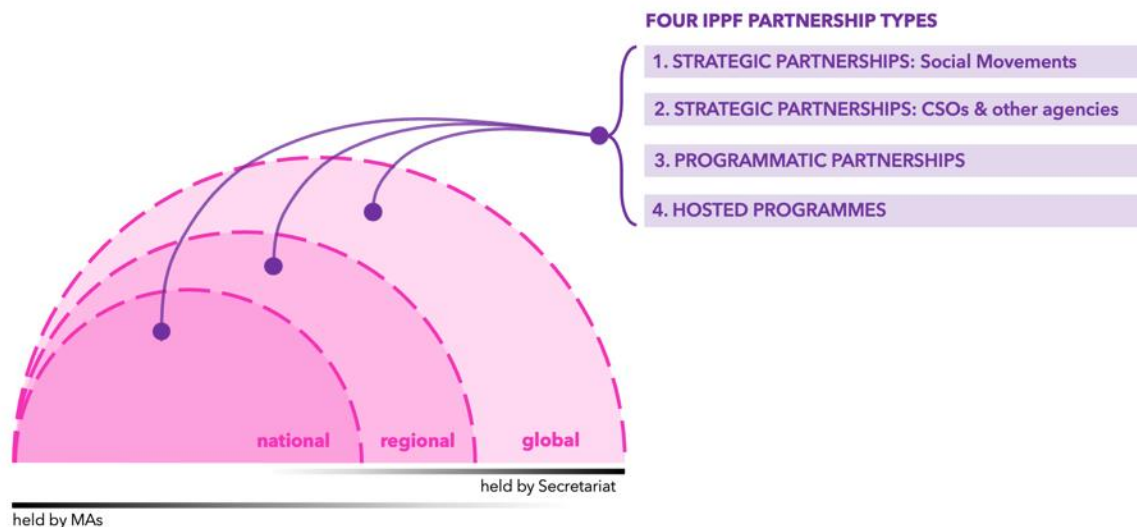
weight of a federation. But it offers less of the shared identity, purpose, and strategic direction.

3. External Partnership

By convention, by exigency, or for strategic and/or pragmatic reasons there are a range of partnership types beyond the internal partnerships. Such partnerships exist at all geographical level (community, national, regional and global). The development and maintenance of the external partnerships are driven by contextual, organisational, strategic, and, most of all, geographic factors.

It would be useful to think of external partnerships in **four categories** that may occur at all levels (national, regional, global):

- I. **Strategic Partnerships with social movements:** usually long-term relationships with allied movements/networks (and/or the CSOs that help coordinate and support their work) based on core values and interests; formalised as an MoU, which may be supplemented by flexible, regularly renewed, project contracts to facilitate financing where appropriate. The collaboration may focus on matters of service delivery/access, on advocacy and influence, or on other strategic considerations.
- II. **Strategic Partnerships with traditional CSOs/NGOs, multilateral and other agencies:** long-term committed relationships where core values and interests are held in common; defined by an MoU. The collaboration may focus on matters of service delivery/access, on advocacy and influence, or on other strategic considerations. The MoU may be supplemented by flexible, regularly renewed, workplans and/or project contracts to facilitate financing.
- III. **Programmatic Partnerships:** short or longer-term relationships centred around specific work-streams; possible to contract via an MoU, scope of work or a project agreement where financing is involved. Usually involving CSOs or other agencies working in the service delivery, advocacy, technical assistance or knowledge spaces. Most humanitarian, and short-term service delivery and advocacy interventions would take this form. Many Strategic Partnerships can begin as Programmatic Partnerships and later, based on meaningful results and growing trust and affinity, develop into Strategic Partnerships.
- IV. **Hosted Programmes/Organisations** (which may typically also lie within the framework of a strategic partnership): contracted via hosting agreements which may be short- or long-term but based on shared values and interests. Hosted partnerships would typically give IPPF an entry into a supplementary area of work, access to new target groups or new ways of working, complementary competencies, potential for growing joint work, visibility, and (often) an income stream. The hosted organisation would receive many of the same benefits as well as the option to avoid localised registration and, potentially, a range of strategic, administrative and financial support functions.



While two types of strategic partnerships (1 and 2) are similar in many ways, there are significant differences between emerging, organic social movements and their organisations, and more established, formal, traditional organisations. This will have practical consequences for the nature of the partnerships.

4. Entering partnerships

In order to enter into a partnership, there are a number of principles that must be considered. These are:

- Development of new partnerships (and the phasing out of old ones) should be guided by **the strategy** which should determine which kind of partnerships, around which issues, in which regions, should have priority.
- **MA-centricity should be a central principle:** In general, national partnerships should be held by MAs (where present) and MAs should be the main arbiters of IPPF work in their countries. Exceptions to this should be negotiated with the relevant MA where an MA is present.
- **First do no harm:** Care should be taken that Secretariat partnerships in-country further Strategy 2028 without harming local MA's efficacy or placing other partners at undue risk.
- There can be **trade-offs** between investments in the IPPF system, and investments in external partnerships. The latter might offer opportunities for more rapid impact; the former might more directly strengthen the value-add and sustainability of the IPPF system. This factor should be weighed in decision-making about investments in new partnerships.
- **Contextual intelligence & participatory analysis is integral to decision making about partnering:** Know the context well; draw on expert analysis; involve affected stakeholders (MAs, other partners, key staff) in the process to inform decision making.

- **Win-Win:** Partnerships should directly benefit all parties and be likely to benefit marginalised people in meaningful ways.
- **Efficiency & Simplicity:** Partnerships do mean additional work; therefore, engage in the fewest possible partnerships at each level for the maximum possible impact.
- **Know our limits:** Be clear about risk-appetite: financially, politically, reputationally, and from a safety & security perspective. Be clear about available capacity to partner (time, energy, skill, mutual value-add, finance, nature and extent of support needed, including emergency support).
- **Work consciously with boundaries:** Be clear about the difference between solidarity with movements (and other partners) vs. merging with, subsuming or otherwise eroding them. Movements, especially young and relatively isolated movements, are particularly vulnerable to influence and unintentional ‘capture’ by larger, well-resourced institutions.

5. Managing Partnerships

All the previously listed principles for entering into partnerships will continue to be relevant in ongoing partnership work and need to be kept in mind and consciously considered from time to time. In addition to these, a few principles apply specifically to ongoing work. These are:

- **Positioning & role in-country: MA vs. Secretariat.** MAs are selected based on their capacity to play a leading role in the national SRHR response – they are positioned to have a legitimate voice, convening power at local and national levels, and access to influential state and civil society actors and spaces. In-country, the Secretariat should not assume a similar positioning – to do so would, at best, be unsustainable. At worst it may weaken local responses. The Secretariat’s role in-country should be facilitative, supportive, enabling – about solidarity, sharing experience and analysis, offering insight where possible; i.e., not leadership from the front.
- **Respect & transparency:** Treat all affected parts of the Federation system, and current and potential partners with respect. Deal forthrightly and communicate clearly. Work through disagreements and conflict to enrich decision making and deepen relationships.
- **Simplify and align systems:** A variety of approaches to managing partnerships exist across the various Secretariat offices and MAs (e.g., MoU; governance and steering structures; project management approaches; etc.). It would be useful to move towards alignment around across the federation and, in the process, learn from each other’s ways of working. If this were done, differences in systems would come to reflect functional needs (e.g., the need for more flexibility in dealing with Strategic Partnerships with social movements) rather than different traditions developed in different parts of the system.
- **Learning/Peer learning/Accompaniment:** Doing partnerships of all categories at all levels is a professional practice that can significantly benefit from learning and exchange, between MAs and Secretariat Offices. While there is an in-built expectation that the Secretariat will support and accompany MAs moving forward with new and challenging types of partnerships, there is a untapped potential for

peer learning and peer accompaniment between MAs. MA-led Centers & Funds might play a significant role in supporting this.

- **Review partnerships regularly and be willing to exit or scale-down as appropriate:** Context, priorities and organisations change continuously. Some partnerships that were a good investment last year, may no longer hold up if the above criteria are applied. These should be reconsidered. Some may need more investment; others may be better scaled down or exited in a responsible manner.

In addition to the above, some additional considerations apply to non-financial and hosting arrangements.

- **Non-financial elements to partnerships:** For IPPF, re-granting is centrally embedded in its DNA; naturally enough the structure and planning of its work centres to a significant degree around its core funding streams. It is nevertheless important to avoid under-emphasising the *non-financial* gains that partnerships present. These include access to new learning, new methods, new target groups, new types of intersectional work, amplifying each other's voice and work, enhanced and more impactful joint advocacy, among other things. These should be considered when forming partnerships, planned for, and monitored.
- **Hosting arrangements** need to be contracted with care and sensitivity to both IPPF's needs and capacity and the hosted organisation or programme's expectations; it may be useful to develop a policy on hosting if this work will be expanded in future. Given the complexity and "costs" (mainly senior staff time) of setting up and managing such arrangements, and the difficulty of exiting them, it should usually only be done where there is a compelling strategic and/or financial case.

6. The system in action

The parts of the IPPF system responsible for holding partnership (at all levels) include:

- MAs and CPs.
- Secretariat: ROs or London Office and its divisions
- National-level partnerships

By default, MAs – as IPPF's national representatives – are the principal holders of partnerships at national level. MAs should have an effective monopoly on direct partnerships with their government and its various national, regional/provincial and local institutions. Any Secretariat engagement with national government in-country (in countries with an MA) should always involve the MA and would usually be facilitated by them. The main caveat will be so-called donor countries, often situated in the Global North. Here, the Secretariat should have direct bilateral contacts, relations and agreements between donor agencies and or governments.

MAs are encouraged and supported to engage with *all four partnership types where relevant* to complement and strengthen their own work at national level. Some examples follow:

Strategic Partnerships with social movements:

Where possible, working with national organisations or national networks of LGBTQI+, PLHIV, people living with disabilities (OPDs), sex workers or other priority populations around issues of both service delivery and advocacy.

Strategic partnerships with traditional CSOs, NGOs, multilateral or other agencies:

All the potential work mentioned below under Programmatic Partnerships could develop into long term Strategic Partnerships or could be approached as such from the outset.

Programmatic Partnerships: There is often potential for Programmatic Partnerships with national CSOs, or with the local offices of international CSOs and governmental or intergovernmental agencies. These may involve joint efforts/programmes/consortia to scale-up and broaden service delivery or engage in joint advocacy. In particular, partnerships expanding innovative and intersectional work (e.g., climate adaptation; technological innovations supporting SRHR) and access to RH supplies should be of interest.

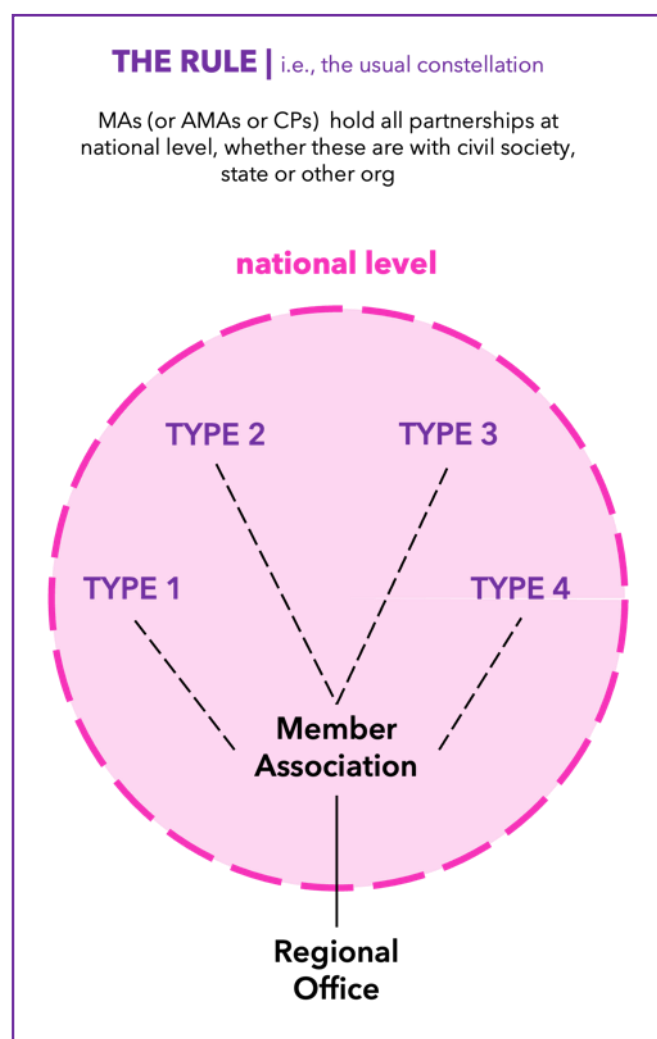
Hosted programmes or organisations: Typically, these would involve cases where there is a pre-existing Strategic Partnership with a national organisation or network representing a social movement/community, and where a hosting arrangement with strong back-office support is a precondition for the movement to operate or access resources.

EXCEPTIONS

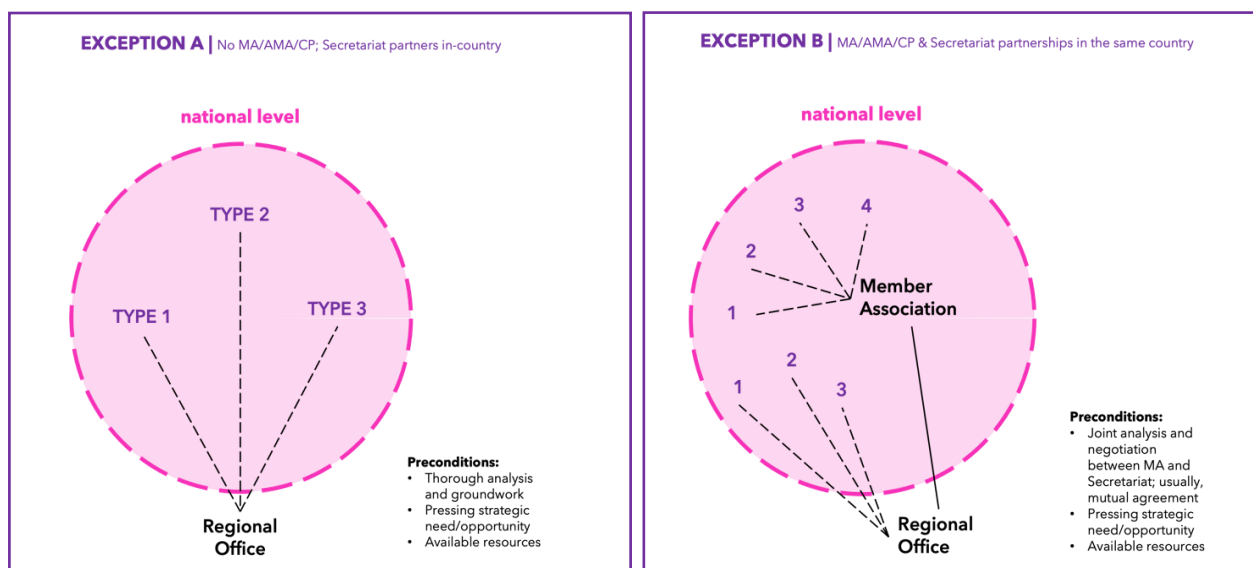
Under what circumstances might the Secretariat (usually via the relevant RO) engage in direct partnerships at national level?

Exception A: Where there is a convincing argument for intervention in a particular country (including risk analysis), and where adequate resources are available or can be sourced, BUT where there is no MA/AMA/CP present.

Exception B: Where the MA/AMA/CP is unable (due to risk or incapacity) or unwilling to partner with critical actors with the potential to make a significant difference to realising the IPPF strategy in-country; AND where the MA has been engaged in a joint process of analysis around this; AND where both the MA and the third party agree to the partnership. However, wherever possible, gaps in MA capacity should alternatively be remedied via accompaniment or other Secretariat support.



In exceptional cases where the DLT (or an appropriately constituted committee) agrees that the need is sufficiently vital and urgent to warrant the risk of proceeding even if not all conditions are fulfilled.



Addressing conflicts around partnership decisions and/or national boundary issues should be addressed at the DLT level.

Regional-level partnerships

The Secretariat at regional level may engage the same types of partners in the course of supporting shifts in regional or global policies and practices or to enable improvements at country-level – i.e., enhancing the effectiveness of MAs and other national-level partners. Some examples follow:

Strategic Partnerships with social movements: Regional networks of transgender people, LGBTQI+, PLHIV and Sex Workers already feature among IPPF partners in several regions. They may offer an efficient means of connecting to these movements, as well as intelligence and support to national-level change efforts.

Strategic partnerships with traditional, national, regional or international CSOs, NGOs, multilateral or other agencies;

- Regional CSOs or regional branches of CSO's leading in areas of innovation and/or intersectional work (e.g., climate change; tech applications; etc.) that may benefit IPPF's national, regional and global practice, programming or advocacy work.
- Intergovernmental structures (e.g., AU, ESCAP, EU, etc.) where IPPF and partners' voices and issues can be foregrounded.
- **Programmatic partnerships:** Participating in, or leading consortia delivering regional projects/programmes, or elements of global programmes. Often such programmes involve Federation members as well as other implementing partners, creating opportunities for both expanded impact and the formation of new working relationships, while contributing to Federation sustainability.

In the case of regional-level consortia doing multi-country programming in countries where an MAs/AMAs/CP is present the principles outlined in the previous subsection for work at national level would apply.

- **Hosted programmes or organisations:** This could include regional networks of relevant social movements, or like-minded but complementary regional or international CSOs that prefer not to set up their own fully fledged structures and where there is a clear win-win for both organisations. Such collaboration should typically directly benefit MAs in the region by giving access to new competences and providing the foundation for regional/multi country Programmatic Partnerships.

Global-level partnerships

Secretariat partnerships at global level may engage the same kinds of partners, in service to realisation of the overall strategy. This level is, in many respects, similar to the regional level, though the nature and scale of the partners may differ. Some simple examples:

- **Strategic Partnerships with social movements:** Global networks of LGBTQI+, PLHIV and Sex Workers. They may offer an efficient means of connecting to these movements, as well as intelligence and support to regional and national-level change efforts.
- **Strategic partnerships with traditional, international CSOs, NGOs or other agencies;**
 - Global civil society networks and alliances.
 - Intergovernmental structures (e.g., UNFPA, WHO, the Global Fund, etc.) where IPPF and partners' voices and issues can be foregrounded.
- **Programmatic Partnerships:** Participating in, or leading consortia delivering global/multiregional projects/programmes. Partnering with technical agencies around shared interests.
- **Hosted programmes or organisations:** Global programmes/organisations, aligned with IPPF's vision, values and strategy.