



PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATION POLICY

Balkans Forward Foundation

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1. Purpose

The purpose of this Partnerships and Collaboration Policy is to ensure that Balkans Forward Foundation (“the Foundation”) enters into partnerships and collaborative relationships in a strategic, principled, transparent, and responsible manner.

The Foundation recognises that partnerships can strengthen reach, relevance, expertise, and impact, but also create legal, reputational, operational, financial, or ethical risks if not approached carefully.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all forms of cooperation, collaboration, partnership, alliance, joint initiative, consortium participation, co-hosting, or other structured working relationship entered into by or on behalf of the Foundation.

It applies to all persons involved in establishing, managing, approving, or representing such relationships, including the Board, Executive Director, staff, consultants, and authorised representatives.

3. General Principles

Partnerships and collaborative relationships must be consistent with the Foundation’s mission, values, legal obligations, and strategic priorities.

The Foundation shall seek to work with individuals, organisations, institutions, and networks that demonstrate credibility, integrity, relevant competence, and alignment with the purpose of the collaboration.

Partnerships must not compromise the Foundation’s independence, ethical standards, safety, or ability to act in accordance with its principles.

4. Selection and Assessment of Partners

Before entering into a structured partnership or collaboration, the Foundation should take reasonable steps to assess the relevance, suitability, and potential risks of the proposed partner or relationship.

This may include consideration of the partner's reputation, track record, legal status, governance, operational reliability, financial credibility, public positions, and alignment with the intended purpose of the cooperation.

The level of assessment should be proportionate to the significance, visibility, duration, and risk of the relationship.

5. Roles, Expectations, and Boundaries

The purpose, scope, responsibilities, and expectations of the collaboration should be clear from the outset.

Where relevant, roles, deliverables, decision-making arrangements, communication expectations, financial responsibilities, visibility, and risk considerations should be documented.

The Foundation shall avoid ambiguous or open-ended arrangements where roles, ownership, accountability, or boundaries are unclear.

6. Independence and Integrity

The Foundation shall maintain its organisational independence in all partnerships and collaborative arrangements.

No partnership shall be accepted or maintained if it requires the Foundation to compromise its mission, values, legal obligations, ethical standards, or operational judgment.

The Foundation shall not allow any partner, donor, institution, or external actor to exercise improper influence over its positions, decisions, or activities.

7. Conduct and Mutual Respect

All collaborative relationships should be based on professionalism, mutual respect, good faith, and responsible communication.

The Foundation expects that partners and collaborators act in a manner that is consistent with basic principles of dignity, non-discrimination, accountability, and appropriate professional conduct.

Where serious concerns arise regarding behaviour, integrity, safety, or misuse of the relationship, the Foundation may reassess, limit, suspend, or terminate the collaboration.

8. Funding, Resources, and Representation

Any shared use of resources, funding arrangements, visibility, branding, representation, or public communication must be clearly agreed and managed responsibly.

The Foundation must ensure that financial responsibilities, donor obligations, and communication risks are properly understood and, where relevant, documented.

No person may represent the Foundation, speak on its behalf, or commit it to a partnership without appropriate authority.

9. Risk Management and Sensitive Contexts

The Foundation shall exercise particular caution in collaborations involving politically sensitive issues, human rights defenders, LGBT+ persons, minority communities, public institutions, high-visibility actors, or hostile operating environments.

Potential risks to safety, confidentiality, reputation, legal compliance, and community trust should be considered before and during collaboration.

10. Review and Exit

Partnerships and collaborative relationships should be reviewed periodically where appropriate, particularly where they are long-term, high-risk, financially significant, or publicly visible.

The Foundation reserves the right to limit, pause, or terminate a collaboration where the relationship no longer serves its purpose, creates unacceptable risk, or is inconsistent with the Foundation's principles.

Where possible, such decisions should be handled responsibly and with due regard to legal, contractual, and reputational implications.

11. Breach of Policy

Failure to comply with this policy may result in corrective or disciplinary action where appropriate.

Unauthorised commitments, concealment of partnership risks, improper representation, or engagement in unsuitable relationships may be treated as serious violations.

12. Related Policies

This policy should be read together with the Code of Conduct, Conflict of Interest Policy, Anti-Corruption and Fraud Prevention Policy, Project Management Policy, Data Protection Policy, and any relevant donor or contractual requirements.

13. Review of the Policy

This policy shall be reviewed periodically and updated as necessary to reflect organisational practice, strategic learning, and good governance standards.