

GENERAL RULES AND PROCEDURES FOR PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

15 April 2021

1. Rationale and Purpose

Partnerships and collaborative relationships contribute to achieving IUFRO's strategic goals and are therefore critical to delivering results and to ensuring the continued provision of high quality services to IUFRO Members. IUFRO works with a broad range of partners including inter-governmental, governmental, and non-governmental institutions, initiatives, private sector entities, and major groups of civil society from around the world to achieve such outcomes. These Guidelines apply to all partnerships involving written agreements between IUFRO (as a legal entity) and a partner (the other legal entity). They aim to facilitate partnership development with all relevant partners in support of IUFRO's institutional goals and themes as identified in the post-2020 Strategy and more broadly to contribute to achieving IUFRO's vision and mission.

2. Strategic Context

Partnerships (and resource mobilisation efforts) must be in line with the statutes and internal regulations of IUFRO, particularly Statutes Article II and Internal Regulations SECTION XIV: Cooperation. All IUFRO's activities with its partners are also in line with the IUFRO post-2020 Strategy and contribute to the implementation of the associated Strategy Action Plan 2020-2024.

As part of the post-2020 strategy, approved by the IUFRO Board, IUFRO seeks to increase interdisciplinary science collaboration not only for tackling current research questions but also keeping the door open for diverse future paths in forest-related sciences. Moreover, IUFRO aims to strengthen science-society interaction recognizing that the uptake and use of scientific information by policy makers and practitioners forms part of a social process and depends largely on building trust among stakeholders. This requires our pursuit of quality, science-based solutions, effective communication and global cooperation.

3. Definitions

Funding partners collaborate with IUFRO through provision of voluntary contributions of money and/or in-kind contributions.

Partners may be engaged to contribute to IUFRO's activities on many levels, address different issues and serve different purposes. A partner's contribution to IUFRO's activities may range from implementing components of individual projects at the national, regional, or international level to cooperation in joint initiatives or other relevant activities. Often such partnerships contain an element of planning, managing and implementing project activities with a view to achieving the project objective(s). IUFRO also engages with partners through its participation in international policy processes, advisory groups or committees, and consortia. Partnerships vary greatly in scope, depth, maturity and length.

Partners and funding partners include, but are not limited to, inter-governmental and governmental organizations, civil society organizations, foundations, international financial institutions, academia, media, and private sector entities, which collaborate with IUFRO to fulfil agreed-upon objectives consistent with the mandates of both organizations.

Partnerships are voluntary collaborative relationships between IUFRO and one or several other partners from different sectors of society. In a partnership, all participants agree to work together to pursue a common objective or undertake a specific task and to share risks, responsibilities, resources, competencies and benefits to achieve their own objectives, the objectives of their partner(s), and the overall objective of the partnership.

4. General Principles for Engagement

When engaging in partnerships, IUFRO aligns its approach, negotiations, and final contractual agreements with its core values of excellence, networking, diversity and integrity, as presented in the IUFRO Strategy, as well as with the following principles. These principles help to protect and promote IUFRO's global reputation and credibility, and include:

Value

The relationship returns value to all partners. There is a clear and mutual added value in terms of the efficiency and effectiveness of reaching shared goals and objectives.

Scientific credibility

Partnership activities shall be defensible in terms of objective scientific judgment. Either party may make the results of such collaboration publicly available. Intellectual property rights that might be envisaged from the Activities with scientists initiated from the Partnership shall be handled in the contracting of the respective scientists.

Equity

All partners recognize and respect each other's mandate, values, knowledge, skills and reputation.

Transparency

Partnerships are based on openness and trust. They shall be entered into and managed in a transparent manner. Information on agreed activities will be publicly available.

Independence

Despite the fact that the partnership will define collaborative action, IUFRO shall always retain independence, and reserve the right to disagree.

Accountability

Partnership activities shall be designed and implemented in a manner that ensures clear and agreed responsibilities and accountability by all partners.

Communication

Principles of communication, such as reciprocal acknowledgement of both institutions in any communication about the partnership and its results, shall be clearly defined at the outset and managed throughout the relationship.

Permission

Logos, copyrighted materials, and confidential information shall not be disseminated without prior written authorization of the owner.

Sustainability

Partnership activities shall be planned to promote economic, environmental and social sustainability. The partnership should promote sustainable development.

Sufficient resources

Sufficient resources shall be budgeted for and mobilised to reach the objectives of the partnership.

Non-exclusivity

IUFRO shall not endorse any product or service, nor shall IUFRO enter into any agreement that excludes the right to negotiate similar arrangements with other partners.

5. Specific Considerations for Partnerships

Partnership agreements: Taking into account the above principles and considerations, partnerships shall be based on explicit, written agreements (memoranda of understanding or other voluntary agreements) through which partners shall agree on clear objectives and activities, and define their expected contributions, roles and responsibilities; as well as reporting, monitoring and evaluation procedures to ensure continuous improvement and the ongoing relevance and quality of activities.

Duration and discontinuation of partnership agreements: Any agreement between IUFRO and its partners will include a statement of the intended duration of the partnership and will include the conditions under which it would discontinue such partnerships. For example, IUFRO shall discontinue a partnership if its implementation makes little or no progress towards achieving its objectives and if the implementation of the agreement or one of its parties violates any of the guiding principles and specific considerations listed above.

6. Partnership Management and Process

The IUFRO Secretariat will develop and maintain partnerships to ensure a coordinated approach to partnership management in accordance with these guidelines, the statutes and internal regulations of IUFRO, and the institutional goals and themes indicated in IUFRO's post-2020 strategy.

Notification

The IUFRO Secretariat will notify the President of any prospective partnership. In addition, any IUFRO Unit that aims to establish a partnership should notify the President and the Secretariat before reaching an advanced stage. The notification should be done via e-mail, and should contain basic information about the partner, the goals of the engagement, planned activities and should be able to demonstrate the benefit for IUFRO.

Notification will be followed up by advice, support and assistance from the IUFRO Secretariat in consultation with the President on content and/or process and next steps of the envisaged partnership. The result can also be a recommendation not to proceed. Notification does not constitute approval of the partnership.

Suitability Assessment

To efficiently gain insights about envisaged partners and avoid wasting resources in pursuit of unsuitable collaborations, the values, risks and implications of a partnership opportunity will be discussed by the IUFRO Management Committee (MC). The discussion shall be guided by the following questions:

- Is a partner acceptable (including due diligence)?
- Does the partnership fit with the strategic goals and organizational mandate of IUFRO? Does the partnership provide significant value/impact to IUFRO and its Members?
- Are the costs acceptable in relation to value gained?
- Are the risks (such as potential negative reputation impacts, conflicts of interest, or implementation challenges) sufficiently low or well mitigated?
- Are there sufficient financial/human resources/capacities to implement?
- Is there a clear measure of success for IUFRO?

Due Diligence Process

For collaboration with private sector entities and/or if deemed necessary by the Management Committee for completion of the suitability assessment, a due diligence process should be carried out by the IUFRO Secretariat. The Secretariat may be assisted in this task by a qualified consultant. This process provides detailed information necessary to inform decisions, minimise risks and to maintain IUFRO's reputation; however, significant resource requirements are affiliated with such a process, so the costs and benefits should be considered carefully. Details of this Due Diligence Process would have to be established.

Decision Making Process

Based on the findings of a suitability assessment and content of a proposed partnership agreement, the IUFRO Management Committee (MC) may decline, suggest revisions or make a recommendation to the IUFRO Board to establish an agreement with an organization in accordance with Article VII of the statutes and internal regulations of IUFRO.

Further Guidance

IUFRO (2020). *IUFRO Post-2020 Strategy*. Available at: <https://www.iufro.org/discover/strategy/>

IUFRO (2017). *IUFRO Statutes and Internal Regulations*. Available at: <https://www.iufro.org/publications/general-publications/article/2017/08/29/iufro-statutes-and-internal-regulations/>

The Partnering Initiative (IBLF) (2011). *The Partnering Toolkit: an essential guide to cross-sector partnering*. Available at: <https://thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/>