

Business Partnership Support: ethical guidelines for the recipients of the financial support

The purpose of these guidelines is to provide undertakings/organisations carrying out a business partnership project with concise instructions for taking ethical principles, human rights and good governance into account in the implementation of a project.

The guidelines are a supplementary document and its purpose is to clarify, among other things, environmental and social responsibility obligations laid down in [the Terms and conditions of Business Partnership Support](#) as well as the observance of principles concerning human rights. If necessary, Finnpartnership consultants will provide guidance on taking matters concerning these guidelines into account in the project implementation.

These guidelines have been drafted with the understanding that undertakings carrying out business partnership projects indirectly represent Finland and Finnish society on developing markets. It is for this reason that operating in an ethical and professional manner in a project country demands special attention.

1. Human rights and prohibition of discrimination

The foundation of Finland's foreign and security policy is the rule of law, human rights, equality and democracy. Development policy is part of Finland's foreign and security policy and also supports its strategic economic relationships. The goal is to build sustainable partnerships with developing countries that are based on mutual benefit and respect.

Because all people are born equal, they must all be afforded the same rights regardless of their race, skin colour, gender, language, faith, political or other opinion, ethnic or social origin, property, birth or other status.

The Terms and conditions of Business Partnership Support obligate the undertaking receiving support to also pledge their commitment to comply with International Labour Standards and International Labour Standards on Occupational Safety and Health (ILO) as well as international recommendations on human rights ([United Nations Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights](#)). Furthermore, internationally accepted environmental and social responsibility standards¹ and local legislation must be observed in carrying out a project.

Guidelines:

- When carrying out a project with Business Partnership Support, **every effort must be made** to ensure that **its implementation fulfils [the obligations related to Finland's value- and human rights-based foreign policy](#)**. The goal of these general guidelines is to support implementation of the human rights based approach (HRBA) in development cooperation as well as to clarify the concept of the HRBA and Finland's perspective on its practical application.
- If you encounter any discrimination in a project being carried out with Business Partnership Support, address it **immediately in a manner the situation requires by taking action yourself and/or reporting it**. **Regardless of the seriousness of the situation, it must always be addressed in an appropriate manner.**
- When carrying out a project, the recipient of support must take into account any environmental and social impact obligations and recommendations set for the project

¹ Further information:

- IFC Performance Standards: <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2012/ifc-performance-standards>
- World Bank EHS Guidelines: <https://www.ifc.org/en/insights-reports/2000/general-environmental-health-and-safety-guidelines> OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises, in English: <http://www.oecd.org/corporate/mne/> and in Finnish: <https://tem.fi/documents/1410877/2870803/OECDn+toimintaohjeet+%20monikansallisille+vryityksille.pdf/2e3aa906-8cd6-4151-b24f-1588c079dda4>
- UN Global Compact: <https://unglobalcompact.org/participation/getting-started/resources>

also where human rights are concerned. **Furthermore, the provisions stipulated in the support terms and conditions must be observed.** If you would like additional support for taking human rights into account in a Business Partnership Support project, please contact Finnpartnership's consultants. **If necessary, Finnpartnership can offer additional guidance or consultation for this.**

- If you suspect any discrimination or other actions detrimental to the realisation of human rights in a project, such as abuse of power or other inappropriate efforts to exert influence, **we ask that you report** it to Finnpartnership or (anonymously) with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs [online service](#).

2. Good governance, tax responsibility and corruption

Corruption is an impediment to development as it distorts economic structures, causes damage to democracy and threatens the rule of law and realisation of human rights.

Promoting good governance in all activities using development cooperation funds is crucial. Any undertaking carrying out a project with Business Partnership Support shall be required to also abide by the principles of good governance, tax responsibility, transparency and anti-corruption measures.

The Terms and conditions of Business Partnership Support also include more specific provisions on the prohibition of bribery, according to which the recipient of the support gives an assurance that neither it, nor the persons using its leadership or supervisory power, or its employees or local representatives have engaged in bribery or illegal activities similar to bribery (including bribery of a foreign official), and that they will not take part in such activity during the time that the discretionary Government grant is used. Any breach of this assurance may result in the clawback of a paid Government grant or part of it.

What to do:

- **If you encounter any signs of bribery or corruption in a Business Partnership Support project or in connection to it, address the situation immediately. Regardless of the seriousness of the situation, it must always be addressed in an appropriate manner. In such situations, the recipient of support shall be obligated to take immediate action** in order to minimise damages. The recipient shall also be required to report the matter to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.
- When planning business operations for the project country, preparations must be made for dealing with bribery and corruption and their prevention.
- The recipient of support should read the Ministry for Foreign Affairs' [Anti-corruption Handbook for Development Practitioners](#)), which provides useful additional information on combating corruption in project countries.
- If you suspect any misuse of development cooperation funds, such as bribery, misappropriation or other violations of the Terms and conditions of Business Partnership Support, **we ask that you report** this misuse to Finnpartnership or (anonymously) with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs [online service](#).

3. Decent local cooperation and partnership

As its name says, development cooperation work involves multiple parties. This work requires seamless collaboration with local partners in order to succeed. When working together with local partners, it is indeed vital to act in an appropriate manner and with discretion, taking all parties into consideration.

Business Partnership Support projects indirectly represent Finland and Finnish society out in the world. It is for this reason that acting in a professional, respectful and decent manner in the project country is important not only to Finland's national image, but also with regard to the operating conditions of other Finnish undertakings.

What to do:

- When working together with a local partner, it is vital to act respectfully and with discretion in both official and informal capacities.
- Even in situations where working together with a local partner is challenging, it is important to make every effort to maintain a professional and respectful environment for cooperation.
- If you encounter harassment, inappropriate behaviour or any other types of misconduct **when working together with local partners, we ask that you report it either directly to Finnpartnership or (anonymously) with the Ministry for Foreign Affairs [online service](#).**

4. Contact details for reporting suspected cases of misuse

Finnpartnership contact details:

Email: fp@finnpartnership.fi

Exchange: +358 (0)9 348 434 (please ask for Finnpartnership)

You may also contact Finnpartnership consultants directly.

Ministry for Foreign Affairs service for reporting cases of misuse of development cooperation funds

<https://vaarinkayttoilmoitus.fi/#/ilmoitus?lang=en>

All reports submitted to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs service will be treated confidentially. Investigations may take a substantial amount of time. Providing contact details can speed up the investigation of a case. Reports may also be submitted anonymously.