

Division:	Operations	Ref. No.	POL-3149
Department:	RACS Global Health		
Title:	Partnership Engagement		

1. PURPOSE

Working in partnership is a core programming principle within RACS Global Health’s development approach. RACS recognises that the quality of its relationships with its partners is fundamental to it’s success in achieving its mission and ensuring the effectiveness and sustainable impact of the Global Health Program.

Through its Global Health Program, RACS is privileged to work in collaborative partnerships with a diverse range of organisations to advocate for the inclusion of safe, affordable surgical and anaesthesia care in national health plans and support capacity building and sustainable workforce development throughout the Asia-Pacific region.

This policy sets out the core principles and partnership processes that guide practice in the Global Health Program at local, national and regional levels. It supports the fostering of strategic and effective partnerships with Australian and local partners throughout the Asia-Pacific region. The policy guides the identification, assessment and selection of partners, outlines the key principles that underpin RACS’ partnership approach, and details RACS’ expectations of partners including policy compliance and accountability requirements.

Adopting a principled, capacity building approach to forming and working with partners ensures that the RACS’ Global Health Program:

- focuses on responding to the priority health needs of countries in the Asia Pacific region as articulated by national and provincial Ministries of Health and other relevant, local representatives
- leverages a broad range of specialist medical expertise to build local capacity and strengthen health systems in resource poor countries
- applies current best practice to all capacity building and surgical procedures to ensure the achievement of quality health outcomes, that are locally sustainable.

2. DEFINING PARTNERSHIP

RACS’ Global Health defines a partnership as a relationship of equality between partners based on the RACS’ values of service, integrity, respect, compassion and collaboration, together with the principles of complementarity and accountability, where the shared values, purpose, goals and objectives of the partnership are clear, and which recognises the autonomy of partners.

Based on this definition, RACS Global Health recognises that a partnership is:

- a dynamic relationship and process which may or may not involve the transfer of money
- a longer-term relationship (typically 3 years or more) that allows time to develop and deepen the relationship for shared goals, objectives, and realising the outcomes and impacts of programs and projects
- a commitment to the sharing of ideas and mutual learning
- grounded in a documented agreement that spells out the contractual obligations, irrespective of whether RACS provides funding or not.

3. SCOPE

RACS’ partners include governments through national and provincial Ministries of Health; health institutions such as national, provincial and district hospitals; medical faculties within universities; international and local non-government organisations (NGOs) and community- based organisations (CBOs).

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RACS also works in partnership with a number of Australian, New Zealand and regional partners such as other medical colleges and societies to provide a wider range of specialist medical and surgical expertise to the Global Health Program.

RACS Global Health also has relationships with a range of donors, suppliers and other stakeholders. These relationships are outside the scope of this policy and are supported by guidelines and procedures outlined in the Global Health Program Manual and Finance Manuals.

4. GUIDING PRINCIPLES

RACS Global Health ensures the following values and practices underpin all of its partnership engagement and collaborative international health programming:

- Work in close association in a spirit of service, integrity, respect, compassion, and collaboration
- Demonstrate a commitment to joint learning and support
- Promote mutual accountability
- Be guided by, and respond appropriately to local health needs and priorities
- Ensure partner-centred and capacity development approaches which foster independence and self-reliance
- Engage in open and transparent dialogue and decision-making with partners and encourage regular feedback and the sharing of ideas for program improvement
- Ensure respective roles, responsibilities and accountabilities are clear
- Respect and adhere to local laws and comply with local security guidelines
- Respond promptly to suspected links to terrorism and any form of fraud or corruption and not offer, promise, give nor accept any bribes
- Ensure a robust 'do no harm' approach supported by strong safeguarding protections in the areas of child protection and the prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment
- Ensure that the rights of all are considered and promoted in programming, and that power inequalities are not inadvertently amplified, in line with the Gender Equality and Disability Inclusiveness Policies
- Protect the environment and promote responsible disposal of medical waste
- Avoid welfare, evangelical and partisan approaches in line with the RACS' Global Health Development and Non-Development Policy.

5. SELECTION OF PARTNERS

RACS Global Health will enter into partnerships with organisations that:

- have complementary visions, values and approaches
- are registered in-country and have legal authority to operate (in the case of local and international NGOs)
- are locally well-regarded and respected

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- meet standards outlined in the Partner Due Diligence Assessment process including having sound governance, financial management systems, are not on a terrorist list, have a sound program management track record and/or technical expertise relevant to the partnership
- are willing to make any changes to develop their capacity and make changes to comply with RACS’ Global Health policies and related donor requirements.

As a DFAT Accredited NGO and a signatory to the ACFID Code of Conduct, RACS’ partners must comply with standards outlined in the Australian Council for International ACFID Code of Conduct together with contractual obligations set by DFAT or other donors.

Prospective partners must participate in a Partner Due Diligence Assessment process to assess their suitability as a RACS Global Health partner. This process will result in a partnership either proceeding if the outcome of the assessment process is favourable, or alternatively not proceeding if the prospective partner is unable to meet the due diligence standards.

The partner due diligence process verifies that a new partner:

- has a vision, mission and strategy that aligns strategically with RACS’ vision, mission and Global Health Strategy
- has the capacity to effectively monitor and evaluate project or program activities
- has a commitment to learning and quality improvement
- is appropriately legally constituted including in-country representation
- has sufficient human and financial resource to achieve partnership outcomes
- has robust and accountable organisational and governance structures
- is financially viable and has the procedures to manage funds responsibility and minimise the potential for fraud
- has the capacity to identify and manage any risks to projects delivered by the partnership
- is not on the DFAT and National Security Australia list of terrorist organisations and proscribed persons or entities
- has systems and processes in place to prevent the transmission of funds to terrorist organisations
- is compliant with RACS’ policies and procedures for Child Safeguarding and the Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment (or willing to make changes to become compliant)
- will not use project or program funds for non-development activities such as the promotion of political, religious or welfare purposes
- does not discriminate based on age, gender, religion, ethnicity, physical or intellectual ability or political affiliation
- promotes gender equality, equal participation of people with a disability or marginalised groups and environmental sustainability.

Once a partnership is established, RACS Global Health will work with the partner to support the development of agreed capabilities, particularly in relation to supporting policy compliance and other requirements. The details of RACS partnership management processes are outlined in the RACS Global Health Program Manual.

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6. RELATED DOCUMENTS

- RACS' Global Health Strategic Plan 2017-2021
- Global Health Program Manual
- Global Health Finance Manual
- Volunteer Mobilisation Manual
- Workforce Conduct Policy
- Conflict of Interest Policy
- Counter Terrorism in International Activities
- Partner Due Diligence Assessment Guide & Tool
- Development and Non-Development Policy
- Child Safeguarding Policy
- Prevention of Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment Policy
- Disability Inclusiveness Policy
- Environmental Protection and Waste Management Policy
- Fraud Policy
- Gender Equality Policy
- Complaints Handling Policy
- Whistleblower Policy

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