

The UNA-USA Suggested Partner Vetting Process

Introduction

The United Nations Association of the United States of America (UNA-USA), a program of the United Nations Foundation, is pleased to present this document as a framework to assist UNA-USA Chapters, hereafter referred to as UNA-USA, in vetting potential partners across relevant risk, value, and cost dimensions. In developing the Suggested Partner Vetting Process, we provide a sequence of recommendations that will enable UNA-USA to make informed decisions on prospective and potential partnerships.

UNA-USA Policy Considerations

A. **Suggested Vetting:** All prospective partnerships should be viewed through 5 filters:

1. *Does the idea leverage UNA-USA's core capabilities?*
2. *Does the effort have a clear, well-understood UN connection and advance UN priorities? Does the partner support the UN already, and if so, can UNA-USA add value?*
3. *Does the partnership further the efforts of UNA-USA?*
4. *Are there firm, identified funding for the work?*
5. *Are there measurable, achievable outcomes?*

With consideration to the 5 filters, any organization having interests or activities listed below are deemed unacceptable by UNA-USA National. We therefore encourage you to adopt the same guidelines.

- *Entities that are involved in acts of terrorism;*
- *Entities that are sanctioned by the U.S. or UN, or have committed serious violations of U.S. or UN sanctions;*
- *Entities that are directly involved in forced labor or human rights abuses (“human rights” as defined and referenced in the [Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#));*
- *Entities that are directly involved in the use of child labor;*
- *Entities that are directly involved in the manufacture or distribution of anti-personnel landmines or cluster bombs;*
- *Entities whose primary business is the manufacture of tobacco.*

In this instance, we define an entity as any potential partner of UNA-USA including businesses, nonprofit organizations, foundations, faith-based organizations, individuals, etc.

UNA National also suggests the following:

1) to notify UNA-USA National on partnership opportunities with the potential to exceed values at \$50,000 or above, or on partnerships with the potential for national reach. This action is to prevent duplication of effort and outreach.

2) to vet partnerships against the following additional criteria:

- *Arms and Munitions (other than cluster munitions and landmines);*
- *Alcohol;*
- *Fraud and Corruption;*
- *Gambling;*
- *Pollution or Environmental Damage;*
- *Any other reputational risks to UNA-USA, the UNF, or the UN; as well as*
- *Compliance with the UN Global Compact; and*
- *Alignment with the policy of nondiscrimination based on gender, sexual orientation, national origin, race, religion, age, political affiliation, or disability”.*

These criteria are based on the [Guidelines on Cooperation](#) between the United Nations and the Business Community, issued by the United Nations Secretary-General in July 2000, and the [ten principles of the UN Global Compact](#).

B. **Conflict of Interest:** Potential partnerships should also be vetted against conflicts of interest:

Purpose: *As a charitable institution dedicated towards humanitarian goals, public support is key to the success of UNA-USA. Public support is tied to the public’s respect of UNA-USA and their perception of UNA-USA as an organization that is efficient, effective, worthy and ethical. To this end, it is imperative that UNA-USA members, at all times, avoid even the slightest appearance of impropriety. This concern must be balanced against the reality that the Chapter is composed of and led by many individuals who have spent their lives involved in the support of many of the same humanitarian and charitable causes as those of UNA-USA.*

Accordingly, it is likely that UNA-USA will become involved in the support of organizations with which some Officers, Directors, and Staff are separately and independently involved. It is important in such an instance that UNA-USA be able to support such organizations where it is ethically and appropriately warranted while still avoiding the appearance of impropriety. Moreover, UNA-USA must fully comply with state and federal laws that address conflicts of interest in charitable not-for-profit organizations.

Duty to UNA-USA: *Members have a clear fiduciary obligation to UNA-USA in connection with their service in such capacities. At all times they shall act in a*

manner consistent with this fiduciary obligation and shall exercise particular care that no detriment to the interests of UNA-USA (or appearance of such detriment) may result from a conflict between those interests and any personal interests which the individual may have.

Recommended Diligence Risk Tiers and Documentation

For record-keeping purposes, UNA-USA National Office recommends using the color-coded due diligence process outlined below:

Green denotes research results that reflect minimal risk or a limited amount of publicly available information. Minimal controversies or minimal negative public opinion were discovered during the research process. Research findings may contain notes on very minor facts or allegations against a potential partner/donor.

Process: Approval done by Chapter Leadership.

Yellow denotes research results that contain notable facts or allegations against a potential partner/donor that should be recorded, but the associated risk level is still considered to be low and acceptable. Research findings will contain notes on various minor facts or allegations against a potential partner/donor.

Process: Should require Chapter Board approval

Orange denotes research results that contain significant allegations against a potential partner/donor or indirect involvement by the entity in activities that violate exclusionary criteria outlined on page 1 of this document. Caution should be noted when proceeding with the partnership. Research findings will contain notes on various facts or allegations against a potential partner/donor as well as why caution should be exercised.

Process: Should require Chapter Board approval with full acknowledgement of potential risk

Red denotes research results that contain clear evidence of direct involvement by the entity in activities that violate criteria outlined on page 1 of this document, and thus the partnership may be a high risk to the organization. Research findings will contain notes on various facts or allegations against a potential partner/donor as well as why partnership planning should cease.

Process: Should require Chapter Board approval to terminate potential partnership.

Chapter's Roles & Responsibilities

Partnership Management

In collaboration with the UNA-USA Chapter Leader, the UNA-USA Chapter member that holds the primary relationship with the partner is responsible for the following activities in the Partner Vetting Process:

- Create a record of potential partner including the following: 1) Industry 2) Organization Overview; 3) Corporate Social Responsibility Info; 4) Global Compact [Participant](#); 5) Direct Competitors; and 6) Partnership Snapshot.

- Inform partner that UNA-USA Chapter is conducting due diligence per the Suggested Partner Vetting Process. (However, please note that each due diligence report is marked as strictly confidential and is not to be shared with the partner or any other non-UN or non-UNA-USA parties).
- Initiate due diligence, record findings, and color-code report.
- Produce one-page document for any red, orange, or yellow due diligence report to be presented to the Chapter Board for review. This includes a counterargument to any negatives raised in the due diligence research, highlights of partnership benefits, and the 5 Filters as previously mentioned.
- Create an MOU that documents the deliverables for each partnership. Make the goals S.M.A.R.T. (Specific; Measurable; Achievable; Realistic; Time-Bound)
- Monitor partner activity throughout the life of the partnership, using an array of tools (e.g. [Google Alerts](#)) to scan for pertinent news. If any concerns are identified, the Partnership Manager is to bring this to the attention of the Chapter Board immediately.

Partnerships & Collaborations Committee

The Partnerships & Collaborations Committee invites UNA-USA to submit questions regarding potential partnerships and collaborations. Please send email to twolfe@unfoundation.org.

Legal Counsel

We encourage Chapters to seek legal counsel for questions beyond the scope of the Suggested Partner Vetting Process.

Research Tools

Tools that may be employed in the due diligence research process include but are not limited to the following: FinScan; Google; WealthEngine; Sustainalytics; Foundation Center; Raiser's Edge; ProQuest; the UN Al-Qaida and Taliban lists; Interpol; UN Sanctions database; Human Rights Watch; Business Humanrights; and the Global Compact.

Due Diligence Types & Requirements

Chapters are responsible for vetting *all* prospective partners – regardless of the anticipated USD value or level of publicity – against the 5 filters. Chapters are recommended to vet the partner against the minimum screening criteria as described under Due Diligence Risk Tiers and may want to explore additional resources on the UN and [Interpol terrorist lists](#), and the UN and U.S. sanctions lists as part of the minimum mandatory screening.

The chapter is responsible for conducting due diligence to ensure the legitimacy of partner, company name, aliases, affiliations, board members, and governing officers, are accurate.