

UNFPA

Policies and Procedures Manual Policy and Procedures for Selection, Registration and Assessment of Implementing Partners

Programme Policies

Policy Title	Policy and Procedures for Selection, Registration and Assessment of Implementing Partners
Previous title (if any)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Policy and Procedures for Selection and Assessment of Implementing Partners (2012)• Registration of Implementing Partners (IPIMS) (2012)
Policy objective	This policy outlines the selection, registration and assessment process UNFPA must undertake when working with an implementing partner
Target audience	This policy applies to all UNFPA personnel, particularly those involved in selecting, assessing and registering an IP
Risk Matrix	Controls of the process are detailed in the Risk Control Matrix
Checklist	N/A
Effective date	5 September 2016
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**POLICY AND PROCEDURES FOR SELECTION, REGISTRATION AND
ASSESSMENT OF IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS**

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I. Purpose

This policy outlines the selection, registration and assessment process that must be followed in order to engage with an implementing partner. An implementing partner is defined as “the entity to which the Executive Director has entrusted the implementation of UNFPA programme activities specified in a signed document, along with the assumption of full responsibility and accountability for the effective use of UNFPA resources and the delivery of outputs as set forth in such programme documentation¹”.

The implementing partner is fully responsible and accountable for successfully managing the programmatic and financial aspects of workplans and delivering expected results. It is therefore imperative UNFPA selects its implementing partners based on capacity to ensure the highest quality of service, including the ability to apply innovative strategies to meet the priorities, needs and strategic direction of the programme, in the most efficient and cost-effective manner.

II. Policy

This policy outlines the selection, registration and assessment process UNFPA must undertake when working with an implementing partner. It identifies control actions to mitigate potential risks and establishes the following:

- Per [UNFPA Financial Regulations and Rules](#), an implementing partner can be:
 - a programme country government or governments;
 - an organization or entity of the United Nations system, including UNFPA;
 - an inter-governmental institution or agency not part of the United Nations system;
 - a non-governmental organization (NGO); or
 - an academic institution.
- Programme country governments entities and/or national NGOs must be given first consideration in the selection of implementing partner [in keeping with the principle of national ownership and capacity building].
- An implementing partner must not appear on the [Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List](#) nor on the [United Nations Global Marketplace](#)² vendor ineligibility list.
- A non-governmental implementing partner must be selected in one of two ways:
 - competitive selection: based on an invitation for proposals (IFP), in which a competitive bidding process is applied; or
 - non-competitive selection: suitable for organizations whose work is closely related to UNFPA’s mandate and who are considered to be a strategic implementing partner.
- The selection and review templates in this policy must be used when selecting a partner.
- Any entity selected to be an implementing partner must be registered through the [Partner Information Management System](#) (PIMS).
- An implementing partner must be assessed via the attached templates and the [micro assessment](#) according to the UNFPA established thresholds.

¹ As defined in [UNFPA Financial Regulation and Rules](#), Regulation 2.1

² A private sector entity cannot be an implementing partner.

- If the head of the unit³ determines the result of the micro-assessment indicates *unmanageable* risks, UNFPA may wish to consider selecting a different partner and/or implementing the activities directly.
- A micro assessment is valid for five years and may extend across programme cycles.
- The technical assessment included in the selection templates is valid for the duration of a set of activities with the implementing partner.
- The programme manager is responsible for ensuring the process for selecting, assessing and registering partners⁴ is followed according to the procedures established below.
- Where, possible, priority should be given to organizations who have environmental policies in place to limit the environmental impact of the workplan activities.

This policy comes into effect on 5 September 2016 for all new non-governmental organization/non-governmental academic institution implementing partners. Existing non-governmental organization/non-governmental academic institution implementing partners are exempt until 1 January 2017 at which time selection of partners must be re-confirmed using either the competitive or non-competitive process outlined in this policy as of 1 January 2017.

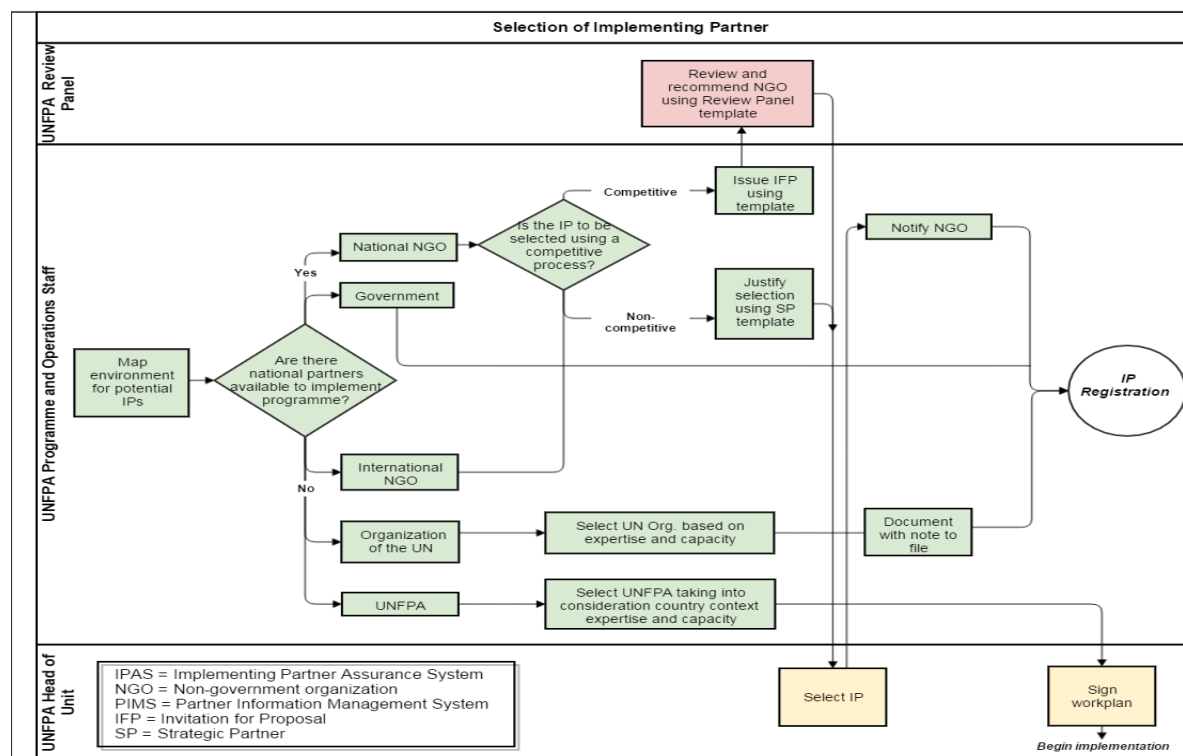
III. Procedures

A [process overview flowchart](#) of the procedures described below can be found in section V.

³ The UNFPA head of unit refers to the representative, division director, regional or sub-regional director, country director or the Chief of Operations (or the delegated officer), as appropriate.

⁴ See Annex I for overview flow chart of the Selection, Registration and Assessment process

A. Selection of an Implementing Partner



1. Hierarchy of Implementing Partners

Per UNFPA [Financial Regulations and Rules \(Regulation 9.6\)](#), when choosing an implementing partner, first priority must be given to national government entities and/or national NGOs, to support national ownership and help build national capacity. However, this decision must be based on past performance of the partner as evidenced by past audits, assurance activities, programme monitoring, evaluations, etc.

In the absence of a national government entity or national NGO, an international NGO or organization of the United Nations, including UNFPA⁵ may be selected as an implementing partner.

2. Mapping of Potential Partners

Programme documents, such as the Country Programme Document (CPD), UNDAF, and Global/Regional/Country Programme Action Plan (G/R/CPAP) make reference to partnership strategies and their role in achieving results. These partnership strategies form the basis for developing subsequent relationships with partners during programme implementation. During the formulation of the relevant programme documentation, the country/regional office or

⁵ Per the Workplan policy, certain activities must be implemented by UNFPA, for example, procurement of contraceptives.

headquarter unit may be required to identify potential partners based on the type of expertise and partnerships required⁶.

If a unit is required to identify and map potential implementing partners⁷, the unit may choose, but is not required, to issue an “[Expression of Interest](#)” via local media or other means. This will alert organizations of the opportunity for a potential partnership. Interested organizations will submit information including legal status, mandate, established expertise in the relevant area and proven track record. UNFPA will then review the applicants, and those meeting UNFPA requirements will be placed on a short-list of *potential* implementing partners. Placement on this list does not guarantee a partnership with UNFPA. Before entering into a partnership, the short-listed organizations must be selected according to one of the options outlined below and assessed using the micro-assessment.

3. Selecting an Implementing Partner

The [Guidance Note on Contracting Legal Entities to Provide Services: When to Use Programme and When to Use Procurement](#) limits the type of activities for which an implementing partner can be contracted. Actual selection is based on the type of partner:

- a) Government
- b) Non-governmental organization/ non-governmental academic institutions
- c) Organization of the United Nations
- d) UNFPA

a) Government

Government counterparts are always considered to be a strategic implementing partner and therefore can be selected based on need and expertise. No further documentation justifying the selection is necessary. However, it is the responsibility of the unit to ensure the government has sufficient capacity to deliver and confirms there are no known conflicts of interest between the government and UNFPA or its personnel (including family or financial relationships).

b) Non-governmental organization (national and international) and non-governmental academic institutions

For non-governmental implementing partners, UNFPA has two selection options available: 1) competitive selection via an invitation for proposals (IFP), and 2) non-competitive selection for reasons outlined below. The preferred and strongly recommended method of selection to use is the competitive, IFP process⁸. The head of unit is responsible for choosing the most appropriate selection option.

⁶ This is particularly important for countries who need to share the list of potential implementing partners with the government.

⁷ Including identifying UNFPA as the implementing partner.

⁸ Implementing partners selected by other United Nations organizations as part of a joint programmes are considered selected by the non-competitive process.

Competitive Selection: Invitation for Proposals (IFP)

To ensure partners implement workplans with the highest quality and cost-effective delivery, the unit undertakes a competitive process to select an implementing partner. This is done by distributing an [invitation for proposals \(IFP\)](#). The unit is encouraged to advertise the IFP, when deemed appropriate, in the local media to alert organizations of a potential partnership with UNFPA or UNFPA can send the IFP to potential implementing partners previously identified during the mapping exercise or otherwise known to the unit. This modality recognizes the need for competitive and innovative strategies and interventions to fulfil UNFPA's strategic plan and the national development goals UNFPA contributes towards.

The programme manager is responsible for following these steps to select a partner through an IFP:

- Step 1. The respective UNFPA unit prepares and issues the IFP which includes expected deliverables, selection criteria, selection process and suggested format for the proposals. Deadline for submission of proposals must be a minimum of two weeks.
- Step 2. The proposals remain closed until a review panel convenes and reviews the proposals using the [review panel template](#). The panel must consist of at least 3 UNFPA personnel from programme/technical and operations⁹.
In addition to reviewing the proposal to find the entity(s) best suited to implement the activities, the panel must also assesses the technical capacity and comparative advantage of the potential implementing partner, according to criteria set out in the review panel template.
- Step 3. Based on the recommendation of the review panel, the head of unit makes an informed and transparent decision based on the technical qualifications of the implementing partner, cost effectiveness and best fit to efficiently deliver the output.
- Step 4. The completed review template detailing the process should be filed, along with all proposals received and kept on file for a minimum of 5 years.
- Step 5. UNFPA [informs the applicants](#) of the results of the review and notifies the selected partner(s) of the next steps involved, e.g., sign an IP Agreement and workplan.

The selection of the partner is based on the criteria and activities set out in its proposal. If an implementing partner selected in such manner is being considered to implement a different and unrelated set of activities, UNFPA must either undergo a new competitive process for that particular set of activities, or it must justify using the partner via the non-competitive selection process outlined below. The unit should use the information it gathers about the implementing partner's capacity to help determine the cash transfer modality to be used.

⁹ It is strongly recommended, where possible, to include the operations manager and have at least one person who is not directly involved in the management of the programme on the panel. Where possible, the head of unit should not be a member of the panel. Staff members from other United Nations organizations may sit on the panel, if needed.

Non-competitive Selection

There are exceptional circumstances when UNFPA uses a non-competitive selection process because UNFPA deems an organization to have a strategic advantage to implement a specific set of interventions or, the partnership is in response to a humanitarian situation where a rapid response is essential.

Partners selected in a non-competitive manner to implement a specific set of activities must be an organization who works in a field closely related to UNFPA's mandate and meets one or more of the following:

- is in a *unique*¹⁰ position to influence issues that promote UNFPA's mandate while leveraging political support, skills or resources to achieve programme results;
- has the unique capacity to reach a targeted or hard to reach audience;
- is the sole organization available with the capacity or ability to implement the proposed interventions and/or
- is the partner deemed most suitable to facilitate a rapid response to a humanitarian situation.

UNFPA must be able to fully justify selecting the partner in a non-competitive manner and must avoid maintaining partnerships based solely on historical reasons. Partnerships that are selected in a non-competitive manner must not undercut competition with other organizations that can deliver similar results.

Under this option, the unit must use the [Non-Competitive partnership template](#) to fully document and justify why selecting this particular partner is in the best interest of UNFPA and confirm the partner has sufficient institutional, technical and managerial capacity to deliver the proposed interventions. For country offices, if the estimated cumulative workplan total for the duration of the programme cycle is expected to exceed \$500,000, the regional director must sign the completed template approving the justification to use the non-competitive process. For regional or headquarter departments, the Deputy Executive Director (Programme) approves the use of the non-competitive process when the cumulative workplan total duration of the programme cycle is expected to exceed \$500,000. Justification for selection via a non-competitive process is based on the partner's ability to implement a particular set of interventions and should not be based simply on maintaining a partnership with the organization itself. Therefore, the unit only needs to fill out the template once a programme cycle, unless, the implementing partner is being considered for a different set of activities unrelated to the current workplan. In that case, the template would need to be completed again. The unit should use the information it gathers about the implementing partner's capacity to help determine the cash transfer modality to be used.

The head of unit signs off on the selection and [informs the NGO of its selection](#).

c) Organizations of the United Nations

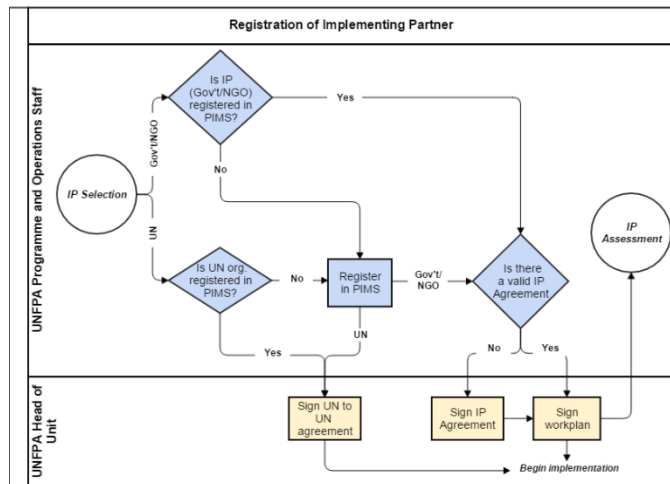
¹⁰ i.e., has a distinct advantage in a particular area of expertise or outreach.

An organization of the United Nations may be selected as an implementing partner on the basis of its respective area of strength, presence in the country and in-country financial and managerial capacity. A simple Note to the File documenting the selection of the organization of the United Nations will suffice. If inter-agency collaboration is implemented through a joint programme, please refer to the [United Nations Development Group](#) (UNDG) website for guidance.

d) UNFPA

UNFPA may choose direct implementation, taking into consideration the country context and the capacity of the regional/country office or headquarters unit.

B. Registration of an Implementing Partner



Once UNFPA selects the partner, the UNFPA unit must register the implementing partner in the online Partner Information Management System ([PIMS](#)), if it is not already registered. Registration can only take place after the responsible unit confirms the legal status and eligibility of the organization and collects and files all required documentation, in accordance with instructions in the [PIMS](#).

C. Agreements with Implementing Partners

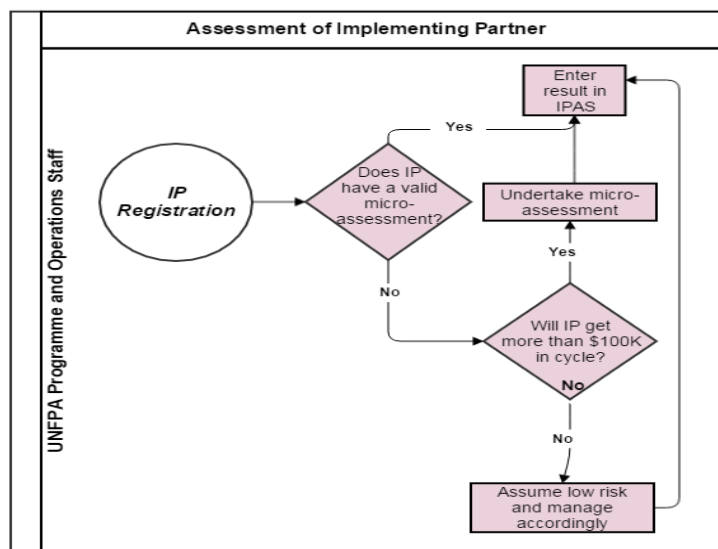
UNFPA must enter into an agreement with the implementing partner prior to commencing any activities. This includes the following:

1. For government, national and international NGOs and academic institutions, sign an [Implementing Partner Agreement](#) with the partner and upload the signed document to [PIMS](#). The IP Agreement is valid for the duration of the programme cycle. The next step is to sign a workplan with the partner according to the [Policies and Procedures for Preparation and Management of Workplans](#).
2. For organizations of the United Nations, sign a [United Nations Agency to United Nations Agency Contribution Agreement](#) and upload the signed document to PIMS. The unit has the option to sign a workplan or include all budgeted activities in the agreement itself. The agreement is valid for the dates set out on the cover page.

Any changes to the legal agreements templates must be done in track changes and cleared via the [Integrated Service Desk](#)¹¹.

¹¹ ISD category: Programme>Programme Planning & Implementation> Agreements

D. Assessment of an Implementing Partner



Regardless of whether a partner was selected via a non-competitive or competitive process, if it is expected to receive more than USD 100,000 cumulative during the unit's programme cycle, it must be assessed using the [micro assessment questionnaire](#) and [terms of reference](#). The micro assessment assesses the implementing partner's control framework and identifies gaps, if any. It results in a risk rating (low, moderate, significant or high), which UNFPA uses, along with other available information (e.g.,

materiality, previous assurance results), to determine the [type and frequency](#) of assurance activities (e.g., spot checks and audits).

The micro assessment should take place *before* start of implementation. If the micro assessment cannot be completed prior to implementation, and the estimated amounts exceed the established threshold, the unit must schedule an assessment as soon as reasonable and apply high risk assurance activities to the partnership until then.

If the partner is expected to receive less than USD 100,000 for the programme cycle, no micro assessment is needed¹². The unit assumes low risk and applies low risk assurance activities. However, if that threshold is exceeded during the programme cycle, the head of unit is responsible for ensuring a micro assessment is completed.

A micro assessment is valid for a period of five (5) years and may extend across programme cycles. For example, a micro assessment conducted at the beginning of the fourth year of a five-year country programme cycle will be valid until the end of the third year of the following country programme cycle.

The partner must be re-assessed after a period of five years and should be re-assessed if there are significant changes to the management of the institution and/or major staff turnover that would impact the capacity of the implementing partner.

The risk rating – either from the last micro assessment or based on high or low assumptions outlined above – must be recorded in the [Micro Assessment data entry module](#).

If the IP is shared with UNICEF and/or UNDP¹³, conduct micro assessment jointly:

¹² Estimated expenditure is recorded in IPAS.

¹³ For implementing partners shared by UNFPA units at the global and regional level, completion of the micro-assessment should be coordinated.

- a) Determine which agencies require the assessment according to their thresholds
- b) Amongst those, the lead agency is typically the largest contributor of funds to the IP
- c) The United Nations organization that require the assessment share the cost

If no or few IPs are shared, but several assessments are planned, UNFPA, UNDP and UNICEF should combine the exercise and procure services together, wherever feasible. Global Services LTAs are available for procuring services of entities to conduct the micro assessments. They can be found here: [LTA and SOPs](#).

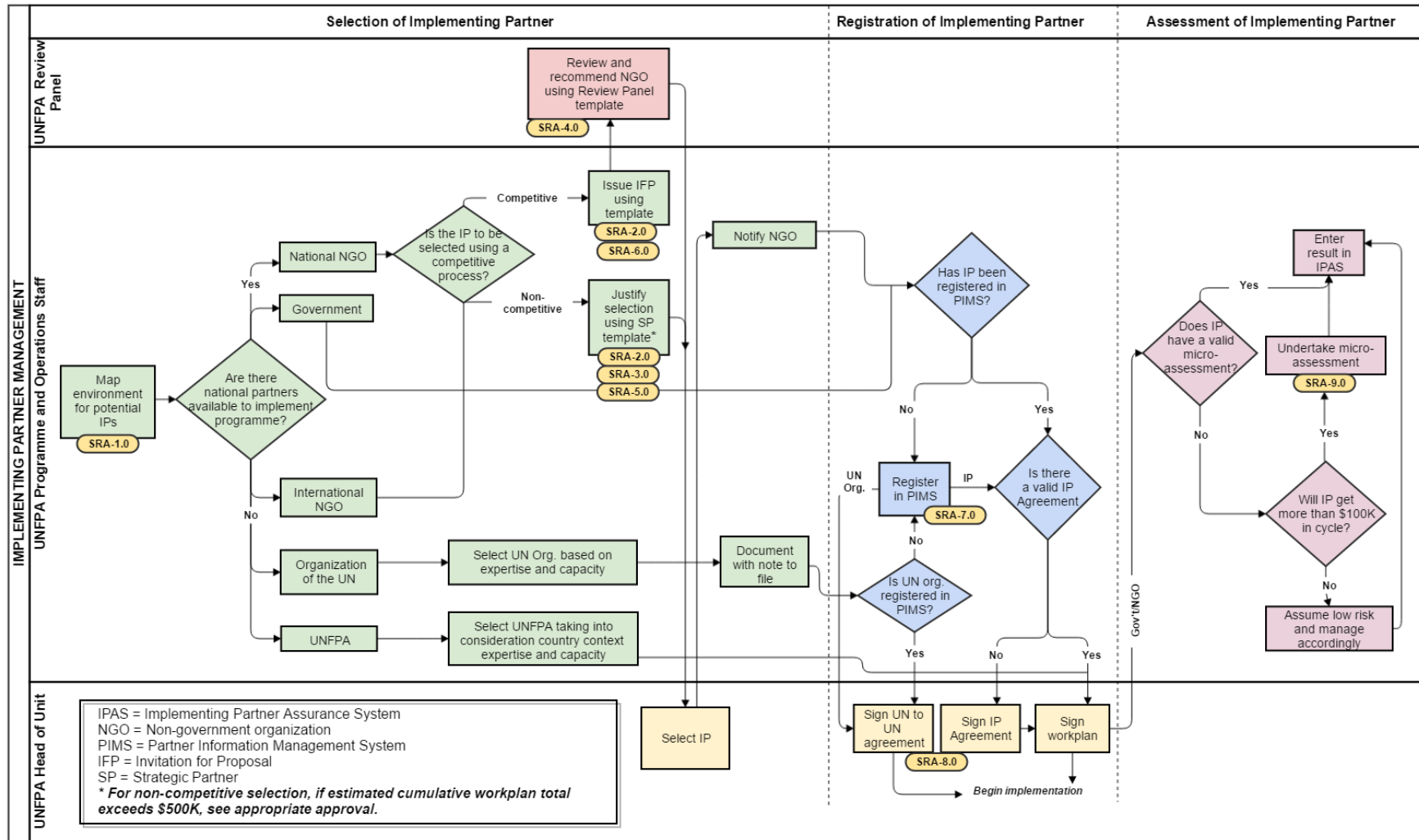
IV. Other – Working with International NGOs

When working with an international NGO, the following principles apply:

- The office of the INGO who has the overall responsibility for the management of programme implementation must be *registered and assessed* separately from the corporate headquarters, if different. For example, if an INGO has its headquarters in country A and a local office in country X where the activities will be implemented, the UNFPA unit in country X would register the country X local office of the INGO in PIMS and receive a unique IP Code¹⁴, irrespective of whether the NGO is already registered in another country.
- Regardless of whether a country office is working with a global or regional corporate office of the INGO, the Implementing Partner Agreement (IPA) must be signed between the UNFPA country office and the INGO directly. The country office may not use an IPA signed between the implementing partner and a UNFPA regional office, headquarters unit or other country office.
- Headquarters and regional offices implementing global and regional activities may use the same signed IPA for an INGO.

¹⁴ Exceptions would be if the international NGO is heavily centralized and the corporate headquarters maintains overall responsibility and management of the programme.

V. Process Overview Flowchart of Implementing Partner Selection, Registration and Assessment Process



VI. Risk Control Matrix

The risk control matrix can be found in the following google drive:

<https://drive.google.com/open?id=0BzrC9ALCReCvZfQ3WmlFRkd0SW8>