8. Verification in UNPP

A. Overview

UNPP includes a feature to "verify" the self-reported information provided by CSOs in their organizational profiles. The UNPP verification feature is analogous to the current "core values assessment" undertaken by UNICEF prior to entering into a partnership agreement with a CSO.

Not all UN users of UNPP have the ability to verify CSOs. UN Advanced Editors—but not UN Basic Editors or UN Readers—have the ability to conduct verification of CSOs in their country. Only UN Headquarters Editors have the ability to verify the headquarters profiles of international NGOs, in line with the UNICEF CSO Procedure, which requires that international NGOs undergo due diligence review by the UNICEF Division of Communication's Civil Society Partnerships (CSP) unit at HQ level.

B. Verification Questions

Verification of a CSO profile in UNPP consists of the following actions:

Verification Question	Relevant Profile Questions to Review	Action
Has the CSO/partner uploaded its valid, non-expired registration certificate issued by the correct government body, or otherwise indicated eligibility to operate in the country?	Click on the CSO's profile. Under the "Identification" section and "Legal Status" sub-section of the profile, review the CSO's response to the question: "Is the organization registered to operate in the country?" Review the document uploaded by the CSO under "registration document" or the comment provided by the CSO explaining why it is not registered to operate in the country.	Click yes if: • The CSO has declared that "yes," it is registered to operate in the country, and the registration document uploaded by the CSO (a) appears to be genuine, (b) reflects the organization's legal name, (c) does not have an expired validity date, and (d) has been issued by the government body tasked with the registration of CSOs in the country. • The CSO has declared that "no," it is not registered to operate in the country, and the comment that it has provided is acceptable (e.g. the government ministry responsible for registering CSOs in the country is defunct). Otherwise, click no. Note that clicking no prevents the CSO from obtaining a "verified" status and therefore prevents it from being selected in UNPP.
Are the partner's mandate and mission consistent with that of the UN?	Click on the CSO's profile. Under the "Mandate & Mission" section and "Background" sub-section of the profile, review the CSO's response to the questions "Briefly state the background and rationale for the establishment of the organization" and "Briefly state the mandate and mission of the organization."	Click yes if: • The text entered by the CSO under the "Mandate & Mission" section of its profile suggests that it shares the core values of the UN. Otherwise, click no. Note that clicking no prevents the CSO from obtaining a "verified" status and therefore prevents it from being selected in UNPP.

Does the CSO/partner have mechanisms to combat fraud and corruption, prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, and protect and safeguard beneficiaries?	Click on the CSO's profile. Under the "Mandate & Mission" section and "Ethics" sub-section of the profile, review the CSO's response to "Briefly describe the organization's mechanisms to safeguard against the violation and abuse of beneficiaries, including sexual exploitation and abuse" and "Briefly describe the organization's mechanisms to safeguard against fraud, corruption and other unethical behaviour." Also review the copies of the policies/codes of conduct uploaded by the CSO, if any.	Click yes if: • The text entered by the CSO describing how it safeguards against the violation and abuse of beneficiaries, and against fraud, corruption and other unethical behaviour, suggests strong, functioning mechanisms. Otherwise, click no. Note that clicking no prevents the CSO from obtaining a "verified" status and therefore prevents it from being selected in UNPP. Note that if the CSO has uploaded supporting policies/codes of conduct, this is a best practice. However, UNICEF does not have a global requirement that all CSOs must have *documented* policies on beneficiary safeguarding and fraud/corruption. This is in recognition of the fact that community-based organizations and other smaller CSOs, due to their level of organizational development, may not have such policies in place.
Do the [risk-related observations associated with the CSO/ partner and captured in UN Partner Portal] pose unacceptable risk to the UN?	Review the risk-related observations, if any, captured in UNPP.	Click no if: • There are no risk-related observations • There are risk-related observations, but they do not pose unacceptable risk to the UN. Otherwise, click yes. Note that clicking yes prevents the CSO from obtaining a "verified" status and therefore prevents it from being selected in UNPP.
Are there any other risk-related observations associated with the CSO/ partner that are not captured in UN Partner Portal, but which pose unacceptable risk to the UN?	Click on the CSO's profile and review the text inputted and documents uploaded by the CSO. Conduct an internet search of the CSO, focusing on credible websites. If necessary/relevant, consult colleagues from UNICEF, other UN agencies, or other trusted humanitarian/ development actors to determine whether the CSO presents any risk that is not already captured in the	Click no if: • There is no potential reputational risk identified from public or other sources. Click yes if potential reputational risk is identified from the CSO's UNPP profile, on the internet or other media sources, or via trusted humanitarian/development actors. Note that clicking yes prevents the CSO from obtaining a "verified" status and therefore prevents it from being selected in UNPP. *If potential reputational risk is identified during the attempted verification process, then consider exiting out of the verification workflow and adding a risk-related*

	"observations" section of the Portal.	*observation to the CSO's profile, as per the "Observations in UNPP" guidance.*

C. Verification: What it does and does not mean

A CSO that has been accorded the "verified" status in UNPP has met all of the UN's minimal due diligence requirements, meaning that it appears to be able to lawfully operate in the country, appears to have a mission and mandate that is in alignment with that of the UN, appears to have adequate measures to safeguard both resources and beneficiaries, and does not appear to pose unacceptable reputational risk to the UN. This is the equivalent of a CSO having an Annex E that has been reviewed and signed by UNICEF.

The fact that a CSO has "verified" status does not mean that it is competent to implement programme activities in any particular sector or geographic area. It also does not mean that the CSO is necessarily the best choice for any particular partnership opportunity. Verification merely means that a CSO has been reviewed by an authorized UN user, and has been deemed to satisfactorily meet minimal due diligence requirements. A "verified" CSO should subsequently undergo additional review of its suitability for a particular partnership opportunity in terms of technical, financial and other strategic considerations.

D. Updates of Verification Status

Some of the questions included in the verification process can be objectively answered, e.g. Is the organization able to legally operate in the country? In contrast, other verification questions may not be fully objectively answered. For example, one UN agency's definition of "unacceptable" reputational risk may differ from another's. UNPP is designed so that a CSO's verification status is dynamic and can be updated, either on the basis of newer information, or a newer interpretation of existing information. Where a UN user with verification rights disagrees with a CSO's current verification status, s/he may subject the CSO to a new verification process, which may result in the assignment of a different status. As the sponsoring UN agencies gain more experience in verifying CSOs, greater clarity on what is considered acceptable and not acceptable reputational risk may become clearer.

A CSO's verification status in UNPP can be continuously updated, but does not automatically expire. In contrast, the current UNICEF policy states that the "core values assessment" of CSO partners is valid for five years. As UNICEF gains experience using UNPP in the initial months/years after rollout, UNICEF will review current policies to determine whether the policies should change, or whether enhancements can be made to the UNPP