



Application and implementation framework for weltwärts cross-organisation partner conferences

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1. Context

In line with the principles set out in SDG 17, the weltwärts volunteer service helps programme stakeholders establish and strengthen partnerships to promote global, sustainable development (intended impact 2 of the weltwärts programme).

The principle of partnership in the collaboration between the programme stakeholders in Germany and in the weltwärts partner countries is laid down in the documents upon which the work of the weltwärts programme is based – such as the funding guideline, the quality standards and the rules of procedure for the Programme Steering Committee (PSC). In addition, the programme is intended to promote networking between civil society organisations in Germany and in the partner countries (see funding guideline).

This promotion of partnership-based collaboration and networking between civil society organisations forms the context in which the programme-wide partner conferences take place. They also facilitate dialogue between partner organisations and the Programme Steering Committee, helping to ensure that the concerns and suggestions of partner organisation employees are heard at the programme steering level.

2. Objectives

The aim of the cross-organisation partner conferences is to promote Global South partner organisation employees' dialogue

- with one another;
- with members of the weltwärts Programme Steering Committee (PSC); and
- with employees working for the German-based organisations.

The specific objectives are as follows:

▪ **Partner conferences are a tool for facilitating knowledge-sharing between participating partner organisations**

The partner conferences offer participating partner organisations a forum to share knowledge and lessons learned and to network with one another. This helps develop and assure quality at the programme implementation level and can lead to or strengthen initiatives to promote continuous regional networking (e.g. partner networks). It also helps strengthen civil society structures in the partner countries.

▪ **Partner conferences are a tool for facilitating dialogue between the PSC and participating partner organisations**

The partner conferences offer the participating PSC members and partner organisations the possibility to engage in direct dialogue with one another. At the conferences, the PSC members provide information about the weltwärts programme and its development, gather new ideas concerning the steering of the programme that arise from the debates held at the conference, and can present a maximum of two specific matters on which the PSC wishes to seek partner organisations' opinions. Although the opinions and positions expressed at the conferences cannot provide a representative picture of the partner organisations' opinions, it is important that they are heard as they provide essential input for the steering of the programme.

- **Partner conferences are a tool for promoting knowledge-sharing between partner organisations and German host organisations**

The partner conferences provide an opportunity for direct knowledge-sharing between partner organisations and German host organisations on programme implementation questions that arise during the conferences. They thus strengthen dialogue between partner organisations and German-based organisations. At the same time, the diverse make-up of the weltwärts joint operation is made visible for the participants by the presence of different German host organisations.

3. Target groups

- **Partner organisations/places of assignment in weltwärts partner countries**

The conferences are mostly aimed at those people at partner organisations/places of assignment in weltwärts partner countries who are directly involved with the weltwärts programme. Partner organisations and places of assignment representing as many German host organisations as possible belonging to different shared interest groups and quality associations, as well as members of partner networks (if they exist in the region concerned) should be invited to participate.

- **German host organisations**

A further target group is employees from German host organisations that have volunteers in/from the countries participating in the conference. In the interests of the environment and resource conservation, it is welcomed if participants from Germany combine their participation at the partner conference with attendance of mid-term seminars and/or visits to partner organisations as part of their work for the weltwärts programme.

- **Programme Steering Committee (PSC)**

Each conference is usually attended by two members of the PSC or their designated deputies. One of the members represents the government and the other member represents civil society. In addition, one returnee representative on the PSC per year can attend a conference.

4. Roles in the conference implementation process

- **Conference-managing organisations**

The conferences are implemented by one or more eligible organisations from Germany. These then act as the conference-managing organisations, responsible both for organisation and logistics aspects and, in accordance with this framework, the content and design of the conference. These tasks include, for example, submitting the application for the conference, financial monitoring and reporting, writing the invitation, selecting the participants and evaluating and documenting the conference and its results.

The conference-managing organisations ensure that German host organisations are explicitly invited to the conference and present in sufficient numbers to facilitate a dialogue between the partners. They also ensure that the German-based organisation is notified when its partner organisation has registered for the conference.

If interest exists, the conference-managing organisations can invite the relevant German Embassy and/or partner government for an appropriate, limited time. This is done in close consultation with, and with the support, if necessary, of, Engagement Global (EG) and Germany's Federal Ministry for

Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ). In addition, the BMZ informs the embassy via the official channels.

- **Programme Steering Committee**

The number and regional distribution of the conferences is decided by the PSC once a year. The PSC can also present a maximum of two specific matters for consultation at the conferences.

The PSC members present at the conferences provide information about the weltwärts programme and developments on the programme and explain PSC decisions to the conference participants. They gather suggestions put forward by the conference delegates and answer their questions about the steering of the programme, during the actual conference as far as possible. If it is not possible to give an answer directly at the conference, the PSC members present ensure that the delegates receive a response concerning outstanding issues/questions after the conference. Once a year, the PSC reviews the feedback from the conferences that have taken place during the past cycle.

- **Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)**

The BMZ tells the PSC, based on the budget situation, how many conferences can be held in the year in question. It also decides, after Engagement Global's preliminary review of the applications for partner conferences, which ones are to be approved.

- **Engagement Global (EG)**

EG generally performs supporting tasks, such as issuing tenders for partner conferences and preparing expressions of interest ready for the PSC decision, organising a preparatory meeting, advice on and preliminary review of applications, sending of invitations, translations of conference documents and preparation of input and background information on the weltwärts programme and matters to be put forward by the PSC. At the end of the conference cycle, EG and the civil society representative responsible for partner involvement in the PSC, prepare the conference feedback for the PSC's perusal.

5. Conference content design

- **Conference design by the conference-managing organisations**

The content and methodological approach are the responsibility of the conference-managing organisations. Working with local partner organisations is welcomed wholeheartedly.

- **Agenda-setting by partner organisations**

The partner conference agenda should primarily be determined by topics put forward by partner organisations.

If there are partner networks in the country/region in which the partner conference is to be held, the conference-managing organisations explicitly invite them to participate in the design of the conference content. The partner conference programme should include space for information about the network and its future development.

It should also provide sufficient opportunity to deal with topics that arise during the conference. In the first part of the conference, in particular, it should be ensured that there are some segments without German host organisations and PSC members. This enables the partner organisations to identify relevant topics about which they would like to share thoughts and ideas during the remainder of the conference.

- **Contribution of information and matters for consultation from the PSC**

The two matters that the PSC can present at conferences should be worded in a goal-oriented manner (i.e. The intention must be clear). As far as possible, background information should be provided to the delegates before the conference. In order not to influence the conference agenda, the matters put forward by the PSC should not be placed at the beginning of the conference.

In addition, the PSC members present at the conference provide information and updates about the weltwärts programme.

6. Venues, size and scheduling

- **Conference venues/regions**

To ensure that conferences take place in as many different regions as possible, the PSC can specify countries/regions that it would like to host a conference in its letter inviting expressions of interest. In addition, the conference-managing organisations can submit expressions of interest for conferences in other countries/regions too. African countries are to be given particular consideration since cooperation with these countries plays a significant role in the Federal Government's development cooperation activities.

The regional distribution of the conferences is ultimately decided by the PSC, on the basis of the expressions of interest.

Conferences can be national or multinational but the region should generally not be too large. The conference-managing organisations specify the choice of country in the expression of interest, giving reasons for their choice. In the case of multinational conferences, economic factors (e.g. travel expenses) and technical factors (e.g. ease of communication between delegates) must be taken into account.

If conferences take place in countries/regions that have already hosted a conference/conferences, it is up to the conference-managing organisations to ensure that the content follows on from the results of the previous conference(s) and that the delegates include people who have not attended in the past.

In general, it must be ensured that the intended venue is easy to reach.

- **Size and scheduling**

Partner conferences are usually attended by 50 participants. It is possible to go higher or lower than this number, provided the reasons are given.

Partner conferences usually last 4 to 5 days. The dates should be coordinated with the official meeting schedule of the weltwärts joint operation in order to ensure that the PSC members can take part.

7. Funding framework, expressions of interest and applications

- **Funding framework for accompanying measures for the programme**

Since cross-organisation partner conferences receive funding through the funding line for accompanying measures for the programme, the approach outlined in that funding line applies. Due to the Federal Government's increased interest in conferences being held, funding will be provided to cover 100% of the eligible total expenditure, budget permitting. The usual application deadlines for accompanying measures for the programme do not apply to partner conferences.

In line with the approach set out for funding accompanying measures for the programme, all weltwärts-approved, non-profit German host organisations as well as any alliances, consortia or networks they form (for example, associations), and all associations of returnee volunteers that have been recognised as being not for profit are eligible to apply, provided they are based in Germany.

The conferences are held by one or more eligible organisations.

Collaboration between several eligible organisations and their partner organisation(s) is particularly desirable as this boosts the networking character of the conferences and enables organisations large and small to get involved in staging a conference. The lead organisations should have the expertise necessary to design and organise an international conference in a professional, delegate-oriented manner.

▪ **Expression of interest**

At least once a year, EG sends a letter on behalf of the weltwärts joint operation, inviting eligible organisations to express their interest (using a simple form) in staging a conference the following year. The PSC uses these expressions of interest to decide the regional distribution of the conferences and which organisations will manage each conference. The expressions of interest are assessed on the basis of the conditions specified in this document as well as any additional criteria, which the PSC can specify each year in advance. If several organisations wish to hold a conference in the same region, EG puts the organisations in contact with each other and suggests that they join forces.

▪ **Submitting an application**

The organisations selected by the PSC receive a request from EG to apply for Federal Government funding for accompanying measures on the weltwärts programme with which to stage the conference in question. As usual, EG is responsible for the preliminary review of the application; the BMZ for the final review and approval.