

ETC2025 : Partnership Model

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Background

The previous ETC2020 partnership model was developed around the implementation of the ETC2020 strategy and the collective related goals of the strategy. The ETC2025 strategy endorsed in 2021 puts more focus on the importance of strategic partnerships, thus requiring a revised partnership model. The previous partnership model limited the number of organizations that could engage in service delivery, and this limited new ideas and approaches. As a result, the number of committed partners in the ETC has been limited with few initiatives being driven outside of the ETC global team. Another issue that contributed to limited commitment from certain partners was the lack of a formal partnership management approach, including a framework around engagement and predefined engagement levels.

ETC principles for partners will still apply in the new partnership model, meaning they will be:

- based on humanitarian principles and must be strictly non-commercial;
- foster interest in humanitarian assistance and actively contribute to ETC activities at the global and/or local levels.

In line with the current model, partnerships should bring expertise, resources, or a tangible connection to humanitarian initiatives that would improve the ETC's ability to support emergency preparedness and response.

Introduction of the new ETC partnership model

A new partnership model framework was developed by the ETC SAG during 2022 and 2023. This framework was presented at the 2023 ETC plenary meeting in Copenhagen, where a working group session was held to collect partner input on how to best implement a new model based on the framework. Understanding the different levels of partner engagement and how to manage the new partnership model were key outcomes of the plenary meeting in 2023.

The model introduces three levels of engagement with different expectations and obligations:

- *Global members*
- *Global partner network*
- *Local partners*

ETC partners as defined by the ETC2020 partnership model will be given the opportunity to choose their desired level of engagement under the new model. While some partners will

commit to a high level of engagement, others may decide to be involved to a lesser extent in ETC activities.

The new model will account for the varying levels of engagement, while managing expected contributions to ETC initiatives and activities. The level of commitment and engagement with the ETC will be reflected in the influence organizations have on the strategy and direction of the cluster. The main benefit to the cluster is the presence of dedicated members who can drive the cluster forward in line with the ETC2025 strategy, enable the cluster to implement its mandate, and help shape it going forward.

Implementation of the new partnership model

The implementation of the new ETC partnership model requires a clear path forward for existing and potential partners interested in working with the cluster under the new levels of engagement – global members, global partner network, or local partners.

Transition of existing ETC partners

The initial phase will transition current ETC partners to the new model, requiring partners to indicate their intention to become a global member or choose to engage as part of the global partner network. This process will involve bilateral conversations with the global ETC team to identify each partner's expectations and motivation for engagement and to agree on the most appropriate modality. Organizations will be able to switch between engagement levels over time, depending on their ability to commit to the expectations of each level.

Application process

The application process will be more individualised than under the current partnership model, with commitments tailored to each organisation's specific capacity and capabilities.

The application process¹ for each of the three levels:

Global members Applications for global ETC membership will be presented to the global ETC for review by either a) an existing ETC partners during the transition phase (early 2024) to the new partnership model or b) by organisations from the global partner network that have maintained active partner status for a minimum of two years².

Following an initial review, the organisation will engage in discussions with the global

¹ Simplified diagram on application process in Annex 1

² Exceptional circumstances might bypass this requirement to be met

ETC team to confirm expectations and commitments as part of the vetting process, ensuring alignment with the ETC's objectives and values, before moving on to a presentation of the application to the existing membership. The last step will be a formal vote by the ETC members on the application, which will require a minimum vote in favour of 50%+1 to accept the application. If the new member application is accepted, the onboarding process will begin, and the organisation officially joins the global ETC membership. If not, the organisation may consider maintaining its status in the global partner network.

- **Global partner network** If an organisation has an interest in joining the global partner network, the global ETC team will carry out a review to decide if the application is admissible. If it is not, the organisation will be informed, and the process is terminated. If the global ETC team concludes that the application is eligible, a bilateral meeting will be set up to discuss how the organisation can contribute to the mandate of the ETC and how mutual information sharing can be beneficial to both parties. An agreement on expectations is established between the ETC and the new partner, determining the areas in which the latter can contribute their expertise and/or resources (e.g. providing equipment, technical assistance, connectivity or operational staff), including details of the scope of collaboration, resource sharing, decision-making processes, and communication channels. While a membership vote is not required, any objections to a partner application from existing members will be considered by the SAG as part of the decision process.
- **Local partners** The ETC will engage local partners based on contextual needs and working relationships with WFP, the ETC and its members. The ETC will collaborate with organizations that wish to forge partnerships at the local level, even if they are not engaged at the global level. These local partners could be involved in various ETC related initiatives, such as the implementation of services for communities' projects, emergency response operations, or preparedness activities. Local partners are critical to humanitarian efforts because of their local knowledge, leadership and collaboration capabilities. Although humanitarian principles should be the guiding force for all partner actions, local partners are not limited to humanitarian organisations, as the private sector and governments should also be considered key partners.

Managing expectations

The new model is based on clear and agreed expectations for the three different levels of engagement. There will be room for flexibility based on various factors that define the scope of engagement, but organisations will be held accountable to their agreed level of engagement.

- **Global members** Expectations for global ETC members will vary by organisation, depending on their nature, resources, and capacity. The expectations will be defined by mutual agreement on customized commitment, including frequency of engagement, support in operations, donations and deployment (in line with possible partnership agreements established with WFP).
- **Global partner network** The purpose of a global partner network is to collaborate by sharing information, knowledge and resources to support the ETC mandate and the wider humanitarian community. Organisations that are part of the global partner network should maximise information and resource sharing through coordination. Therefore, roles and responsibilities need to be clearly pre-defined. This group will also act as a networking forum to share ideas, challenges, and solutions. It should promote collaboration between different sectors that might have limited engagement outside of the emergency context. An annual gathering event will be organized to leverage this network to organise and/or plan workshops, trainings or knowledge sharing sessions to improve the skills and knowledge of all partners involved.
- **Local partners** The ETC involves local partners in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of emergency telecommunication initiatives, by seeking input, addressing concerns, and ensuring local needs are taken into account. This fosters trust, increases community engagement, and improves the overall impact of ETC activities. Local actors are critical to service provision and the extent to which outside intervention and capacity will be required to support the delivery of ETC services. Local partners will be encouraged to provide their perspective in global ETC meetings where it would be appropriate to do so. It is vitally important that local voices are heard to ensure the ETC members, partners, and associated ETC services are fitting the needs in the field.

Evaluation

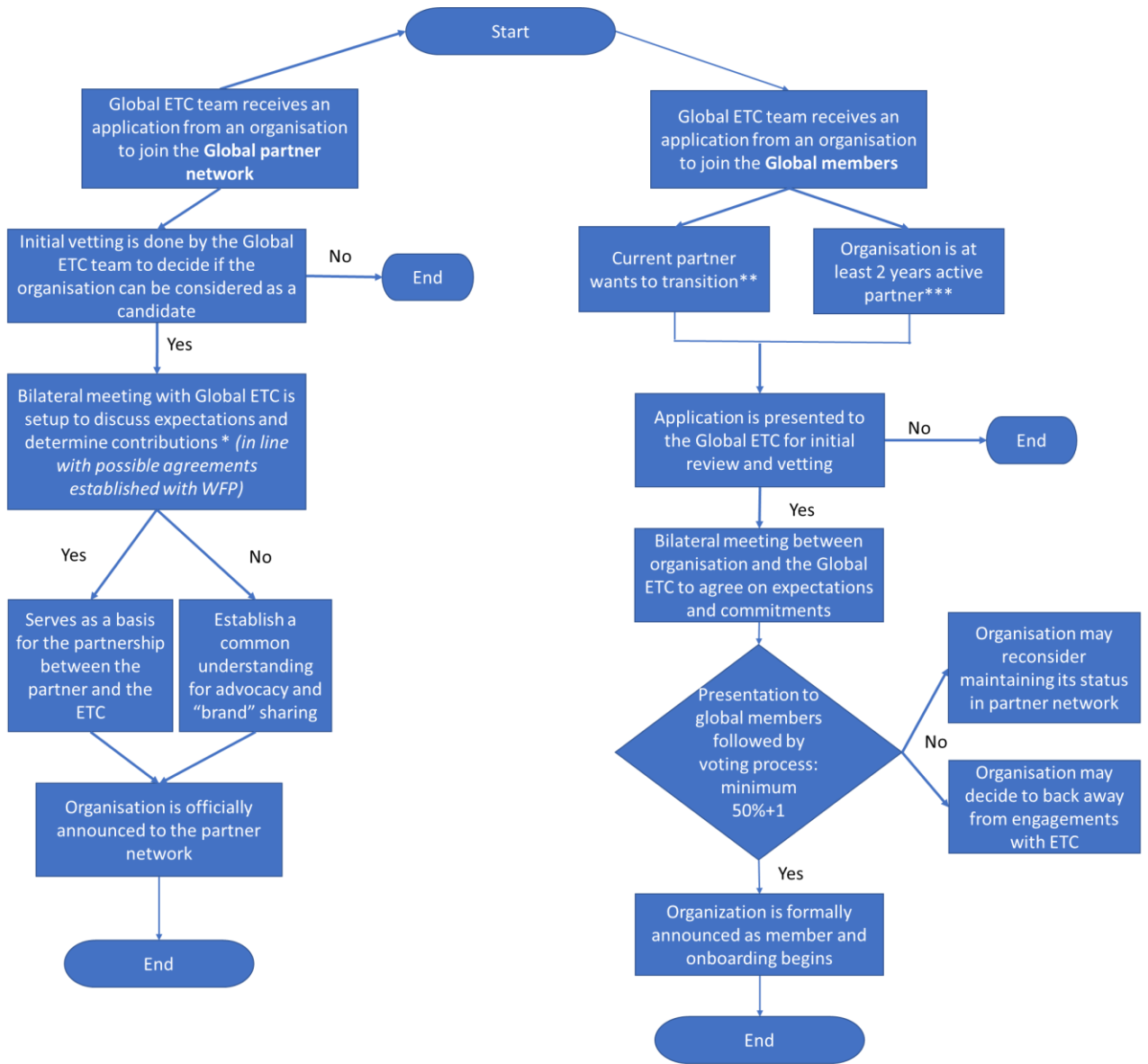
Evaluating engagement and participation is important to keep the model valid and effective, and to revise it when necessary. It is also a key moment in any partner relationship, both for the

organisation and for the global ETC team. In addition to regular discussions and the agreed engagement, there should be time to reassess the satisfaction of both parties and consider possible improvements.

- **Global members** Annual consultations led by the global ETC team will be organised to assess the engagement of each member. If the member organisation decides that it no longer wishes to be a member, it can express this formally to the Global ETC. The annual plenary meeting will be an opportunity to meet face-to-face to discuss and work together as members on certain challenges, opportunities, and common issues.
 - **Global partner network** The global ETC will conduct an annual high-level assessment of partner engagement. In addition, when necessary or requested, an annual meeting will be convened with individual partner organizations.
- Local partners** The global ETC will solicit feedback from partners and the local community to identify opportunities or challenges.

Annexes

Annex 1: Simplified diagram for Global Membership application process



* No membership vote required, but strong objections from existing members are considered by the SAG during the decision process.
 ** Only during model transition phase
 *** Exceptional circumstances might bypass this requirement to be met