



Women's Environment & Development Organization

For a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality and the integrity of the environment

Partner Policy

As a women's global advocacy organization, WEDO works to ensure that women's rights; social, economic and environmental justice; and sustainable development principles – as well as the linkages between them – are at the heart of global and national policies, programs and practices.

WEDO views strong and diverse partnerships as integral to meeting its mission. It allies with women's organizations and networks; environmental, development and human rights organizations; governments; and intergovernmental organizations, including the United Nations, to achieve its goals. WEDO's expertise is in high-level advocacy in international arenas, building bridges among a range of stakeholders – especially the tripartite of government, UN and non-governmental actors. WEDO believes in good partnering to advance its own knowledge, capacity and objectives, as well as to contribute to those of others' and of the wider women's, environmental and development movements of which it is part.

Working with others

Partnering is not just rhetoric for WEDO: we believe in collaboration, and we find it essential toward meeting our goals. Our approach to partnerships reflects our values and how we believe change happens; we each have our strengths and our strategies – but together, we can accomplish more.

This partner policy provides an overview of the principles by which we work and, in turn, those by which we expect our partners to work. Partnerships can be challenging, but we strive to learn from mistakes. This policy is upheld as a 'working' document, and we welcome comments and suggestions to improve.

Mutual benefits

WEDO's partnerships are mutually empowering, focused on mutual knowledge-sharing, organizational development, institutional strengthening and achieving impact. Partnerships should offer both parties the opportunity to learn and grow. Partnerships are based on a shared agenda and a transparent distribution of tasks, building upon each other's skills, expertise, networks and audiences. WEDO believes that programming implemented in partnership is more likely to be inclusive, participatory and impactful.

Six principles for partnerships

Six basic principles serve as a guide for WEDO's practice of partnering.

- ❖ Shared vision and values
- ❖ Mutual accountability
- ❖ Transparency and communication
- ❖ Participatory decision-making
- ❖ Commitment to joint learning and innovative and creative problem-solving
- ❖ Upholding independence



Shared vision and values

Partnerships between WEDO and other organizations are built on a shared vision of a just world that promotes and protects human rights, gender equality and the integrity of the environment, which implies solidarity beyond the implementation of specific programs or activities. A rights-based organization, WEDO believes in the empowerment of all people –and especially women–toward the realization of equality and justice. WEDO staff and affiliates strive to work and live in an eco-friendly manner, taking responsibility for actions and impact on our environment. While sufficient common ground is needed for good partnering, WEDO also respects and celebrates diversity. On any particular issue on which partners disagree, WEDO welcomes dialogue and respectful debate.



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Mutual accountability

WEDO and partners are accountable to a variety of stakeholders – most importantly to the women and communities who stand to benefit from the realization of gender equality and environmental sustainability. In project partnerships, each party must be accountable to the other, responsible for delivery of activities, outputs and outcomes, and for efficient and effective allocation of funds. WEDO is committed to a high standard of financial management and expects the same careful accounting and record-keeping from its partners.



Transparency and communication

Transparency and communication are critical components to strong, respectful and impactful relationships – both at the personal and institutional level. WEDO and partners maintain an 'open door' policy, by which to discuss division of labor, strategies, deliverables and other aspects of joint work. Monitoring and evaluation expectations and systems are aligned from the start, and feedback at every stage of M+E feeds into next steps of the project as much as possible. Disagreements or concerns are addressed openly, with a view toward amicable resolution. All partners receive visibility and recognition for shared work, and attribution is celebrated when appropriate.

Participatory decision-making

A women's advocacy organization, WEDO forms positions and strategies based on input from a wide range of stakeholders around the world – particularly from women and women's organization partners. WEDO promotes participatory decision-making, empowerment of all women, including young and diverse voices and leadership, and inclusion of men. Spaces for information-exchange and consultation – both formal and informal, physical and virtual – are created and included in every program. When the rights and obligations of each partner are negotiated, the expected contribution from each party, including WEDO, are clearly stated. The process for final decision-making is also agreed. As each takes responsibility for fulfilling agreed roles, each takes equal share in celebrating successes and learning from challenges.



Commitment to joint learning and innovative and creative problem-solving

WEDO strives to challenge the status quo and create real change – for the betterment of societies and ecosystems everywhere – and that often means learning from mistakes and experimenting with and weighing risk. As global power structures, economies, population dynamics and environments, et cetera, all change, so do institutions. WEDO and partners strive for continual learning and continual adaptation to new or additional variables. The process is as important as the impact: with clarity of roles and respect for each other at the outset, the learning and innovation curve can fuel adjustments to strategy for maximum result.

Upholding independence

Partnerships are not meant to – nor should they – blur lines of autonomy. WEDO does not impose its views and strategies upon others, and WEDO does not partner with other organizations, including donors, who impose views or strategies upon WEDO. WEDO chooses partners that it believes are responsible, resourceful and effective, and it expects that others choose WEDO for the same reasons.