

## Invitation for Expression of Interest

### 1. Introduction

As part of the Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) to End Violence Against Women Programme, UN Women is in the process of identifying a Responsible Party for the set-up and co-hosting of a new Global ACT CSO Platform. The objective of the platform is to convene women's rights and civil society organizations working to end violence against women and girls, develop a shared advocacy agenda to increase momentum and amplify advocacy priorities of women's rights organizations and movements and carry out priority actions related to forthcoming key advocacy moments and opportunities.

UN Women will award a maximum of 830,000 USD to a global or regional women's rights and feminist organizations or a consortium of women's rights and feminist organizations (including 2 or 3 organizations) with diverse capacities and areas of expertise, such as in advocacy, communication, and policy analysis. To ensure regional representation across the regions currently covered by the ACT Programme, as well as representation of global actors and other regions, expressions of interest from consortium would be preferred. The consortium could include one organization from Africa, one from Latin America, and a global organization with a presence in other regions. However, other compositions of the consortium will also be considered. The duration of the partner agreement with the responsible party will be 2 years (1<sup>st</sup> of July 2024 – 30 of June 2026).

A proportion of the awarded amount may be used for sub-granting to women's rights organizations or organizations working on intersecting issues to foster cross-sectoral collaboration and coalition building across relevant policy areas by creating spaces for the sharing of knowledge, expertise, experiences, and best practices between different sectors; to enable strengthened capacities across sectors to undertake effective advocacy, policy, and programmatic work; and to facilitate the development of joint advocacy strategies, actions and policy recommendations in support of the shared advocacy agenda and action plan, and leverage opportunities for influencing policy documents and processes to integrate EAW.

The full scope of work is outlined below.

#### a. Background and Context

Violence against women and girls (VAWG) is the most pervasive human rights violation worldwide. Nearly thirty years after the Beijing Platform for Action, despite unprecedented momentum and commitments to eliminate VAWG, the prevalence has remained persistent.<sup>1</sup> Global emergencies, crises, and conflict have further intensified the drivers and risk factors of VAWG, and digitalization has exacerbated existing forms of violence and led to the proliferation of new forms. At the same time, the rise in anti-women's-rights movements, shrinking space for civil society and backlash against women's rights are undermining efforts to prevent VAWG and leading to a rise in attacks against women's human rights defenders.

Despite these worrying trends, there is more evidence than ever before that VAWG is preventable. Evidence demonstrates that the presence of a strong and autonomous feminist movement is the single most critical factor to drive policy change in ending violence against women and Girls (EAWG) both in transnational contexts and in domestic policy making.<sup>2</sup> Research has also shown that large-scale reductions in VAWG are possible through

<sup>1</sup> WHO (2021) Violence against Women Prevalence Estimates, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Mama Cash (July 2020) Feminist Activism Works! A review of select literature on the impact of feminist activism in achieving women's rights. AWID (November 2020) Moving More Money to the Drivers of Change: How Bilateral and Multilateral Funders Can Resource Feminist

multi-sectoral coordinated actions of governments and civil society, and intensive advocacy efforts and media campaigns carried out by feminist organizations.<sup>3</sup>

In this context, the European Union and UN Women have partnered to develop a new initiative called Advocacy, Coalition Building and Transformative Feminist Action (ACT) to End Violence Against Women. ACT is a new, game changing joint commitment between the European Commission and UN Women as co-leaders of the Action Coalition on Gender Based Violence (GBV). The ACT programme is focused on strengthening global and regional advocacy, coalition building and transformative feminist action to EVAW. ACT will be implemented over three years in two regions initially: Africa and Latin America, with a global component to accelerate impact and position the priorities of women's rights movements in global fora across a wide range of related issues.

It will build on the EU-UN Spotlight Initiative's results and lessons learned in 26 countries to strengthen women's rights movements at the regional and global levels and to elevate women's rights advocacy priorities in regional and global policy making and intergovernmental fora to build greater momentum globally in EVAW.

Its overall objective is to accelerate efforts to eliminate all forms of VAW, with two overarching objectives:

- To strengthen coalition building, networking, leadership, and resilience of global and regional feminist women's rights movements; *and*
- To increase and enhance advocacy, campaigning, policymaking on EVAW through multistakeholder partnerships and coalitions.

The ACT programme will achieve its results through direct investments in global and regional feminist women's rights organizations to strengthen their institutional capacities, resilience, coalition building, networking, and leadership. It will also coordinate and amplify a shared advocacy agenda that is designed in collaboration with women's rights organizations, bringing on board multi-stakeholder partners and new actors to accelerate efforts to end violence against women and girls. ACT will ensure strong connections and engagement with women's rights movements at the national level to ensure that global and regional level advocacy is informed by grassroots activists as well as to generate impact and results at the country level.

#### **b. Background on the ACT Global Civil Society Platform**

At the global level, the ACT programme will establish a global civil society platform to end violence against women and girls. The objective of this platform will be to convene women's rights and civil society organizations (WROs) working to end violence against women and girls, develop a shared advocacy agenda to increase momentum and amplify advocacy priorities of women's rights organizations and movements.

The ACT CSO platform will therefore act as a vehicle to advance joint advocacy efforts and coordinate access and participation of WRO organizations in strategic policy and advocacy spaces both at the global and regional levels (e.g. Beijing+30 Review, CSW, UNGA, etc.) The ACT CSO platform will also map out those spaces where WROs are currently not able to access or where linkages have not previously been made to the EVAWG agenda (e.g. G20 Summit, Davos, etc.). The ACT CSO platform will ensure that priority is given to lifting voices of grassroots WROs,

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Movement. Htun, M & Weldon, S.L. (2012) The Civic Origins of Progressive Policy Change: Combating Violence against Women in Global Perspective, 1975–2005. *American Political Science Review*. Vol. 106, No. 3 August 2012

<sup>3</sup> Mary Ellsberg, Margarita Quintanilla & William J. Ugarte (2022) Pathways to change: Three decades of feminist research and activism to end violence against women in Nicaragua, *Global Public Health*, DOI: [10.1080/17441692.2022.2038652](https://doi.org/10.1080/17441692.2022.2038652)

intersectional organizations and organizations that do not usually have access to global policy and advocacy spaces to enhance their impact in global advocacy spaces.

Key Objectives of the Platform include:

- To facilitate networking, strategizing and coalition building between WROs across regions to strengthen the global EVAWG movement.
- To strengthen global advocacy on EVAWG through consensus building around a shared advocacy agenda to increase momentum on EVAWG.
- To elevate and amplify the voices and advocacy priorities of grassroots WROs and survivors to drive transformative change.
- To strengthen solidarity and collective care in pushing forward against the pushback.
- To facilitate intersectional and intersectoral alliances to foster partnerships between WROs and CSOs across diverse sectors including for example digital rights activists, climate justice, disability rights, LGBTQI+, indigenous women, afro descendent women, youth led movements amongst others.

Structure, Governance and Management

- **Structure of the Global CSO Platform**

The ACT Global CSO Platform will be civil society-led, co-convened by UN Women and a consortium of feminist women's rights organizations (2 or 3) with diverse capacities and areas of expertise, such as convening and coordination of networks, advocacy, communication, and policy analysis. This consortium could include one organization from Africa, one from Latin America, and a global organization with a presence in other regions. UN Women will provide incubation support to the ACT CSO Platform as it sets up its operations and develops the shared advocacy agenda and work plan.

- **Governance & Decision Making:**

As a first step, UN Women and the ACT Programme's Civil Society Steering Committee <sup>4</sup> will act as an advisory group for the CSO Platform to allow continuity and clear linkages with the ACT Programme. The role of the Civil Society Steering Committee is to be a sounding board and provide direction to the platform as it develops its structure and work plan. Over time, the ACT CSO platform will determine in collaboration with members the best structure based on the available resources, the needs, and the desired engagement of membership. The governance and decision making of the platform should be streamlined whilst ensuring participation and meaningful engagement of structurally marginalized and intersectional groups, local and grassroots groups, addressing unequal power dynamics and ensuring transparency and accountability.

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<sup>4</sup> The ACT Civil Society Steering Committee serves as advisory body to the ACT Programme globally and will be comprised of 10-12 women's rights activists and experts from women's rights organizations, including representation from ACT's regional networks from Latin America, East and Southern Africa and West and Central Africa.

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- **Membership**

The ACT CSO Platform to End Violence Against Women and Girls will be open to all women’s rights and feminist organizations working to EVAWG committed to the shared advocacy agenda. In various discussions with women’s rights and feminist organizations, there was a strong call for an inclusive and open platform that incorporates the experiences of grassroots women and girls, especially from the global south/majority. Members should fulfill one of the descriptions below:

1. Women’s Rights/Feminist Organizations engaged in EAWG advocacy.
2. Women’s Rights/Feminist Organizations working at the intersection of EAWG and other intersectional issues: For example, LBTQI, disability, young women, indigenous women, survivor networks, and young women-led organizations to name a few.
3. Women’s Rights/Feminist Organizations working at the intersection of EAWG and other sectoral issues; For example, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights, Digital Rights, Climate Justice, Women’s economic empowerment, etc.

Once in place, the ACT CSO Platform, with support from UN Women, will invite WROs to join the platform and will manage membership engagement and coordination.

Roles and Responsibilities

- **UN Women:** will serve as a strategic partner to the ACT CSO platform and as a co-convenor. This includes:
  - Facilitating political engagement with high-level decision-makers, policymakers, Governments, and donors
  - Building bridges and facilitating collaboration with other multistakeholder platforms such as the Generation Equality Action Coalitions.
  - Facilitating engagement and collaboration with the EDVAW Platform of Independent Expert Mechanisms on Violence against Women to promote greater accountability of member states commitments to EAWG
  - Build bridges between CSOs and other sectoral actors, e.g., private sector, tech sectors, etc.
  - Convening CSOs during key strategic moments
  - Supporting the Platform with developing strategic communication: UN Women can support the platform to work with advertising agencies and other experts, e.g., behavioral experts to design impactful and strategic messaging and campaigns
  - Engaging influencers to support the dissemination of advocacy priorities and campaigns
  - Resource mobilization for the Platform and ACT Programme more broadly

**UN Women has consulted with women's rights and feminist organizations at global and regional level to confirm the necessity and backing for the ACT CSO Platform to End Violence Against Women and girls (EVAWG). Consultation has also been carried out to develop initial thinking on advocacy priorities, governance, and operations. It is expected that the Consortium engaged to co-host the ACT CSO platform to End Violence Against Women and girls (EVAWG), will build on these efforts in a collaborative and inclusive manner with women’s rights organizations, networks and coalitions engaged as part of the platform.**

- **Description of expected results**

The Consortium engaged as a Responsible Party<sup>5</sup> will be expected to a) Ensure the set-up and co-hosting of the ACT Global CSO platform, in collaboration with UN Women, b) Convene women’s rights and civil society organizations working to end violence against women and girls as part of the ACT CSO Platform and develop a shared advocacy agenda to increase momentum and amplify advocacy priorities of women’s rights organizations and movements and c) Carry out the roles and functions of the ACT CSO Platform (as outlined below and in further collaboration and consultation with members of the ACT CSO platform), including priority actions related to forthcoming key advocacy moments and opportunities and fostering cross-sectoral collaboration and coalition building in support of the shared advocacy agenda and priorities.

**Overarching roles and functions of the ACT CSO Platform to be carried out:**

1. Creating space for solidarity and sharing of experience and knowledge: This could include:
  - **Convening women’s rights organizations** to facilitate the sharing of knowledge and experiences on EVAWG to foster cross-regional learning as well as to **create a space for feminist networking, strategizing and co-creating.**
  - **Support collective care and solidarity action:** Provide a space for collective care and to mobilize solidarity actions in response to threats, crises, rollback in laws and policies or other opportunities related to EVAWG, including through developing joint statements, shadow reports, petitions on EVAWG
  - **Facilitate skill sharing and capacity strengthening:** The platform could be a space for members to share their skills and expertise and strengthen the capacity of WROs to develop their advocacy and leadership on EVAWG including through cross-sectoral and intersectional alliances to enable learning and cross-fertilization across diverse fields e.g., climate justice, digital rights, disability rights to name a few.

1.1. Key indicators of success within 2 years include:

- A more cohesive and coordinated global movement to EVAWG
- Number of coalitions, networks and organization that become members of the ACT CSO Platform and actively collaborate in the space.
- Number of spaces created for feminist and women’s rights organizations to come together to develop common advocacy priorities, share knowledge and learning and build upon self-care practices and ways of working.
- Number of civil society organizations, that have strengthened capacity to exercise their leadership role towards the eliminating of violence against women and girls..
- Number of organizations representing diverse and intersecting sectors of women's rights organization engaged and/or number of intersecting sectors engaged in the ACT Global CSO platform

2. Coordinate EVAWG advocacy and develop strategic partnerships and alliances. This includes:

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<sup>5</sup> The Responsible Party is the organization UN Women enters into a partner agreement with to carry out the work as outlined in the Terms of Reference and partner agreement.

**Developing a shared advocacy agenda and policy advocacy campaigns** with agreed messaging at global and regional levels to inform policy and legislative change, and institutional practices related to EVAWG.

- **Developing a road map/action plan** identifying key advocacy strategies, key moments, and events including global and regional intergovernmental and policymaking fora amongst others. This should be anchored around the Beijing+30 review process and should be developed in a participatory, collaborative and inclusive manner with member organizations of the ACT CSO Platform. Key advocacy moments could include the United Nations General Assembly (UNGA79) and the Summit of the Future; CSW69/Beijing+ 30, Financing for Development, the High Level Political Forum and UNGA80), **the 2024 G20 Rio de Janeiro Summit, SVRI Forum 2024 amongst others.**
- **Managing Partnerships and Alliances:** Forge strategic partnerships and alliances with other organizations and relevant stakeholders, including across intersecting sectors, to advance the joint advocacy agenda.

2.1. Key indicators of success within 2 years include:

- A clear shared advocacy agenda on EVAWG with buy-in from women’s rights movements globally developed.
- 2-year advocacy plan developed leveraging key strategic opportunities to advance key advocacy priorities.
- Number of coordinated actions by women’s rights organizations/coalitions and multistakeholder partnerships at global and regional level to advocate jointly on EVAW.
- Number of cross-sectorial alliances between ending violence against women (EVAW) experts and other sectors established and/or strengthened.

3. Developing Advocacy and Communication and strategies, messages and materials in partnership with UN Women. This includes:

- **Co-creating a comprehensive communication strategy in cooperation with UN Women** to engage relevant stakeholders and mobilize support for the joint advocacy agenda using innovative and strategic communication approaches.
- **Developing and disseminating communication and advocacy products and materials** on specific advocacy priorities in cooperation with UN Women
- **In partnership with UN Women providing communication support to members.** The platform could support members with communication training, and tools and help them design compelling advocacy messages and campaigns to EVAWG.

3.1. Key indicators of success within 2 years include:

- Number of advocacy and communication products that create awareness and visibility for the EVAWG priorities developed.

- Number of advocacy-oriented knowledge products, briefs or policy papers produced and published in partnership with WROs and academia/research institutes at regional and/or global level.
- Number of global and regional normative and policy processes that have incorporated EAW priorities/recommendations of CSO's/women's rights coalitions into their outcome documents, frameworks, policies.

Other key performance indicators may be defined in cooperation with the Responsible Party.

It is expected that interpretation (English/Spanish/French) will be provided by the responsible party for key meetings and process of the global platform to ensure inclusive engagement across regions.

A proportion of the awarded amount may be used for sub-granting to women's rights organizations or organizations working on intersecting issues to foster cross-sectoral collaboration and coalition building across relevant policy areas by creating spaces for the sharing of knowledge, expertise, experiences, and best practices between different sectors; to enable strengthened capacities across sectors to undertake effective advocacy, policy, and programmatic work; and to facilitate the development of joint advocacy strategies, actions and policy recommendations in support of the shared advocacy agenda and action plan, and leverage opportunities for influencing policy documents and processes to integrate EAW as well as for identifying potential new entry points for financing EAW efforts.

This could, for example, also include cross-sectoral collaboration and coalition building between ending violence against women (EAW) experts and digital rights and EAW experts to cultivate learning and cross-fertilization to inform the development of effective strategies and solutions to prevent and eliminate tech facilitated GBV, climate justice, disability rights, LGBTQI+ or other areas aligned with the shared advocacy agenda and action plan.

This could also include supporting the engagement, and to facilitate participation and strengthen the visibility and influence, particularly of under-represented groups of women and girls, within collective advocacy on EAWG in preparation for and during key advocacy spaces and moments, and regional or global policy and decision-making fora relevant to EAWG linked to the shared advocacy agenda and action plan.

Any grantmaking component included in the proposal must not exceed 50% of the partner agreement budget and each individual grant may not exceed 25% of the Partner agreement budget.

### **Sustainability Plan**

UN Women will provide incubation support to the ACT CSO Platform as it sets up its operations and develops the shared advocacy agenda and work plan. However, it is expected that a sustainability and resource mobilization plan is developed during the first year of operation to ensure continuation of the ACT Global CSO Platform, as needed, beyond the programme lifecycle.

2. **Timeframe:** The duration of the partner agreement with the responsible party will be 2 years ( 1<sup>st</sup> of July 2024 – 30 of June 2026)

- **Competencies:**

#### Mandatory Requirements:

*Please see Annex 1 for details on the mandatory requirements.*

### Technical & Operational competencies

For the ACT Global CSO platform to be successful, the global or regional women's rights and feminist organizations, or consortium of organizations must have the following expertise and experience:

- The Responsible Party must consist of a global or regional women's rights and feminist organizations or a consortium of women's rights and feminist organizations (2 or 3) with diverse capacities and areas of expertise, such as advocacy, communication, and policy analysis.
- The global or regional women's rights and feminist organizations or consortium must have the capacity to convene women's rights organizations across regions globally. To ensure regional representation across the regions currently covered by the ACT Programme, as well as representation of global actors and other regions, expressions of interest from consortium would be preferred. The consortium could include one organization from Africa, one from Latin America, and a global organization with a presence in other regions. However, other compositions of the consortium will also be considered.
- Expertise and at least five years of experience in the field of ending violence against women and girls. In exceptional circumstances three years of experience may be accepted.
- At least 3 years of experience in engaging in global advocacy and policy analysis on EVAWG, such as developing strategic advocacy actions, political analysis, intelligence gathering on the advocacy landscape and relevant policy decisions, engagement in accountability mechanisms, influencing policy outcomes, tracking EVAWG commitments, developing joint policy statements or briefs, engaging in global policy spaces, or other.
- At least 3 years of experience in movement building and coordination, including the ability to manage different stakeholders and create consensus-building.
- Capacity to bring together women's rights and feminist organizations and co-create strategies and tactics to advance a collective advocacy agenda.
- Experience in strategic communications. This includes developing advocacy campaigns, awareness-raising.
- Experience with and capacity to carry out grant management, if grantmaking is included in the proposal.
- Experience in Partnership Development, including experience engaging with different stakeholders, including Governments, policymakers, donors, CSOs, etc.

Those interested in participating in the process should forward their expression of interest to UN Women at [act@unwomen.org](mailto:act@unwomen.org) by the 24th of May 2024 23:59 New York time enclosing the information listed below.

- Full legal name and address of applying organizations (lead organization and other organizations forming part of the consortium if applicable).
- Copy of valid legal registration in the country (lead organization and other organizations forming part of the consortium if applicable).
- Mandate or mission statement of organization (lead organization and other organizations forming part of the consortium if applicable).
- Statement of organization's expertise in the relevant area.
- Statement of consortium composition, complementarity, and combined expertise in the relevant area if applying as a consortium.
- Description of the organization's existing operations in the subject matter area, including how long the operations have been carried out.
- Completion of the Annex 1 – Mandatory Requirements Form



Upon receipt of the above information from prospective Responsible Parties, UN Women will review applicants for placement on a short-list of potential Responsible Parties. During the implementation of the programme cycle, those short-listed candidates may be invited to submit formal proposals (using the standard UN Women Call for Proposals template) to become a Responsible Party. The Call for Proposals will provide a more detailed description of the scope of work.

**Note:**

Due to the high volume of communications, UN Women is not in a position to confirm receipt of completed expressions of interest.

**Annex 1 – Mandatory Requirements**

**Mandatory Requirements/Pre-Qualification Criteria and Contractual Aspects**

**[To be completed by proponents and returned with their expression of interest]**

Proponents are requested to complete this form and return it as part of their submission. Proponents will receive a **pass/fail rating** on this section. To be considered, proponents must meet all the mandatory criteria described below. All questions should be answered on this form or an exact duplicate thereof. UN Women reserves the right to verify any information contained in a proponent’s response or to request additional information after the proposal is received. **Incomplete or inadequate responses, lack of response or misrepresentation in responding to any questions will result in disqualification.**

Mandatory requirements/pre-qualification criteria	Proponent’s response
1. Are the services being requested part of the key services that the proponent has been performing as an organization?	Yes/No
2. Is the proponent duly registered or does it have the legal basis/mandate as an organization? [Please attach a copy of the official registration here].	Yes/No
3. Has the proponent as an organization been in operation for at least five (5) years <sup>6</sup> ?	Yes/No
4. Does the proponent have a permanent office within the location area?	Yes/No
5. Can UN Women conduct a site visit at a customer location in the location or area with a similar scope of work as the one described in this Call for Expression of Interest (CFEOI)?	Yes/No
6. Fraud or other wrongdoing: i. Has the proponent, its employees, personnel, sub-contractor or sub-contractor’s sub-contractor or sub-partner or sub-partner’s partner been the subject of a finding of fraud or any other wrongdoing following an investigation conducted by UN Women, another United Nations entity or otherwise? OR ii. Is the proponent, its employees, personnel, sub-contractor or sub-contractor’s sub-contractor or sub-partner or sub-partner’s partner currently under investigation for fraud or any other wrongdoing by UN Women, another UN entity or otherwise?	Yes/No
7. Sexual exploitation and abuse: i. Has the proponent, its employees, personnel, sub-contractor or sub-contractor’s sub-contractor or sub-partner or sub-partner’s partner been the subject of any investigations and/or been charged for any misconduct related to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) <sup>7</sup> ? OR	Yes/No

<sup>6</sup> In exceptional circumstances, three (3) years of history registration may be accepted and it must be fully justified.

<sup>7</sup> [Secretary General’s Bulletin, 9 October 2003 on “Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse” \(ST/SGB/2003/13\)](#), and United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving Implementing Partners.

<p>ii. Is the proponent, its employees, personnel, sub-contractor or sub-contractor's sub-contractor or sub-partner or sub-partner's partner currently under investigation for SEA by UN Women, another UN entity or otherwise?</p> <p><a href="#">Secretary General's Bulletin, 9 October 2003 on "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse"(ST/SGB/2003/13)</a>, and <a href="#">United Nations Protocol on Allegations of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse involving Implementing Partners</a>.</p>	
<p>8. Has the proponent or any of its employees or personnel been placed on any relevant sanctions list including as a minimum the Consolidated United Nations Security Council Sanctions List(s), United Nations Global Market Place Vendor ineligibility and any other donor sanction list that may be available for use, as applicable?</p>	Yes/No
<p>9. Has the proponent read and accepted the standards set out in section 3 of <a href="#">ST/SGB/2003/13</a> "Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse"?</p>	Yes/No
<p>10. Does the proponent acknowledge that SEA is strictly prohibited, and that UN Women will apply a policy of "zero tolerance" in respect to SEA of anyone including the proponent's employees, agents, sub-partners and sub-contractors or any other persons engaged by the proponent to perform any services?</p>	Yes/No
<p>11. Has the proponent reviewed and taken note of <a href="#">UN Women Anti-Fraud Policy</a>?</p>	Yes/No

**Acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in the template Partner Agreement.**

- Proponents must include an acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in the template Partner Agreement or their reservations or objections thereto.
- Submission of any such reservations or objections does not mean that UN Women will automatically accept them should the proponent be selected as a Responsible Party.
- UN Women will evaluate any reservation or objection during its evaluation of the proposal and may accept or reject any such reservation or objection.

Requirements	Proponent's response
Acceptance of the terms and conditions outlined in the template <a href="#">Partner Agreement</a> .	Yes/No
Indicate any reservations or objections to the terms and conditions outlined in the template <a href="#">Partner Agreement</a> .	