Partnership and due diligence policy

TIPCS enters a partnership only after due diligence and a signed written agreement, and keeps its independence, its non-partisan stance and its transparency towards members, donors and the public.

TIPCS-POL-DRAFT-13 · Draft 1.0 for Board ratification, 8 Nov 2026 (not yet ratified; not legally reviewed)

1. Purpose and scope

This policy sets the rules under which TIPCS, the Tunisian Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies, proposes, assesses, concludes, runs and ends partnerships, memoranda of understanding (MoUs) and similar cooperation arrangements with institutions, associations, companies, public bodies and funders.

It applies to the Board, the executive administration, department heads, staff, volunteers and anyone who speaks for TIPCS. It complements the ratified policies on Sanctions and due diligence, Conflicts of interest and Anti-fraud and integrity, which it does not rewrite.

2. Definitions

- Partner: an organisation that cooperates with TIPCS on research, training, events, services or funding under a written agreement.
- MoU: a written statement of intent that frames cooperation; it creates no spending commitment unless it says so and is signed as required by section 4.
- Due diligence: the documented checks on identity, legal status, reputation, sources of funds, sanctions exposure and conflicts of interest carried out before and during a partnership.
- Visibility without endorsement: showing a partner's name or logo to acknowledge cooperation, without implying that TIPCS endorses the partner's products, views or politics.
- Partner types are linked to TIPCS membership categories: Tunisian association, International CSO, Institutional member, Partner and Benefactor (see the membership catalogue).

3. Principles

- Independence: no partner, donor or public authority directs TIPCS research results, publications or programme choices.
- Non-partisan: TIPCS does not partner for the purpose of supporting a political party, candidate or campaign.
- No partnership before signature: no logo use, joint announcement, shared event commitment or transfer of funds before the written agreement is signed.
- Transparency: partnerships and funding sources are recorded and disclosed as the law and the Board require.
- Proportionality: checks are lighter for low-risk cooperation and stronger where funds, children's safety, data or reputation are at stake.

4. Rules and procedure

The Board supervises; the executive administration manages and signs. Steps:

- Proposal: a department head or member submits a one-page proposal stating purpose, partner type, expected benefit, any money involved and any link to the proposer.
- Screening: the executive administration runs due diligence (identity, registration, governance, funding sources, sanctions lists, press and reputation, conflicts of interest) and records the result and risk level.
- Review: the executive administration recommends; low-risk MoUs without funds may be approved by the executive administration and reported to the Board; any agreement with funds, data sharing or exclusivity goes to the Board.
- Drafting: the agreement states roles, duration, intellectual property, data protection, safeguarding, visibility rules, termination and dispute handling, and is checked by TIPCS legal counsel.
- Signature: three different signatures are required for any spending: the requester, the budget holder and the Board-designated signatory. Only then may the partnership be announced.
- Monitoring: the focal person reports at least once a year; the file is kept with the agreement.

5. Roles and responsibilities

- Board: approves this policy, approves partnerships with funds, data sharing, exclusivity or high risk, and receives an annual list of partners.
- Executive administration: runs due diligence, negotiates, signs within delegated authority, keeps the register of partnerships.
- Department heads: propose partnerships and act as focal persons.
- Legal counsel: reviews agreements on request.
- Everyone: declares conflicts of interest and reports concerns.

6. Rights and obligations of the partner

A partner must be a lawful organisation led by adults, may be asked for documents, must disclose its own funders where relevant, must respect TIPCS's independence, safeguarding and data rules, and must not present itself as speaking for TIPCS. A partner has the right to a clear written agreement, to be told the reasons for a refusal in general terms, and to end the cooperation under the agreement's terms. Visibility is mutual and approved in writing; it never implies endorsement, accreditation or a state-recognised outcome.

7. Legal framework

- Decree-Law 2011-88 on associations: TIPCS is an association; its funding must be transparent, accounted for and, where foreign, handled and declared as that text requires. Check the current text before relying on this.
- Organic Law 2015-26 of 7 August 2015 on counter-terrorism and anti-money-laundering, as amended by Organic Law 2019-9 of 23 January 2019: TIPCS must know who its partners and funders are and where funds come from.
- Organic Law 2004-63 of 27 July 2004 on personal data: any sharing of personal data with a partner needs a lawful basis and a written clause.

- Code of Obligations and Contracts: partnership agreements are contracts and must be clear, lawful and signed by persons with authority.
- Law 2000-83 of 9 August 2000 on electronic exchanges: electronic signature may be used where the Board allows it.
- Law 2017-10 of 7 March 2017 on reporting corruption and protecting whistleblowers.

8. Data protection

Partner files contain personal data of contact persons and signatories. TIPCS collects only what is needed, uses it for the partnership, shares it only under a written clause, and respects Organic Law 2004-63. The TIPCS declaration to the INPDP is in progress. Retention: [period to be fixed by the Board after the INPDP declaration]. Data transfers abroad need a lawful basis and a safeguard in the agreement.

Controller: Tunisian Institute for Peace and Conflict Studies (TIPCS), registered office Avenue Mahmoud Bourguiba, Monastir 5000, Tunisia; contact Contact@tipcs.org. Under Organic Law 2004-63 you may ask to be informed about how your data is used, to access it, to have it corrected, to object to its processing and to have it deleted, within the limits of that law, by writing to Contact@tipcs.org. If you are not satisfied with our answer, you may complain to the National Authority for the Protection of Personal Data (INPDP), www.inpdp.nat.tn.

9. Funds from abroad, safeguarding, non-discrimination and conflicts of interest

Funds from abroad are accepted only from identified, lawful sources, received through TIPCS's own bank account, recorded in its accounts and disclosed as Decree-Law 2011-88 and the Sanctions and due diligence policy require. TIPCS refuses funds of unknown origin or tied to conditions that harm its independence. Partners working with people must apply safeguarding standards at least as strong as TIPCS's, never involve minors in TIPCS activities, and not discriminate. Anyone with a personal, financial or political interest in a partner must declare it and step out of the decision.

10. Ending a partnership, complaints and whistleblowing

TIPCS may suspend or end a partnership, with written reasons, if the partner breaches the agreement, appears on a sanctions list, damages TIPCS's independence or reputation, or fails safeguarding or data rules. Ending ends all use of names and logos, subject to the agreement's wind-down terms, and a closing note is filed. Complaints or concerns about a partnership go to Contact@tipcs.org; for confidential matters use the subject "CONFIDENTIAL – Concern". Whistleblowers are protected as Law 2017-10 provides, and the ratified Whistleblowing and complaints policy applies.

11. Review of the policy and version control

The Board reviews this policy at least annually. Each version carries a number and date, and superseded versions are archived. Contact: Contact@tipcs.org.

> Applications start from a TIPCS account at www.tipcs.org. TIPCS does not promise a job, a diploma, a visa or admission anywhere. Adults only (18+). General information, not legal advice: check the current official texts before relying on it.