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# PARTNERSHIPS AND DFI ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

*BINDING PRINCIPLES FOR STANDARDS-EQUIVALENT PARTNERSHIPS,  
BANKABLE PIPELINES, AND INTEGRITY-ASSURED CO-FINANCING*

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# Partnerships and DFI Engagement Strategy

## Preamble

This Strategy codifies the principles and modalities through which Creativa Center and its ecosystem entities engage Development Finance Institutions (DFIs), Multilateral Development Banks (MDBs), bilateral partners, private finance, and philanthropy in support of Agenda 2074 programs. It aligns with global development compacts and fiduciary norms while safeguarding country ownership, additionality, transparency, and climate-aligned investment.

## Chapter 1 – Engagement Principles

Engagement with DFIs and partners shall adhere to a set of binding principles designed to ensure legitimacy, coherence with public policy, and durable value creation. First, strategic alignment is required with the UN 2030 Agenda, the AU Agenda 2063, and climate-mainstreaming commitments under the Paris Agreement. Program designs shall demonstrate measurable contributions to national development plans, sector strategies, and nationally determined contributions, with indicators harmonized under the Unified MEL (Document 08).

Second, fiduciary integrity and safeguards equivalence are mandatory. Where Creativa programs rely on partner finance, the environmental and social risk management, labor and community protections, and stakeholder engagement processes shall be demonstrably equivalent to, or stricter than, the World Bank ESF and the IFC Performance Standards (2012), as operationalized through Document 06 (ESG Safeguards). Human rights due diligence shall be undertaken in accordance with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and responsible business conduct expectations under the OECD Guidelines (2023).

Third, additionality, country ownership, and subsidiarity shall govern the deployment of concessional and blended finance. Catalytic capital must not displace private investment that would occur absent intervention; instead, it should target addressable market failures and crowd-in sustainable private participation. In structuring blended operations, parties shall be guided by the OECD Blended Finance Principles and apply transparent pricing, fair risk-sharing, and proportionate returns, with clear exit pathways.

Fourth, transparency, accountability, and anti-corruption are non-derogable. All co-financing and procurement shall be subject to publication and assurance duties defined in Document 13 (Chapter 5) and Document 09, with internal controls consistent with COSO, anti-bribery systems under ISO 37001, compliance management under ISO 37301, and whistleblowing mechanisms under ISO 37002. Conflicts of interest shall be disclosed and managed under Document 11, with sanctions screening and exclusion lists applied where required by funders.

Fifth, digital trust, data protection, and cyber resilience shall be integral to all engagements. Data processing shall conform to GDPR and information security to ISO/IEC 27001, with security architecture mapped to the NIST Cybersecurity Framework 2.0 and NIST SP 800-207 (Zero Trust) and enforced through Microsoft platform controls (identity protection via Entra ID, data governance via Purview, and security operations via Sentinel).

Finally, equity and inclusion commitments shall be substantive and evidenced. Engagements shall embed fair labor, gender equity, and community participation provisions consistent with the **IFC** Performance Standards (notably PS2 and PS4), and they shall be evaluated for impacts on vulnerable groups in line with the UN 2030 Agenda pledge to “leave no one behind,” with verification under Document 08 and Document 09.

## Chapter 2 – Pipeline Development

Pipeline development shall proceed through a gated, evidence-based sequence that ensures strategic alignment, safeguards equivalence, and bankability prior to funding commitments. Each prospective operation shall pass through screening, structuring, diligence, and readiness gates, with documentary artifacts maintained in the Financial Transparency Register (Document 13, Chapter 5) and assurance checkpoints pursuant to Document 09.

Initial screening shall establish explicit alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda (SDGs), the AU Agenda 2063, and host-country strategies, and it shall confirm climate consistency with nationally determined contributions under the Paris Agreement. Material risks shall be categorized using the World Bank ESF risk typology and IFC sector guidance, ensuring an early view of safeguards requirements and disclosure expectations under the World Bank ESF and the IFC Performance Standards (2012).

Structuring shall convert concepts into bankable designs with defined outputs, outcomes, and indicative economics. Costing shall integrate life-cycle considerations and sustainable procurement practices in accordance with ISO 20400, while risk allocation shall be framed by a preliminary risk register and mitigations aligned to ISO 31000 Risk Management. Digital-trust architecture and data processing arrangements shall be defined at this stage to meet GDPR obligations and information security requirements consistent with ISO/IEC 27001, with technical enforcement mapped to NIST CSF 2.0 and NIST SP 800-207 (Zero Trust) and implemented through Microsoft platform controls (Entra ID; Purview; Sentinel).

Due diligence shall verify safeguards, financial viability, legal permissibility, and stakeholder acceptability. Environmental and social instruments (ESIAs, ESMPs, labor plans, grievance mechanisms) shall be prepared to standards at least equivalent to the World Bank ESF and IFC PS; responsible business conduct and human rights due diligence shall be evidenced in line with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (2023) and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Financial models shall be subjected to sensitivity testing and value-for-money analysis consistent with the OECD DAC evaluation criteria, and climate-related claims, where applicable, shall be positioned for external assurance under ISAE 3410.

Readiness shall be confirmed through a phased implementation plan with milestones, tranche logic, and domestication requirements, cross-referencing Document 20 (Implementation Roadmap and Phasing Guide). Country-system reliance may be authorized where capacity assessments demonstrate acceptable control environments and gap-mitigation consistent with COSO Internal Control and internal audit standards under the IIA IPPF. Publication and data-sharing plans shall adopt open standards such as the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) and IATI where feasible.

Pipeline governance shall preserve separation of functions. First-line program teams design and execute; second-line compliance, ESG, and digital-trust units challenge and advise; third-line internal audit performs independent assurance. External peer review and validation shall be scheduled at critical gates in accordance with Document 09, with findings disclosed in the Transparency Register

## Chapter 3 – Co-Financing Standards

Co-financing shall be structured to protect host-country interests, ensure additionality, and uphold parity of safeguards across all financing tranches. Documentation shall clearly delineate roles, decision rights, risk-sharing, and disclosure duties, and it shall embed standards compatibility clauses confirming adherence to environmental, social, governance, and anti-corruption rules equivalent to the lead DFI's requirements and to Creativa's internal frameworks.

Standards harmonization shall be achieved through explicit equivalence language referencing the World Bank ESF and the IFC Performance Standards (2012), supplemented by responsible business conduct under the OECD Guidelines (2023) and human-rights due diligence under the UNGPs. Where blended finance is contemplated, pricing, risk tranching, and subsidy levels shall be transparent and proportionate, guided by the OECD Blended Finance Principles and designed to crowd-in private capital rather than displace it.

Allocation of proceeds and disbursement conditions shall be aligned to measurable outputs and outcomes defined in the Unified MEL (Document 08), with climate-aligned operations evidencing contribution to national and sectoral commitments under the Paris Agreement and the UN 2030 Agenda. Tranche releases shall be contingent on verifiable performance, fiduciary compliance, and adherence to ESG covenants, subject to independent verification and, where relevant, external assurance under ISAE 3000 (Revised) or ISAE 3410.

Procurement under co-financing shall apply sustainable procurement practices consistent with ISO 20400 and enable publication of award information in machine-readable form in line with OCDS and donor transparency norms such as IATI. Beneficial ownership disclosure shall be a default expectation, subject to legal constraints and donor terms, with exceptions narrowly tailored and documented under ISO 37301 Compliance Management Systems and protected disclosure mechanisms pursuant to ISO 37002.

Financial integrity shall be protected through anti-bribery controls under ISO 37001, internal control systems aligned to COSO, and independent internal audit under the IIA IPPF. Digital-trust controls and data-sharing arrangements shall be defined in co-financing agreements, ensuring GDPR compliance, information security aligned to ISO/IEC 27001, and cyber-resilience mapped to NIST CSF 2.0 and NIST SP 800-207, implemented via Entra ID, Purview, and Sentinel.

Remedies, step-in rights, and dispute resolution mechanisms shall be calibrated to protect program continuity and the public interest. Material breach of ESG covenants, corruption findings, or non-disclosure of material facts shall trigger escalation under Document 11 (Compliance Code), corrective action plans per Document 06 (ESG Safeguards), and, where needed, suspension or reallocation of funds. All such actions shall be transparently recorded in the Financial Transparency Register (Document 13, Chapter 5).

## Chapter 4 – Bilateral and Multilateral Partnerships

Partnerships with bilateral agencies and multilateral institutions shall be framed by formal instruments—memoranda of understanding, contribution agreements, program partnership arrangements, and framework cooperation agreements—that codify alignment with the UN 2030 Agenda (SDGs), AU Agenda 2063, and climate commitments under the Paris Agreement. Each instrument shall incorporate safeguards-equivalence clauses confirming adherence to environmental and social requirements at least equivalent to the World Bank ESF and IFC Performance Standards

(2012), and shall operationalize responsible business conduct and human-rights due diligence consistent with the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises (2023) and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights.

Country ownership shall be preserved through explicit reference to national development plans, sector strategies, and budget frameworks, with domestication pathways defined in accordance with Document 20 (Implementation Roadmap). Coherence and additionality shall be demonstrated by mapping each proposed operation to existing partner portfolios and identifying market failures that justify concessionality or technical assistance, guided by the OECD Blended Finance Principles and value-for-money analysis under the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria. Where the partnership involves climate-related financing or results statements, greenhouse-gas metrics and methodologies shall be positioned for external assurance in line with ISAE 3410.

Procurement and contract award processes under bilateral or multilateral financing shall adopt sustainable procurement practices per ISO 20400, maintain transparent and competitive procedures, and commit to publication of notices, awards, and contract data in machine-readable formats aligned with the Open Contracting Data Standard (OCDS) and, where feasible, aid transparency standards such as IATI. Beneficial ownership disclosure for prime vendors and first-tier subcontractors shall be required where permitted by law and donor terms, with exceptions documented under compliance controls consistent with ISO 37301 and protected reporting channels pursuant to ISO 37002.

Financial integrity and anti-corruption are non-derogable obligations. All partnership instruments shall include representations and warranties regarding the absence of corrupt practices and shall embed internal control and assurance regimes consonant with COSO Internal Control – Integrated Framework, internal auditing under the IIA IPPF, and anti-bribery systems under ISO 37001. Publication, auditability, and grievance mechanisms shall align with Document 13 (Financial Transparency) and Document 09 (External Validation & Peer Review). Data-sharing, privacy, cybersecurity, and records-management provisions shall comply with GDPR, information security under ISO/IEC 27001, and cyber-resilience architectures mapped to the NIST Cybersecurity Framework 2.0 and NIST SP 800-207 (Zero Trust).

Remedies and step-in rights shall be calibrated to protect public interest and service continuity. Material breach of ESG covenants, verified cases of corruption, or material misrepresentation shall trigger pre-agreed escalation under Document 11 (Compliance Code), corrective action plans under Document 06 (ESG Safeguards), and, where necessary, suspension, reallocation, or termination. All such actions shall be disclosed in the Financial Transparency Register (Document 13, Chapter 5) without prejudice to confidentiality constraints grounded in law or donor terms.

## Chapter 5 – Private Finance and Philanthropy

Engagements with commercial lenders, institutional investors, impact funds, and philanthropic foundations shall be structured to crowd-in capital while safeguarding equity, integrity, and transparency. For private finance, blended structures shall clearly delineate risk tranches, pricing, and expected additionality, guided by the OECD Blended Finance Principles and anchored in safeguards-equivalence language to the World Bank ESF and IFC Performance Standards. Transactions purporting climate benefits shall demonstrate alignment with the Paris Agreement and be positioned for external assurance of climate statements under ISAE 3410.

Responsible business conduct and human-rights due diligence shall be non-negotiable for all private capital partners, with explicit reference to the OECD Guidelines (2023) and the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. Sustainable procurement expectations shall be flowed down



contractually in accordance with ISO 20400, and beneficiaries shall commit to grievance mechanisms and community engagement consistent with the IFC PS2/PS4 and the Unified MEL (Document 08).

Philanthropic engagements—grants, program-related investments, and mission-related investments—shall be structured to ensure clarity of purpose, measurable outcomes, and transparency of flows. Reporting shall be harmonized with Document 08 and disclosed through the Financial Transparency Register (Document 13, Chapter 5). Where philanthropic funds are pooled with concessional or commercial capital, subsidy accounting and attribution rules shall be explicit, with value-for-money assessed against the OECD DAC Evaluation Criteria and with external evaluation and/or assurance scheduled in accordance with Document 09 and ISAE 3000 (Revised).

Anti-corruption, compliance, and transparency controls shall be embedded across all private and philanthropic instruments. Minimum controls include anti-bribery systems per ISO 37001, compliance management under ISO 37301, and protected reporting channels pursuant to ISO 37002. Internal controls shall align with COSO; internal audit shall operate under the IIA IPPF; material disclosures shall be made in the Transparency Register per Document 13. Data-sharing and cybersecurity provisions shall follow GDPR, ISO/IEC 27001, and the NIST CSF 2.0/NIST SP 800-207 architecture.

Pricing of risk, fees, and compensation shall exclude success-fee arrangements tied to public award decisions to preserve probity and avoid conflicts with anti-bribery norms. Side letters, contingent fee arrangements, or most-favored-nation clauses shall be disclosed and, where they risk inequitable treatment or opacity, shall be either harmonized across investors or declined. Governance allocation to GSEA for custodial oversight, as set out in Document 13 (Chapter 2), shall be recognized as a non-operational compliance cost and disclosed accordingly.

Dispute resolution frameworks with private finance and philanthropy shall prioritize negotiated cure periods, corrective action plans under Document 06, and independent review per Document 09. Where termination is unavoidable, step-in mechanisms shall protect essential services and beneficiaries, with transparent reallocation of funds and assets documented in the Transparency Register.