



# PARTNERSHIPS POLICY

## 1 Introduction

SOS-UK works with a wide range of people and organisations, including students, universities and colleges, NGOs, companies and funders.

We have adopted this partnerships policy because, whilst we believe in some cases engagement can be an important strategy to effect change - including with people or groups we may disagree with - there are several areas we see as fundamental barriers to achieving a more sustainable world. We will not partner with organisations whose core work is in these areas.

Supporting a partner that is actively working against our vision is counterproductive. As a student-led charity, we also want to ensure **all** students feel safe working with us, especially marginalised groups. We will also consider the reputational risk some prospective partners may pose to us.

Our income comes from three main areas: external funding (e.g. grants and sponsorships); programme and consultancy fees; and individual donations.

For the purposes of this policy, a “partner” is a person or group that acts as one of our:

- funders, including grantors or sponsors<sup>1</sup>;
- programme or consultancy clients; or
- members on a joint project or campaign.

This policy only applies to SOS-UK and does not cover the wider NUS family.

## 2 How do we decide?

Our partners are essential to the continuation of [our work](#) as an educational charity. However, as an organisation striving for environmental justice, we will not enter into any partnership without first considering the ethics of the prospective partner. Our assessment will include factors such as:

- the extent to which they align with SOS-UK’s vision and values and/or those of other student-led groups;
- the sincerity of their proposal and the extent to which SOS-UK’s involvement may be used to greenwash their activities;
- the influence the partner will have over SOS-UK e.g. financially or in decision-making; and

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<sup>1</sup> Does not include individual public donations that are freely given

- how dependent SOS-UK will be on the partnership to meet SOS-UK's charitable objectives.

Our “red lines” are summarised below including areas we believe are inherently unsustainable, though the list is not exhaustive. More detailed guidance will be used internally to support any ethical screenings.

1. Anyone whose core activity involves any of the below, **unless** an adequate<sup>2</sup> phase-out plan is in place:
  - a. the extraction or production of **fossil fuels**;
  - b. the manufacturing or transfer of **weapons** or other equipment that is used in the violation of human rights or supplied to oppressive regimes;
  - c. **industrial agriculture**, including the production of crops or rearing of animals under such a system, or the manufacturing of chemicals used therein, unless the partnership will be specifically supporting a transition towards regenerative agriculture;
  - d. **animal cruelty**, including conducting animal testing for non-medical products;
  - e. a **financial institution** funding, or investing in, any of the above.
2. Anyone who engages in human or workers' **rights abuses or exploitation**, including (but not limited to) incitement to hatred or discrimination against a person or group.

We will consider other areas on a case-by-case basis e.g. mining; biodiversity loss; tax avoidance; irresponsible marketing; promoting consumerism; zero-hours contracts; or the perpetuation of harm caused by the police, prisons or detention centres.

Our overarching regard will always be the extent to which the potential partner is contributing to environmental and other social injustices and the relative impact any partnership would have on perpetuating that.

### 3 What about existing partnerships?

If we become aware of any issues with an existing partner, we will first engage with them constructively. If the situation cannot be resolved (e.g. them making the required changes within an appropriate timeframe), we will end the partnership as soon as legally possible.

### 4 Who are we keen to work with?

SOS-UK is privileged to work with countless inspiring partners who continue to support our work in different ways. We always welcome exploring new partnerships too with individuals or organisations that are a good fit with our values.

Please do [get in touch](#) if you have any proposals to work together or general feedback on this policy.

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<sup>2</sup> Quantified, dated, public and, where relevant, in line with the science. SOS-UK reserves the right to be the sole judge of whether or not a phase-out plan is adequate, and may consult with partners in determining its decision.