

Reflections and options regarding the Convention's machinery:

Sponsorship Programme

Guidelines for consideration on the management of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Sponsorship Programme

Submitted by the President of the Third Review Conference

I. Introduction

1. Article 12.2 of the Convention on Cluster Munitions states, *inter alia*, that the purpose of the Review Conference shall be to “review the operations and status of the Convention”.
2. The Review Conference therefore provides an opportunity for States Parties to review the institutional machinery supporting the Convention and, where appropriate, consider how such arrangements may continue to support effective implementation of the Convention and the Action Plan to be adopted at the Third Review Conference (3RC).
3. In this context, States Parties may wish to take into consideration experience gained through the functioning of the Convention's existing machinery and arrangements, as well as developments and emerging considerations relevant to the implementation of the Convention. Such reflection can assist States Parties in ensuring that the arrangements supporting the Convention remain responsive to implementation priorities while preserving continuity and established institutional practice.
4. The Sponsorship Programme forms part of the Convention's implementation support architecture and has, over successive Convention cycles, facilitated the participation of States in meetings and activities conducted under the framework of the Convention. In considering the future functioning of the Convention's machinery, States Parties may therefore wish to reflect on the experience and existing arrangements relating to the Sponsorship Programme and consider whether further common guidance would be useful for its continued management.

II. Background

5. The Sponsorship Programme has developed as part of the implementation support arrangements of the Convention. Its administration has been associated with the responsibilities of the Implementation Support Unit (ISU), with administrative and logistical support provided through the institutional arrangements established between the States Parties and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD).
6. The Programme has supported the participation of States in Meetings of States Parties, Review Conferences and other activities conducted under the framework of the Convention, thereby contributing to inclusive participation, implementation-related engagement, universalization and the exchange of national experience and expertise.
7. Following consideration of CCM/MSP/2025/16 on Elements for Possible Guidelines on the Management of the CCM Sponsorship Programme, submitted to the 13MSP by the ISU, the President of the Third Review Conference, with the support of the ISU, established an Informal Working Group on the Convention's Sponsorship Programme and convened consultations with interested States Parties to exchange views and reflect on the Programme and its future management. The Group comprises of representatives from Australia, Cameroon, the Philippines, Panama and Switzerland.
8. The attached Guidelines build on existing frameworks,¹ while taking into account working document CCM/MSP/2025/16, the reflections and work of the Informal Working Group, existing guidance and arrangements concerning the Sponsorship Programme, the consultations undertaken by the President, as well as relevant guidance and institutional arrangements developed under other instruments, including those administered or supported by UNODA and the Secretariat of the Arms Trade Treaty (ATT).

¹ CCM/MSP/2022/12, Annex I, Section II – F; CCM/MSP/2013/6, para 33, and CCM/MSP/2014/INF/1.

III. Proposed elements for consideration

9. On the basis of the considerations outlined above, the President presents for consideration a set of Guidelines on the management of the Convention on Cluster Munitions Sponsorship Programme, contained in the second part of this paper.

10. The Guidelines seek to bring together existing practice and guidance into a common framework for the continued management of the Sponsorship Programme. They are intended to provide greater clarity and consistency regarding the principles, priorities, procedures and institutional responsibilities associated with the Programme, while preserving the flexibility necessary to respond to the priorities of the Convention, the circumstances of individual meetings and activities, and the availability and conditions of sponsorship resources.

11. The Guidelines are intended to support:

- transparent and predictable management of the Sponsorship Programme;
- equitable and inclusive participation by eligible States;
- consideration of implementation and universalization priorities;
- continuity of institutional engagement;
- responsible and accountable use of available resources; and
- clear understanding of the respective roles of States Parties, the Presidency, the Coordination Committee, the CCM ISU and the GICHD within the existing machinery and institutional arrangements of the Convention.

12. The Guidelines are presented for consideration by States Parties. Their consideration does not imply the establishment of a new component of the Convention's machinery, but rather provides an opportunity to consolidate existing experience and guidance concerning an established component of the Convention's implementation support architecture.

**GUIDELINES ON THE MANAGEMENT
OF THE
CONVENTION ON CLUSTER MUNITIONS SPONSORSHIP PROGRAMME**

Preamble

The Sponsorship Programme forms an integral part of the Convention on Cluster Munitions' implementation support architecture. It facilitates the effective participation of eligible States in the meetings and activities of the Convention and contributes to the implementation of the Convention, the achievement of its humanitarian objectives, and the effective functioning of its institutional framework.

These Guidelines establish the principles, procedures and institutional arrangements governing the management of the Sponsorship Programme. They promote transparency, consistency, accountability and equitable participation while preserving the flexibility necessary to respond to evolving implementation priorities, operational requirements and available resources.

The Sponsorship Programme is implemented under the authority of the States Parties and is managed by the Implementation Support Unit of the Convention on Cluster Munitions (CCM ISU) with the administrative support of the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian De-mining (GICHD) in accordance with these Guidelines and any future decisions adopted by the States Parties.

I. Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

The Sponsorship Programme supports the participation of eligible States in meetings and activities conducted under the framework of the Convention on Cluster Munitions. The Programme contributes to the effective implementation of the Convention by facilitating inclusive, representative and meaningful participation in Convention processes.

The Programme forms part of the Convention's broader implementation support architecture and promotes sustained engagement by States Parties in fulfilling their obligations under the Convention.

Objectives

The Sponsorship Programme contributes to:

- the implementation of the Convention;
- the universalization of the Convention;
- inclusive, balanced and gender-responsive participation;
- equitable geographic representation;
- the exchange of implementation experience, expertise and good practices;
- strengthened international cooperation and assistance; and
- continuity of institutional participation and engagement in Convention processes.

In pursuing these objectives, the Sponsorship Programme will:

- support implementation priorities established within the framework of the Convention;
- facilitate meaningful and representative participation by eligible States;
- promote fairness, transparency, inclusivity, operational consistency and gender balance;
- strengthen accountability in the allocation and use of sponsorship resources;
- encourage sustained engagement in Convention processes; and
- contribute to institutional continuity and effective cooperation among States Parties.

II. Guiding Principles

The management of the Sponsorship Programme is governed by the following principles:

- Transparency

The CCM ISU will manage the Sponsorship Programme in a transparent manner. Information concerning sponsorship opportunities, application procedures, timelines and administrative requirements will be communicated sufficiently in advance to enable effective planning by eligible participants.

- Inclusivity and Equitable Participation

The Programme promotes broad, balanced and inclusive participation by eligible States.

Particular attention will be given to participation by:

- Affected States Parties;
- Least Developed Countries (LDCs);
- Small Island Developing States (SIDS);
- States from underrepresented geographical regions; and
- gender-balanced delegations, where feasible.

- Strategic Relevance

Sponsorship allocations will support the objectives of the Convention and contribute to:

- implementation of Convention obligations;
- cooperation and assistance;
- universalization;

- Operational Realism

Management of the Sponsorship Programme will take account of:

- available financial resources;
- travel costs;
- visa requirements;
- operational feasibility;
- meeting timelines; and
- conditions attached to voluntary financial contributions supporting the Programme.

Operational feasibility considerations will be balanced with the objectives and priorities established in these Guidelines.

- Accountability and Responsible Stewardship

The Sponsorship Programme is administered in a manner that promotes the efficient, transparent and responsible use of available financial resources.

Sponsored participants are expected to comply with all applicable administrative requirements and to confirm their participation within the timeframes established by the CCM ISU.

- Flexibility

The CCM ISU will manage the Programme with sufficient flexibility to respond to evolving implementation priorities, operational requirements and exceptional circumstances while ensuring consistency, fairness and transparency in decision-making.

- Institutional Continuity

Management of the Sponsorship Programme supports continuity of institutional participation, preservation of institutional knowledge and sustained engagement throughout successive Convention cycles.

- State Party Ownership

The Sponsorship Programme remains a State Party-driven mechanism.

States Parties retain overall ownership of the Programme and provide strategic policy guidance regarding its objectives, priorities and management.

III. Sponsorship Considerations

General framework

Sponsorship is allocated in accordance with the objectives and guiding principles set out in these Guidelines.

In preparing sponsorship recommendations, the CCM ISU will consider the relevance of the proposed participation to the implementation and universalization of the Convention, the equitable and representative use of available resources, and the operational feasibility of providing sponsorship.

Sponsorship will be considered for:

States Parties with limited financial resources

States Parties with limited financial resources whose participation supports the effective implementation of the Convention.

This includes States Parties that:

- have pending or ongoing obligations under the Convention;
- are participating in implementation-related discussions or activities;
- are preparing, submitting or implementing an extension request;
- require cooperation and assistance in order to advance implementation;
- are actively engaged in the institutional work of the Convention; or
- are in a position to contribute relevant national experience, expertise or good practice.

Affected States Parties

Affected States Parties whose participation contributes directly to:

- the implementation of obligations under the Convention;
- operational or technical discussions;
- cooperation and assistance;
- the exchange of national experience and expertise;
- the development or review of implementation plans; or
- the identification of implementation needs, challenges and priorities.

Universalization priorities

Sponsorship may be provided to signatories and States not party where their participation demonstrably supports the universalization of the Convention.

In considering such sponsorship, account will be taken of:

- concrete steps taken towards ratification or accession;
- engagement with the Presidency, the CCM ISU or relevant Convention officeholders;
- participation in national or regional universalization activities;
- the potential contribution of attendance to progress towards adherence; and
- the strategic relevance of the State concerned to the universalization of the Convention.

Geographic balance, gender balance and inclusivity

Sponsorship allocations will promote broad, balanced and inclusive participation in Convention processes.

In preparing recommendations, the CCM ISU will take into account:

- equitable geographic representation;
- participation by States from underrepresented regions;
- participation by Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States;
- gender-balanced representation;
- the participation of persons with disabilities, survivors and persons with relevant lived or professional experience, where appropriate and consistent with the State Party-driven nature of the Programme; and
- the overall representativeness of sponsored participation.

States requesting sponsorship are encouraged to nominate delegates in a manner that contributes to gender balance and inclusive participation.

Rotation and previous participation

The allocation of sponsorship will balance continuity of engagement with equitable access to the Programme.

In preparing recommendations, the CCM ISU will consider:

- whether the applicant State has previously received sponsorship,
- the frequency and recency of previous sponsorship;
- the value of maintaining continuity through the participation of relevant national institutions or focal points;
- opportunities to broaden participation among eligible States; and
- the overall regional and institutional balance of the proposed group of sponsored delegates.

Previous sponsorship does not automatically exclude a State from future sponsorship. Equally, previous sponsorship does not create an entitlement to continued support.

Overall assessment

Sponsorship recommendations will be based on an overall assessment of the considerations set out in this section. No single consideration is determinative. The relative weight given to each consideration will depend on:

- the purpose and agenda of the relevant meeting or activity;
- current implementation priorities;
- the applications received;
- the availability of resources;
- operational requirements; and
- any relevant guidance provided by the States Parties, the Presidency or the Coordination Committee.

IV. Application and Review Process

Calls for Expressions of Interest

The CCM ISU will issue a call for expressions of interest sufficiently in advance of Meetings of States Parties, Review Conferences and other activities for which sponsorship is available.

The call will provide clear information on:

- the purpose of the sponsorship opportunity;
- eligibility;
- applicable sponsorship considerations;
- the application procedure;
- the information required from applicants;
- the deadline for submission;
- administrative and travel requirements; and
- any conditions applicable to the sponsorship.

The timing of the call will take account of the period required for the review of applications, confirmation of sponsorship, visa procedures and travel arrangements.

Targeted outreach

In addition to general calls for expressions of interest, the CCM ISU may undertake targeted outreach where this is necessary to:

- support specific implementation priorities;
- advance universalization objectives;
- encourage participation from underrepresented regions;
- improve gender balance or inclusivity;
- support the participation of affected States Parties; or
- respond to a limited number of applications from eligible States.

Targeted outreach does not guarantee that sponsorship will be provided and remains subject to the same review process and considerations applicable to other applications.

Review Process

Preliminary review

The CCM ISU will conduct an initial review of applications to determine whether:

- the application was submitted by an eligible State;
- the required information has been provided;
- the proposed delegate meets the applicable administrative requirements;
- the application is consistent with the purpose of the relevant meeting or activity; and
- sponsorship is operationally feasible.

The CCM ISU may request clarification or supplementary information from an applicant where necessary to complete the review.

Substantive review

Applications that satisfy the administrative requirements will be assessed against the sponsorship considerations set out in Section III.

The assessment will take account of:

- implementation relevance;
- universalization relevance;
- the financial circumstances of the applicant State;
- affected-State status;
- geographic and gender balance;
- institutional continuity;
- previous sponsorship;
- the expected contribution of the proposed delegate;
- available funding;
- conditions associated with specific funding arrangements; and
- operational requirements.

Applications will be assessed consistently and on the basis of the information available at the time of review.

Preparation of sponsorship recommendations

Following the review of applications, the CCM ISU will prepare proposed sponsorship allocations.

The proposed allocations will:

- identify the States and delegates recommended for sponsorship;
- reflect the considerations set out in these Guidelines;
- remain within the available budget;

- take account of applicable conditions associated with specific funding arrangements;
- promote balanced and representative participation; and
- identify any relevant operational or exceptional considerations.

The CCM ISU will maintain an appropriate record of the basis on which the proposed allocations were prepared.

Validation by the Coordination Committee

The proposed sponsorship allocations will be submitted to the Coordination Committee for validation in accordance with established Convention practice.

The Coordination Committee will consider whether the proposed allocations:

- are consistent with these Guidelines;
- reflect the implementation and universalization priorities of the Convention;
- promote equitable and representative participation;
- respect the availability and conditions of sponsorship funding; and
- support the responsible and transparent management of the Programme.

Where the Coordination Committee requests clarification or reconsideration, the CCM ISU will provide the necessary information and, where appropriate, revise the proposed allocations.

Strategic guidance in exceptional cases

The Presidency, in consultation with the Coordination Committee, may provide strategic guidance where *inter alia*:

- an application raises a significant policy consideration;
- competing priorities cannot be resolved through the ordinary review process;
- exceptional circumstances require an urgent or non-standard response;
- the allocation has implications for broader Convention priorities; or
- additional guidance is necessary to preserve State Party ownership of the Programme.

Such guidance will remain consistent with these Guidelines, the decisions of the States Parties and the availability of resources.

V. Institutional Roles and Responsibilities

States Parties

States Parties retain ownership of the Sponsorship Programme and provide strategic policy direction concerning its objectives, priorities and overall management.

States Parties may review these Guidelines and adopt amendments, as appropriate, to ensure that the Sponsorship Programme continues to support the effective implementation of the Convention.

Presidency and Coordination Committee

The Presidency, in consultation with the Coordination Committee, provides strategic oversight of the Sponsorship Programme in accordance with decisions adopted by the States Parties.

The Coordination Committee validates sponsorship recommendations prepared by the CCM ISU and provides strategic guidance on matters relating to the effective implementation of the Programme.

Where exceptional circumstances arise, the Presidency may, in consultation with the Coordination Committee, provide additional strategic guidance to ensure that sponsorship allocations remain consistent with the objectives of the Convention and these Guidelines.

Convention on Cluster Munitions Implementation Support Unit (CCM ISU)

The CCM ISU manages the Sponsorship Programme under the authority of the States Parties.

In carrying out this responsibility, the CCM ISU will:

- manage the application and review process;
- prepare sponsorship recommendations;
- communicate with applicants, States Parties, donors and service providers;
- promote implementation-oriented, geographically balanced and gender-responsive participation;
- undertake targeted outreach where necessary to support implementation priorities or universalization objectives;
- maintain accurate records relating to sponsorship allocations and participation;
- ensure consistency and continuity in the administration of the Programme;
- promote awareness of sponsorship opportunities and funding requirements;
- provide administrative, technical and procedural guidance to sponsored delegates, as appropriate; and
- prepare reports and analyses concerning the implementation of the Sponsorship Programme.

In administering the Programme, the CCM ISU will ensure that sponsorship decisions are transparent, consistent, accountable and aligned with the objectives established by the States Parties.

Administrative and Logistical Support

Administrative and logistical services supporting the Sponsorship Programme are provided through the institutional arrangements established between the States Parties and the Geneva International Centre for Humanitarian Demining (GICHD), including the Hosting Agreement.

VI. Scope of Sponsorship

Sponsorship Support

Subject to the availability of financial resources and any conditions associated with specific funding arrangements, sponsorship support normally includes:

- economy-class travel;
- accommodation; and
- daily subsistence allowance (DSA).

The scope of sponsorship may be adjusted where necessary to reflect operational requirements, available resources or specific funding arrangements.

VII. Responsibilities of Sponsored Delegates

Sponsored delegates are expected to participate actively and constructively in all meetings and activities for which sponsorship has been provided.

Participation under the Sponsorship Programme is intended to strengthen implementation of the Convention and to promote sustained national engagement in Convention processes.

Sponsored delegates will:

- participate fully in the meetings and activities covered by the sponsorship;
- contribute to implementation-related discussions and exchanges of experience;
- maintain communication with the CCM ISU regarding administrative and implementation-related matters associated with the sponsorship;
- support continuity of institutional knowledge within their respective national administrations;
- disseminate relevant information arising from sponsored activities to appropriate national authorities and stakeholders; and
- respond promptly to reasonable administrative or follow-up requests from the CCM ISU.

Participation Feedback

To support continuous improvement of the Sponsorship Programme, sponsored delegates will provide brief feedback on their participation following sponsored activities.

Feedback may include observations concerning:

- implementation developments;
- operational experiences;
- lessons learned;
- cooperation opportunities; and
- recommendations for strengthening future sponsorship activities.

The CCM ISU may use such information to inform programme management, reporting and future sponsorship planning.

VIII. Future Sponsorship Allocations

General Principle

In preparing recommendations for future sponsorship allocations, the CCM ISU will consider previous participation under the Sponsorship Programme together with other factors relevant to the effective, equitable and transparent management of available sponsorship resources.

Previous sponsorship does not create an entitlement to future sponsorship.

Considerations

When preparing future sponsorship recommendations, the CCM ISU will consider, as appropriate:

- previous participation under the Sponsorship Programme;
- compliance with administrative requirements;
- timely confirmation of participation;
- repeated withdrawals or non-attendance;
- continued engagement in Convention processes following previous sponsored participation;
- implementation-related developments within the applicant State; and
- any other operational considerations relevant to the effective management of the Programme.

These considerations are applied collectively and do not constitute mandatory eligibility requirements.

IX. Monitoring, Reporting and Participation Support

Monitoring and Record-keeping

The CCM ISU will maintain accurate records relating to the management of the Sponsorship Programme, including sponsorship allocations, participation, administrative arrangements and other information necessary to support the effective implementation of the Programme.

Such records will support:

- transparency and accountability;
- institutional continuity;
- effective programme management;
- reporting to States Parties and donors; and
- preservation of institutional knowledge.

Reporting

The CCM ISU will provide periodic information to States Parties concerning the implementation of the Sponsorship Programme.

Reporting may include information relating to:

- sponsorship allocations;
- participation levels;
- geographic representation;
- gender balance;
- implementation-related participation outcomes;
- operational challenges;
- funding trends; and
- other matters relevant to the effective management of the Programme.

Where appropriate, reports may include recommendations aimed at strengthening the effectiveness, transparency and sustainability of the Sponsorship Programme.

Participation Support

The CCM ISU will provide sponsored delegates with the substantive, administrative, procedural and technical information necessary to facilitate meaningful participation in Convention activities.

Participation support includes, as appropriate:

- pre-meeting briefings or orientation sessions;
- information concerning the institutional structure and procedures of the Convention;
- information on implementation priorities and ongoing Convention processes;
- administrative guidance relating to sponsored participation; and
- coordination and information-sharing among sponsored participants, where appropriate.

The CCM ISU may also facilitate follow-up communication with sponsored delegates after sponsored activities in order to support continued implementation, cooperation and institutional engagement.

X. State Party Oversight

Oversight

The Sponsorship Programme operates under the authority of the States Parties.

States Parties provide strategic oversight of the Programme through decisions adopted under the Convention and through the work of the Presidency and the Coordination Committee.

States Parties retain the authority to:

- establish sponsorship priorities;
- provide policy guidance;
- review the implementation of these Guidelines; and
- amend these Guidelines, as appropriate.

Interpretation of the Guidelines

These Guidelines shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with:

- the Convention on Cluster Munitions;
- decisions adopted by the States Parties;
- the objectives of the Sponsorship Programme; and
- the effective and transparent administration of the Programme.

Questions concerning the interpretation or application of these Guidelines shall be considered by the Presidency in consultation with the Coordination Committee, with the support of the CCM ISU, and, where appropriate, referred to the States Parties for further guidance.

Review of the Guidelines

Periodic Review

These Guidelines will be reviewed periodically to ensure that they continue to support the effective implementation of the Convention and reflect developments in the management of the Sponsorship Programme.

The CCM ISU may identify operational lessons learned and propose technical or administrative improvements for consideration by the Coordination Committee and the States Parties.

Any substantive amendment to these Guidelines remains subject to the approval of the States Parties.