GSG IMPACT

Guide for creating a National Partner

About GSG Impact

GSG Impact helps countries build impact economies – systems where all participants put long-term economic, social and environmental value at the heart of decision making. We help create the infrastructure, information, and incentives for public and private capital to flow towards positive social and environmental impact.

To do this, we establish, strengthen and connect independent National Partners – trusted, local organisations that drive impact economy development in their countries. Working alongside our National Partners, we help countries strengthen their impact ecosystems, create policy and regulatory solutions to national priorities, and mobilise capital for inclusive and climate-aligned growth.

GSG Impact is the cornerstone of the GSG Impact Partnership – a global network of 43 National Partners representing 48 countries: more than half in emerging markets. National Partners are fully locally led and operated. They are co-created by leaders from all parts of a country's impact ecosystem – bringing together government, investors, businesses, and civil society to drive long-term economic systems change.

Learn more at **gsgimpact.org**

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Purpose of this guide

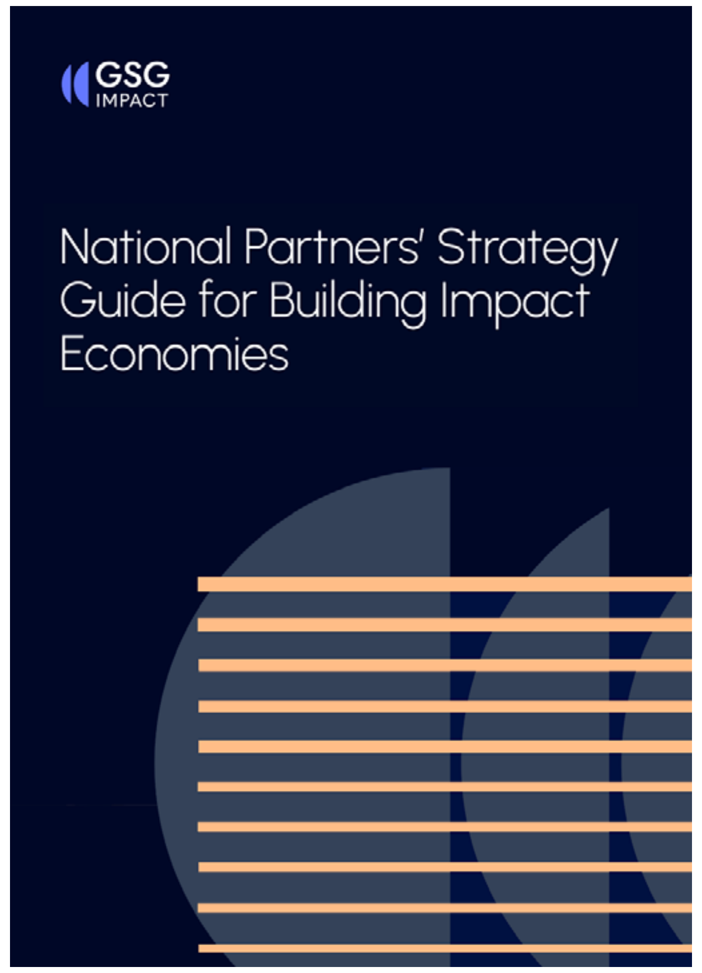
This guide is for leaders and organisations interested in establishing a GSG Impact National Partner.

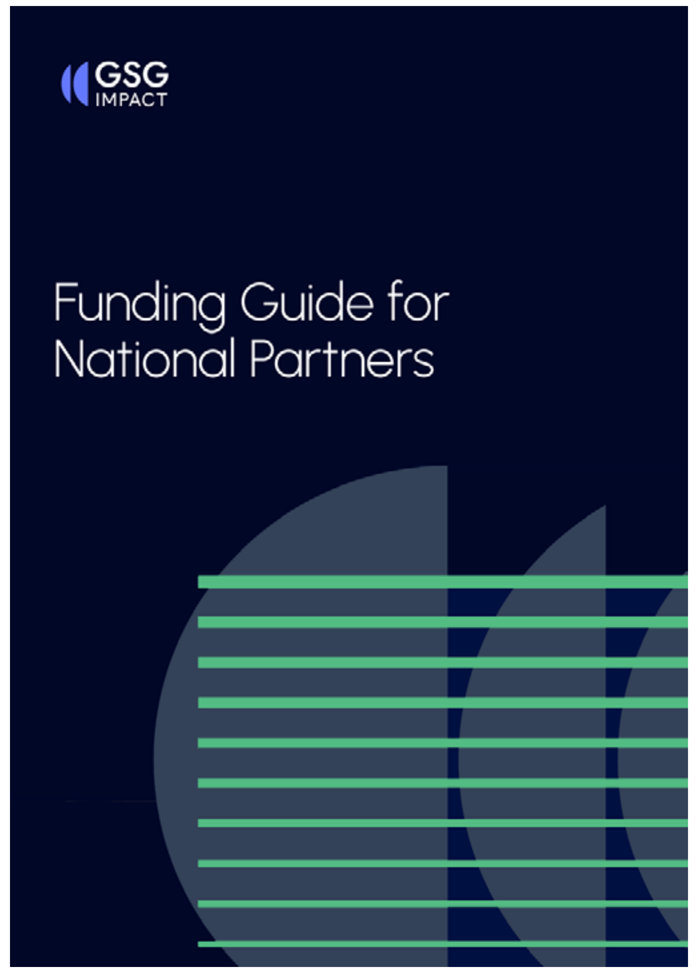
It takes you through the key stages, decisions, and actions required to move from an initial coalition of interested stakeholders to a fully accredited, credible, representative, and sustainable National Partner.

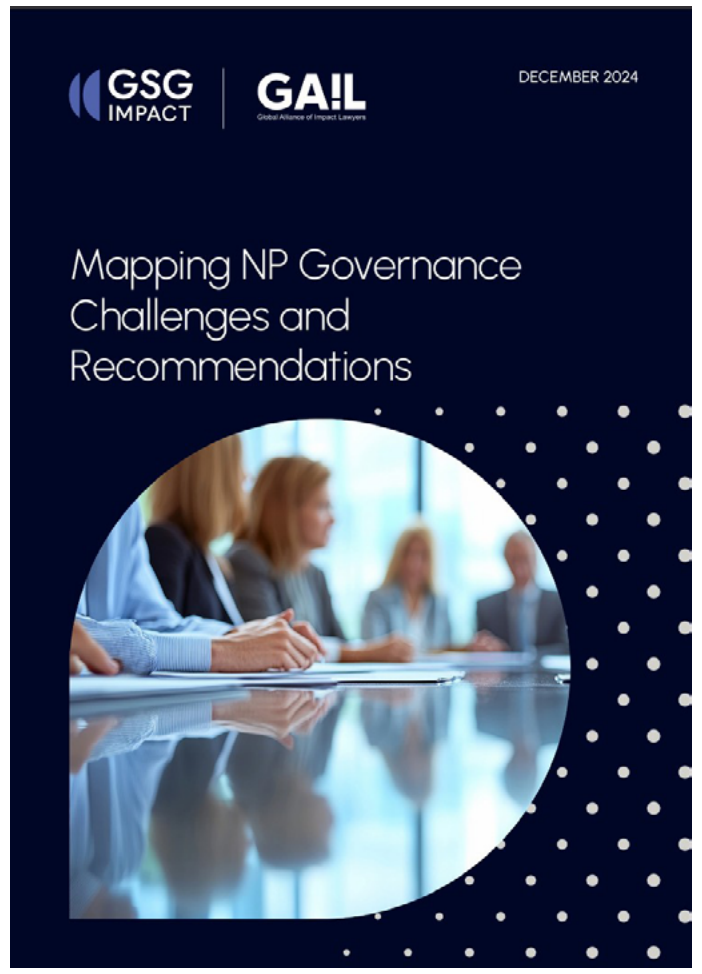
The guide forms part of the National Partner Handbook, a suite of resources supporting Taskforces (temporary coalitions working towards National Partner accreditation) and National Partners with tools, frameworks and guidance for every stage of their development:

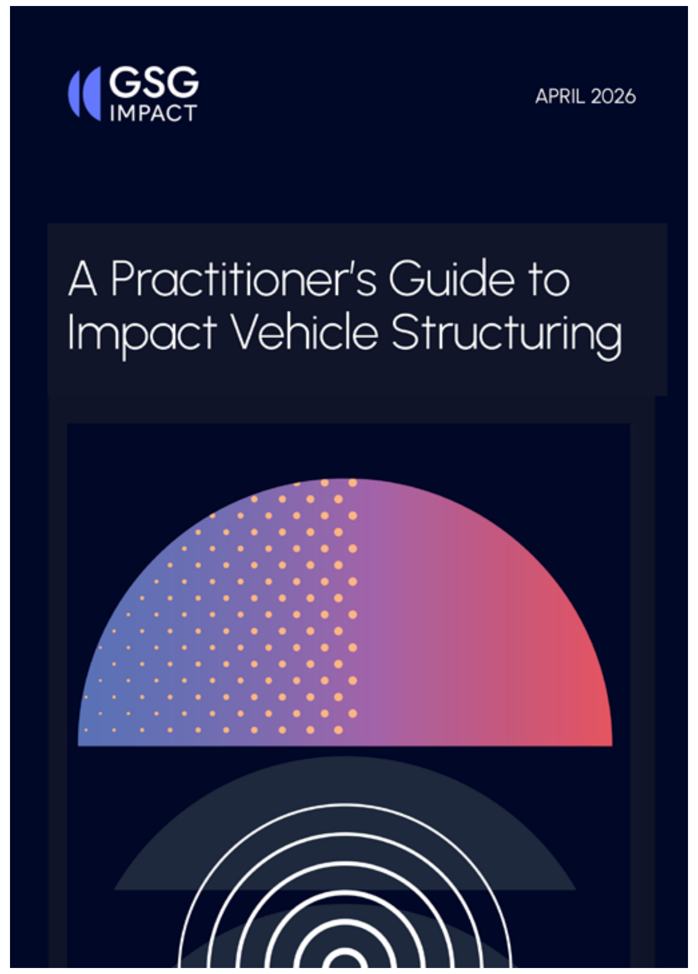
- *National Partners' strategy guide for building impact economies*: How to develop an outcome-driven strategy, from ecosystem diagnosis to setting strategic priorities and action planning.
- *Mapping National Partner governance challenges and recommendations*: Governance design, legal structures, board composition, and leadership models.
- *Funding guide for National Partners*: Frameworks, tools, and case studies to support long-term financial sustainability and resource mobilisation.
- *A practitioner's guide to impact vehicle structuring*: A six-step roadmap for designing an impact vehicle, complemented by a library of case studies sharing practical lessons and real-world structuring experience.
- *Driving impact policy making*: Tools for influencing governments to implement successful impact policy strategies.

There are also additional guides and tools that support Taskforces and NPs along the journey, including research guides, tools, and an online portal.









Part 1. Building impact economies through National Partners

GSG Impact helps countries build impact economies – systems where all participants put long-term economic, social and environmental value at the heart of decision making. To do this, we establish, strengthen and connect independent National Partners – trusted, local organisations that drive impact economy development in their countries.

In an impact economy, investors allocate capital not only based on financial return, but also on the social and environmental outcomes it creates: businesses embed impact into their strategies and operations; governments direct policy and public spending towards measurable positive outcomes; consumers increasingly consider the impact of the products and services they buy. Information, incentives, and institutions work together to reward actions that create long-term value.

Building an impact economy means making progress across many interconnected parts of the system at once, and coordination around shared priorities. It requires many actors moving together, each reinforcing the others' progress.

This is the shared goal the GSG Impact Partnership is working towards, with each country travelling from its own starting point, to a destination shaped by its own institutions, markets, and priorities.

Why National Partners matter

Many of the barriers to building an impact economy are systemic. Progress requires coordination, collaboration, and alignment across multiple stakeholders.

This is where National Partners play a unique role.

National Partners are fully locally led and operated. As trusted, cross-sector platforms, they bring together leaders from government, business, finance, philanthropy, academia, and civil society to build consensus, align priorities, coordinate action, and create the conditions for local solutions to emerge.

By strengthening how a country's actors work together, National Partners help create the conditions that enable progress on every front of the transition: connecting policy with practice, mobilising stakeholders around shared priorities, accelerating learning, and turning fragmented initiatives into collective action.

In doing so, National Partners act as conveners, catalysts, and connectors, helping countries accelerate the transition towards an impact economy.

The table below outlines the core functions typically performed by National Partners. While every National Partner is different, most undertake a combination of these roles, depending on local priorities and ecosystem maturity.

Function	Purpose	Sample activities
Convening and aligning the field	Provide credibility and national leadership as a trusted, neutral platform connecting public, private, and civil society actors around a shared vision.	· Map the impact economy landscape. · Facilitate dialogue and build consensus among diverse stakeholders. · Raise awareness and mainstream the impact economy agenda to bring new actors to the table. · Act as the national interface to GSG Impact and its global community.
Building transparency	Generate, standardise, and share data, research, and tools that enhance market transparency and informed decision-making.	· Publish market sizing and landscape data. · Share best practices and case studies on impact transparency. · Convene working groups to track ecosystem progress over time.
Building capacity and strengthening the ecosystem	Strengthen the capabilities of ecosystem actors and build the infrastructure needed for the impact economy to grow.	· Deliver training programmes and workshops. · Develop tools and guidance. · Facilitate peer learning and other knowledge sharing opportunities.
Co-creating and scaling innovative solutions	Convene the actors best placed to define, adapt, and test which innovations fit the local context, then help successful models scale. National Partners enable the process, rather than mandating outcomes.	· Facilitate co-creation processes to identify locally relevant innovations. · Adapt proven models from other markets and pilot them locally. · Broker connections between funders, entrepreneurs, and pipeline to scale approaches.
Driving policy reform	Influence and advocate for enabling regulations, fiscal incentives, and policy frameworks that embed impact into how capital is mobilised.	· Engage policymakers and regulators. Produce white papers and policy briefs on impact policies. · Advocate for procurement, tax, disclosure, and regulatory reforms.

Why join the GSG Impact Partnership?

Becoming a National Partner means more than joining a network. It means joining GSG Impact's mission to build impact economies and shaping that global effort. Each National Partner helps define the GSG Impact Partnership, bringing their own context, priorities, and leadership to a shared undertaking that no single country or actor could advance alone. In return, National Partners gain benefits and support from the rest of the Partnership.

Benefit	Description
Global community and shared knowledge	Access to a growing community of practitioners, policymakers, investors, and ecosystem leaders, plus the guides, toolkits, research, case studies, webinars, training programmes, and events (including the Global Leadership Meeting) built across the GSG Impact Partnership.
Proven methodology for co-creation	A process and shared language (adaptable to any national context) that brings government, business, finance, and civil society to the same table, aligning actors who otherwise speak past each other.
Strategic and technical support	Direct support from GSG Impact on designing and developing strategy, governance, policy, ecosystems, and investment vehicles.
Visibility and credibility	Recognition as GSG Impact's official National Partner, strengthening credibility with governments, funders, investors, and ecosystem stakeholders.
A stake in shaping the future economic system	The opportunity to shape the global impact economy movement, by helping set the GSG Impact Partnership strategy and global initiatives.

Part 2: The journey to becoming a National Partner

Becoming a National Partner is a structured journey that typically takes 12-18 months, although timelines vary considerably depending on the local context, ecosystem maturity, stakeholder alignment, available resources, and external factors.

The journey is rarely linear. Some groups move quickly through the early stages, while others invest more time in building the right coalition, generating evidence, or securing stakeholder buy-in. What matters is not the speed of progression, but ensuring that the process is grounded in genuine stakeholder ownership, representativeness and collaboration.

Figure 1. The stages to becoming a National Partner

1 Scope

Key question:
Is there sufficient momentum and leadership to justify establishing a National Partner?

Outputs:

- Initial ecosystem scan completed
- Potential champions identified
- Early conversations with GSG Impact and letter expressing interest in becoming a Taskforce

2 Build

Key question:
Who should drive the process?

Outputs:

- Core Taskforce established
- Initial stakeholder mapping
- Working approach agreed

3 Diagnose

Key question:
What does the ecosystem need most?

Outputs:

- Landscape analysis and stakeholder mapping completed
- Priority opportunity areas identified

➜ Refer to:
National Partners' strategy guide for building impact economies

4 Design

Key question:
What form should the National Partner adopt?

Outputs:

- National strategy drafted and validated
- Governance and operating model designed
- Funding approach developed

➜ Refer to:
National Partners' strategy guide for building impact economies
Mapping National Partner governance challenges and recommendations
Funding guide for National Partners

5 Apply

Key question:
Is the Taskforce ready to become a National Partner?

Outputs:

- Application package submitted
- Due diligence process completed
- Readiness assessment passed

6 Launch

Key question:
How does the National Partner move into delivery?

Outputs:

- Formal admission to the GSG Impact Partnership
- Onboarding completed
- National Partner launch communicated
- First-year workplan activated

Co-creation: the key ingredient for success

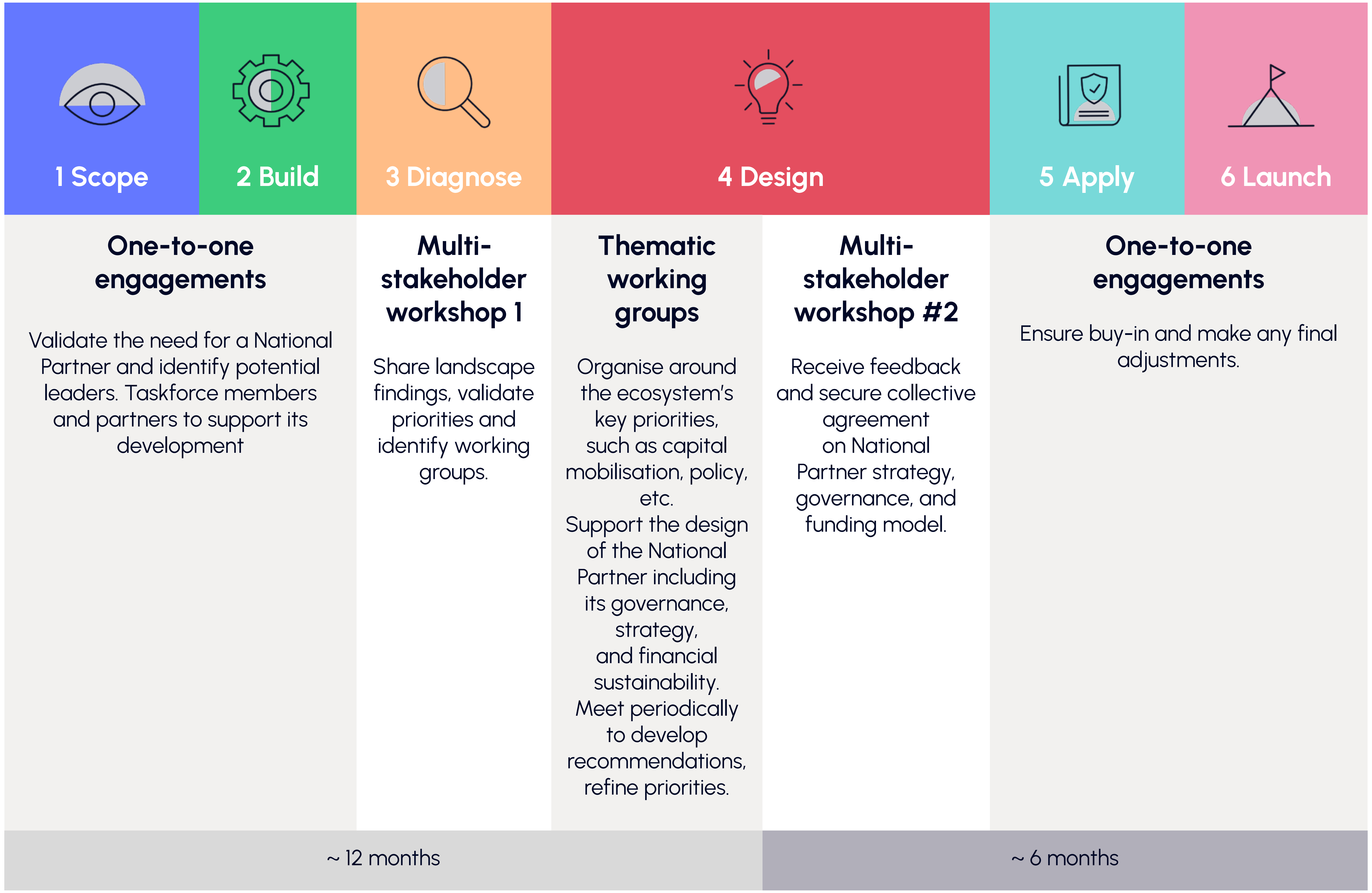
National Partners cannot be designed by a single organisation or small group of individuals. Their legitimacy, credibility, and long-term effectiveness depend on broad participation and shared ownership across the ecosystem.

The objective is not to develop a strategy behind closed doors and seek feedback afterwards. Stakeholders from across the ecosystem – public, private, and non-profit sectors, investors and investees, companies and civil society – should actively shape the National Partner's priorities, governance, and operating model throughout the process.

Effective co-creation combines structured engagement, such as multi-stakeholder workshops and thematic working groups, with ongoing bilateral conversations to build trust, gather feedback, and strengthen buy-in. This process helps ensure that the National Partner reflects the needs and aspirations of the wider ecosystem, rather than the interests of any single organisation or stakeholder group.

Shared understanding cannot be assumed to last once reached. Even coalitions that start aligned can drift apart as individual interests surface over time, so periodic check-ins to reaffirm the shared vision matter as much as the initial consensus-building.

Figure 2. Typical co-creation process used to establish a National Partner



STAGE 1

Scope

What this stage is about

Assessing whether the conditions exist to justify forming a Taskforce (the precursor to a National Partner).

What success looks like

At least three credible and committed potential leaders have been identified, GSG Impact has confirmed that no significant blockers exist, and there is sufficient momentum across the ecosystem to justify forming a Taskforce.

The go/no-go decision

The first step is assessing whether there is a genuine need and readiness for a National Partner. This means getting out into the ecosystem before forming any structure and having informal conversations with a wide range of actors, building a picture of what exists, and testing whether the conditions for a credible National Partner are in place.

These early conversations should be structured around consistent questions, and as listening sessions, not due diligence exercises. Gathering honest information is more important than securing expressions of support. Three questions in particular need clear answers before moving forward:

1. Is there sufficient need and ecosystem activity to build on?
2. Is there a credible group of leaders willing to commit their time, not just their names?
3. Is the country not already served by an existing National Partner or equivalent body with similar scope and mandate?

If the answer to any of these is unclear, more conversations are needed before moving on to forming a Taskforce.

Formal recognition as a GSG Impact Taskforce

Once an initial group of committed stakeholders has formed, demonstrated sufficient representation across the impact ecosystem, and agreed to work towards establishing a National Partner, GSG Impact reviews the group and formally recognises it as a GSG Impact Taskforce.

Recognition as a Taskforce marks the point at which the group enters the GSG Impact development pathway and gains access to relevant GSG Impact support, resources, learning opportunities and events available to Taskforces.

Country prioritisation

GSG Impact considers the following when assessing country readiness:

Criterion	What it means in practice
Ecosystem maturity	Sufficient activity across the impact economy to justify collective coordination (supply, demand, government support, etc.).
Local momentum	Genuine energy from credible actors – not just expressed interest but demonstrated commitment and ownership.
No duplication	No existing organisation with equivalent scope, mandate, and influence already operating.
Stability	Sufficient political and economic stability to sustain long-term ecosystem development.

Finding the right leaders

The quality of the coalition matters more than the speed of formation. More conversations than feel necessary is the right approach, especially for identifying the core Taskforce leaders – those most committed to the initial work of identifying and onboarding new stakeholders and progressing the work forward.

- Leverage existing networks: other National Partners, GSG Impact Ambassadors, and known impact economy actors.
- Engage UN agencies and their in-country representatives.
- Tap into national, regional, and global networks and membership organisations (investor networks, foundation associations, entrepreneur organisations, etc.).
- Ask development finance institutions and country offices of development agencies to connect you with their programme partners.
- Review existing research, including global and local landscape reports.
- Attend ecosystem convenings: both flagship conferences and smaller, thematic events.
- Spend time on the ground: in-person engagement is critical to understand dynamics that are not visible remotely.

Conducting a stakeholder map

Running these conversations well requires knowing who to talk to and who is missing. A structured stakeholder map helps identify who is active across the impact economy, who holds influence, and which voices are not yet in the room. The process itself can help build the case for a Taskforce and secure buy-in from key stakeholders. Request guidance and tools from the GSG Impact team.

Engage GSG Impact early

Before formalising anything, initiate a conversation with the GSG Impact team. These early conversations help assess country readiness, avoid duplication with existing bodies, clarify what support GSG Impact can offer, and set realistic timelines. GSG Impact will also be available for periodic calls throughout the journey, and can help shape both the first stakeholder gathering, and subsequent multi-stakeholder events.

Read more about how GSG Impact supports Taskforces in Part 3.

Common pitfalls at this stage

- Moving too quickly towards formal structures is the wrong focus before the right people are on board.
- Building around a single organisation doesn't create a genuine multi-sector coalition.
- Lack of transparency about how funding, advisors, or implementation partners were selected can quickly erode trust among stakeholders who feel excluded from that decision.

STAGE 2

Build

What this stage is about

Formalising an inclusive coalition capable of leading the journey to accreditation.

What success looks like

A core Taskforce is in place with validated leaders representing a wide array of actors from the impact economy, a shared sense of purpose, an identified initial list of board member candidates, and an agreed way of working.

What is a Taskforce?

A Taskforce is a temporary coalition, usually made up of a small group of individuals and/or organisations, working towards National Partner accreditation. It is not yet a National Partner. Its role is to build consensus, lead the process for co-creating a national strategy and governance framework, engage the wider ecosystem, and prepare the application. Only when the group is finally accredited by GSG Impact as a National Partner does the Taskforce transition into its founding governance structure.

Don't wait for legal status to mobilise resources

A Taskforce is not usually a formal legal entity, which can complicate opening a bank account or receiving funds directly. Some Taskforces have addressed this by signing a memorandum of understanding with an existing organisation willing to act as a fiscal host. This allows the Taskforce to receive and manage funds, and activate a functioning secretariat, well before formal accreditation.

How Taskforces get started

Taskforces don't need a fixed structure to begin. Many start simply as a coalition of the willing – a handful of committed individuals or organisations convening around a shared ambition, without any formal model attached. What matters most at this stage is momentum and the right people at the table, not the institutional form around them. As the Taskforce matures and moves toward National Partner accreditation, it will need to formalise into one of a few common governance models. (See Appendix 2 and Mapping National Partner governance challenges and recommendations for more detail on governance models.)

National Partner Portal

The National Partner Portal, exclusive to Taskforces and National Partners, contains resources including tools, guides, onboarding presentations, and a calendar of events. Contact your GSG Impact regional coordinator for access.

Who should lead the Taskforce?

The quality of leadership is the single most important determinant of long-term success. Stage 2 is where candidate evaluation happens in earnest, using the long list built in Stage 1 to identify the right people, not just willing ones.

Quality	Description
Credibility and influence	Respected by stakeholders across sectors and able to engage effectively with senior decision-makers in government, business, philanthropy, and civil society. When assessing candidates, seek input from peers, funders, and other ecosystem actors to validate their reputation and influence.
Networks and reach	Connected well beyond the immediate impact investing community, with the willingness to open those networks to the field and extend reach into underrepresented parts of the ecosystem.
Action-oriented practitioners with integrity	Recognised for their expertise and track record of delivery.
Market builders committed to system change	Motivated by a genuine commitment to advancing the impact economy. They act in the interests of the broader field rather than personal, organisational, or sector-specific agendas.
Time and commitment	Genuine availability for an active role. This is not a passive advisory position. Taskforce and future board members need time to engage stakeholders, recruit the team and represent the National Partner nationally and internationally.

Coalition composition

Strong Taskforces are diverse by design. No single sector, organisation, or interest group should dominate. Aim for meaningful representation across the impact economy, bringing together a broad range of perspectives and expertise.

Stakeholder group	Who they are	Role
Capital owners	Asset owners, including pension funds, insurance companies, sovereign wealth funds, family offices, high net worth individuals (HNWIs), diaspora investors, philanthropic foundations, university endowments, faith-based investors, development finance institutions (DFIs)	Own and allocate capital, directly or through intermediaries: establish investment mandates, risk-return expectations and stewardship priorities that influence the flow of capital towards impact-aligned activities.
Financial intermediaries	Fund managers, banks, sustainable bond issuers, blended finance vehicles, outcomes-based finance providers, investment platforms	Structure, manage and distribute financial products and investment vehicles that channel capital towards impact-generating activities.
Enterprises	Social enterprises, impact SMEs, cooperatives, inclusive businesses, B Corp businesses, community interest companies, corporations	Deliver products and services that generate impact. Create employment and economic value. Demonstrate and scale impact-aligned business models.
Ecosystem enablers	Accelerators, incubators, technical assistance providers, research organisations, universities, standards bodies, think tanks, professional services firms, media, networks	Build capacity, generate evidence, develop standards, provide market intelligence, and strengthen the infrastructure that supports the impact economy.

Government and regulators	Relevant ministries, regulators, procurement bodies, development agencies	Shape the enabling environment through policy, regulation, procurement and public investment. Act as market participants and catalysts for impact.
Civil society	Individual consumers, citizens, civic associations, NGOs, community organisations, retail investors and savers	Shape demand, advocate for accountability, influence social norms, and participate in civic and economic decision-making.

Diversity beyond stakeholder groups

Diversity should be considered not only in terms of sectors and organisations, but also at the individual level, including demographic factors such as gender, age, skills, lived experience, and professional backgrounds. A well-balanced coalition is better equipped to understand ecosystem needs, build credibility, and drive collective action.

Roles within the Taskforce

Building an effective Taskforce requires more than assembling the right people. It requires being clear about what each person is there to do. Not every important voice needs a seat at the core table, and conflating roles early on is one of the most common sources of confusion and bottlenecks.

Defining these distinctions upfront protects the Taskforce's ability to make decisions while keeping a broad coalition of allies engaged. The roles below cover the most common configurations.

Role	Description	Commitment during Taskforce setup phase	Commitment post-accreditation (as National Partner)
Core Taskforce team	A small group (usually two-to-three people) at the centre of the work. Provides leadership and direction, ensures the work progresses by organising meetings, planning and executing activities, and may assign specific roles to other Taskforce members as needs arise.	15-25 hours per month	Typically transitions into founding leadership roles (e.g. board officers)
Taskforce member	Active in governance, strategy design, and decision-making. A broader group than the core team that should represent a diverse group of actors from the impact economy.	10-20 hours per month	5-10 hours per month, if retained in an ongoing governance or advisory capacity
Board Chair	National stature, collaborative mindset, and strong private sector experience and networks. Not necessarily drawn from the Taskforce itself. One of the most critical governance roles.	Usually not applicable as the Board is formalised at accreditation	2-4 hours per month
Ambassador	Informal members. They champion the National Partner within their own sphere without formal governance responsibility.	2-4 hours per month	2-4 hours per month
Government observer	Policy representatives who need to engage without board accountability.	Ad hoc	Ad hoc
Practitioner advisor	Field experts who contribute substantive input without board obligations. They complement the core Taskforce team: this role is about domain expertise on request, not ongoing coordination or leadership of the initiative.	Ad hoc, or according to scope of a working group.	Ad hoc, or according to scope of a working group.

Engaging government

How government is engaged is a strategic choice – there is no default arrangement. GSG Impact recommends that National Partners are a private sector-led, with government engaged as a close partner rather than a governing actor. Independence from government gives a National Partner the credibility to convene across sectors, speak candidly to policymakers, and outlast political cycles.

Three models exist:

- **Arm's length (recommended):** The National Partner operates independently, engaging government as a trusted external adviser (e.g. Australia, Indonesia, Vietnam, US). This is the model GSG Impact advocates for wherever it is viable.
- **Government as legitimising condition:** Active government participation is needed for credibility and/ strategic reasoning without government leading or controlling the National Partner (e.g. Japan).
- **Government-sponsored:** A public agency leads or co-funds the National Partner (e.g. Cambodia). This model should be approached carefully as it carries real trade-offs, such as dependence on political cycles, constrained ability to hold government accountable, and perceived lack of independence from government to other stakeholders.

Where a Taskforce's membership is heavily weighted toward government actors, this is worth surfacing and addressing early, since it can shape which model the National Partner ends up locked into well before the question is deliberately decided.

In some countries, Taskforces have decided to hold off on formal government engagement altogether during early formation, precisely to avoid being caught up in a change of administration before the National Partner is established enough to withstand it. This is a legitimate sequencing decision rather than a rejection of any of the three models above, or of the need to be representative of the whole ecosystem. Government can still be engaged later, once the National Partner has an independent footing.

Common pitfalls at this stage

- The most visible or vocal individuals are not always the most effective leaders.
- Well-connected individuals are not always the leaders with real national influence and credibility.
- Both social impact experts and mainstream finance leaders are needed: maintaining that balance is critical.
- Concentrating ownership in one organisation undermines the National Partner's legitimacy from the start.
- Enthusiasm without time or access is not enough.
- Underestimating how long it takes before any financial or tangible return appears. Most Taskforce members work unpaid for a year or more before the National Partner generates funding: set this expectation explicitly and early.

STAGE 3

Diagnose

What this stage is about

Developing a shared, evidence-based understanding of the impact economy and ensure that the National Partner's priorities, strategy, and activities are grounded in the realities of the ecosystem.

What success looks like

The Taskforce and key stakeholders have developed a common understanding of the ecosystem, agreed on the most important challenges and opportunities, and identified where the National Partner can add the greatest value. This provides the foundation for designing the National Partner's strategy, governance, and activities.

Understanding the ecosystem

The primary output of this stage is a landscape report, a structured overview of the national impact economy. It does not need to be a comprehensive research study: what matters is that it is credible, co-developed with stakeholders, and good enough to ground the strategy.

The report should help answer questions such as:

- What does the impact economy look like today?
- Who are the key actors and how do they interact?
- Where are the greatest opportunities and barriers to progress?
- Which issues would benefit most from collective action?
- What role could a National Partner play that is not already being fulfilled?
- What initiatives already exist, and what are they achieving?

A robust landscape report typically includes:

- mapping key stakeholders across the impact economy;
- assessing ecosystem maturity and key market trends;
- an overview of capital flows, investment activity, and market infrastructure (where data is available);
- reviewing relevant policies, regulations, and public initiatives;
- analysing key challenges, gaps, and opportunities;
- lessons and examples from comparable countries.

Where possible, build on existing research rather than starting from scratch. Market studies, policy reviews, ecosystem mappings, and academic research can often provide much of the required evidence base.

Validating the findings with stakeholders

Findings should be validated and refined through stakeholder engagement, to ensure they reflect the perspectives and experiences of the wider ecosystem.

We recommend convening a multi-stakeholder workshop to share and discuss the findings. It should be a working session, rather than a presentation, allowing participants to:

- validate the findings and assumptions;
- identify gaps or missing perspectives;
- prioritise key challenges and opportunities;
- begin building consensus around future priorities.

The outputs from this workshop should directly inform *Stage 4: Design*, and help shape the National Partner's strategy, governance model, and areas of focus.

STAGE 4

Design

What this stage is about

Collaboratively designing the National Partner's strategy, governance, and identity, ensuring broad ownership before accreditation as a National Partner.

What success looks like

With the active participation of diverse stakeholders, the Taskforce produces: a national strategy, a governance model, and a three-year financial and sustainability plan.

This stage is built around the principles of inclusion, collaboration, and co-creation. The goal is not to present a finished proposal for consultation, but to design the National Partner together with the ecosystem.

Working through thematic groups

We recommend organising the design work into thematic working groups, with themes informed by the findings from *Stage 3: Diagnose*. Three groups should map directly to the core materials that will be needed for an application:

- a national strategy;
- a governance framework;
- a financial sustainability model.

Other themes will be priorities that *Stage 3: Diagnose* identified as important and that warrant deeper analysis, such as capital mobilisation or policy and advocacy. Their findings feed into the strategy document.

How to set up and run a working group

Composition and size

Aim for six to ten members per group: enough for diverse perspectives, small enough to reach conclusions. Each group should ideally be chaired by an ecosystem actor rather than a Taskforce member, with at least one Taskforce member participating to maintain alignment without chairing or dominating. Participants should collectively reflect the breadth of the impact economy. Invite GSG Impact, its Board members, Ambassadors, or National Partner leaders to participate where possible. Their presence demonstrates that the process is connected to a larger partnership.

Meeting cadence and structure

Most groups meet three-to-five times over two-to-four months. A typical arc sees one session reviewing the landscape findings and agreeing scope, two or three sessions developing and debating draft recommendations, and a final session settling the recommendations and the written output. Sessions of 90-120 minutes work well, with the chair circulating notes and a working document for asynchronous input between meetings.

Outputs and integration

Each group should produce a short-written output capturing its findings, key decisions, and recommendations. The Taskforce can then consolidate these into application documents, working through any differences between groups before validating with stakeholders, such as where a strategic priority carries financial implications that the budget has not yet accounted for.

Three core outputs

The design stage will need to produce three outputs required for the application.

1. National strategy

- A credible, outcome-driven strategy that defines what the National Partner will focus on, how it will create change, and how progress will be measured.

It should be co-designed with ecosystem stakeholders, aligned with national development priorities and with GSG Impact's global strategy, and include one specific, visionary, measurable long-term target.

National Partner strategy guide

The National Partners' strategy guide for building impact economies has tools, examples, an outcome library, and step-by-step guidance on creating a National Partner strategy.

2. Governance model

- A governance structure that is transparent, representative, and fit for delivery.

Key decisions include operational model (see Appendix 2), legal form, board composition and diversity, sub-committees, and election processes. Ideally, the National Partner is chaired by non-government official.

National Partner governance guide

Mapping National Partners' governance challenges and recommendations covers all aspects of governance design, including legal form options, board composition criteria, election processes, term limits, and common governance challenges.

Finding the right chair

The right person has national stature, genuine commitment, collaborative instincts, and the ability to represent the National Partner internationally. Finding them requires cross-checking with peers, funders, and even competitors. Ask how they are perceived, whether they are driven by supporting the collective rather than organisational advantage, and whether they have sufficient time to engage. GSG Impact recommends three-year terms, and a maximum of two terms.

3. Financial sustainability model

- A realistic financial plan and budget covering the first three years, including a functioning secretariat.

Revenue sources typically mix several sources including membership fees, philanthropic grants, government support, corporate partnerships, and revenue-generating services.

National Partner funding guide

The Funding guide for National Partners includes case studies on how National Partners fund their operations, and provides frameworks for developing a diversified, sustainable funding model.

Securing agreement

Once the working group outputs have been consolidated, the Taskforce convenes a second multi-stakeholder workshop (the first having validated the findings from *Stage 3: Diagnose*) to secure broad stakeholder agreement on the strategy, governance model, and financial plan before the application is finalised.

The session should present the consolidated recommendations, resolve any remaining areas of disagreement, confirm the proposed governance structure (including, where feasible, the proposed chair), agree the long-term vision and targets that will guide the National Partner, and demonstrate that the strategy has been developed through a credible co-creation process.

A half-day workshop with 25–50 participants drawn from across the stakeholder ecosystem (not only working group members), is typical. Inviting a representative from GSG Impact or a leader from an established National Partner to open the session can reinforce credibility and connect the process to the wider global network.

A written summary should be circulated within one week, documenting key decisions, areas requiring further work, and agreed next steps ahead of submission. This record evidences stakeholder engagement and collective ownership, strengthening the application's co-creation credentials.

STAGE 5

Apply

What this stage is about

Demonstrating readiness to join the GSG Impact Partnership as a fully accredited National Partner.

What success looks like

A complete application has been submitted, due diligence is underway, and the Taskforce has demonstrated shared ownership, credible leadership, and a realistic plan for delivery.

Approval is decided by the GSG Impact Board of Trustees, based on recommendations from its relevant committees. Approval recognises that the National Partner has met the readiness criteria, and is prepared to operate as an inclusive, representative platform for the national impact ecosystem.

Criterion	What it means in practice
National ownership	Co-creation has produced shared ownership of governance, strategy, and action plan – not one organisation driving the process.
Broad stakeholder engagement	Diverse ecosystem actors have actively participated through multi-stakeholder convenings and bilateral engagements.
Credible leadership	Leaders have national stature, are capable of convening stakeholders and driving change, including a chair with private sector experience.
Robust governance	Clear structures and operating model (independent entity, hosted model, or coalition) are complemented by defined roles, transparent election processes, and planned leadership rotation.
Sustainability	The funding plan is credible and covers at least the first three years of operations, including a secretariat.
Delivery capacity	A functioning secretariat has clear roles, and the capacity to deliver year one activities.

Application document checklist

Applications must include the following documents, templates for most of which can be found in Appendix 3. To ensure alignment on expectations and process, Taskforces are encouraged to reach out to GSG Impact early, and maintain engagement throughout, rather than preparing documents in isolation and sharing them only once complete.

	Document	Notes
☐	Cover letter (one page)	Addressed to the GSG Impact Chair, signed by the incoming National Partner Board Chair.
☐	National impact economy landscape report	A deep analysis of the national impact economy. This can take the form of a literature review of existing published reports, but should still include up-to-date gaps, opportunities, and recommendations for the ecosystem. (It isn't sufficient to submit a pre-existing report as-is without this additional layer of current analysis.)
☐	Vision and mission statements	Clear, concise statements of what the National Partner stands for.
☐	National strategy and action plan	Co-designed with stakeholders from at least three parts of the impact ecosystem (government, capital supply, capital demand, financial intermediaries, ecosystem enablers). Aligned with GSG Impact's strategy. Includes one specific, visionary, measurable long-term target.
☐	Year one activity plan with SMART KPIs	Detailed activities, milestones, and measurable outcomes for the first year.

Document	Notes
Three-year budget and resourcing plan	Annual budget and a credible funding plan for the first three years of the secretariat, including a list of potential funders.
Governance framework	Structure, operating model (independent, coalition, hosted by another organisation, etc.) election process, board composition criteria, terms of office, leadership rotation, and committee structure (if applicable).
Board member profiles	CVs/resumés or short bios, including sector represented, expected contribution, and evidence of commitment to the National Partner.
Statement of commitment from board members	Personal letters or formal statements confirming each board member's commitment.
Secretariat description	Roles, functions, capabilities, and resourcing model, including whether the secretariat is dedicated, hosted, part-time, or supported through pro bono contributions.
Annexes (as applicable)	Additional materials that strengthen the application, e.g. letters of support, ecosystem maps, partnership MOU, list of working group members, statement of commitment and/or profiles from future board members.

The approval process

Once the application package is complete, the Taskforce submits it to GSG Impact.

The GSG Impact team reviews the application and conducts due diligence, such as:

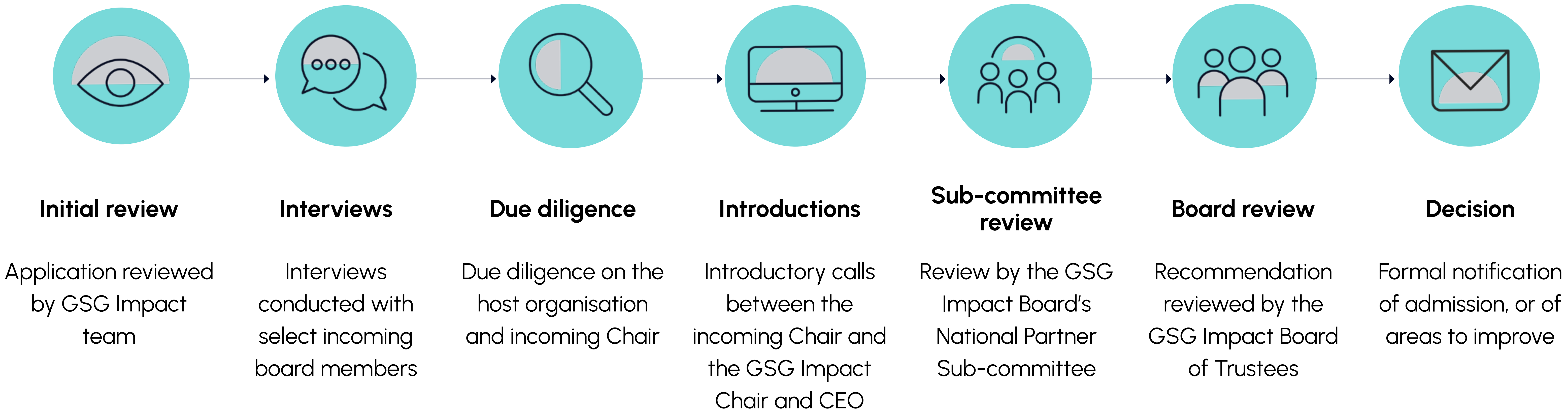
- reference calls with ecosystem stakeholders;
- independent verification of claims made in the application;
- a call between the GSG Impact Partnership Committee, or a GSG Impact Ambassador, and the selected board members;
- an introductory call between the incoming National Partner's proposed chair and the GSG Impact Chair and CEO.

The complete due diligence and review process typically takes six to eight weeks. If the application is considered sufficiently strong, the GSG Impact team prepare a recommendation for the GSG Impact Board to consider at its next meeting. (This means any application submitted within eight weeks of the next GSG Impact Board meeting will need to wait for the subsequent meeting for approval.)

Possible outcomes are: approval, conditional approval (where specific gaps must be addressed before formal admission), or deferral (where the Taskforce is asked to strengthen certain areas and resubmit). In the event of a deferral, the GSG Impact team provides written feedback and a clear set of expectations for the resubmission.

If the application is approved, onboarding begins as soon as the GSG Impact Board's decision is communicated.

Figure 3. GSG Impact Partnership admission process



STAGE 6

Launch

What this stage is about

Transitioning from Taskforce to National Partner, embedding the National Partner within the GSG Impact Partnership, and starting to deliver.

What success looks like

The National Partner is officially admitted and launched, with its year one workplan underway, and the team actively collaborating across the GSG Impact Partnership.

Onboarding

Following approval, onboarding begins immediately. GSG Impact provides:

- a formal welcome to the GSG Impact Partnership;
- access to activities, resources, and networks;
- introductions to peer National Partners and regional leads;
- alignment on reporting and collaboration mechanisms.

Public launch

Key elements include a public announcement, a national launch event (aligned with a relevant wider ecosystem gathering where possible), and media and stakeholder outreach to position the National Partner as the national go-to platform for impact. Depending on the joining date, a public welcome also takes place at the GSG Impact Partnership's annual Global Leadership Meeting (GLM).

The accredited National Partner is now able (and encouraged) to use the GSG Impact logo alongside their own branding, to indicate their place in the GSG Impact Partnership and boost its global profile (read more about brand usage in Appendix 4.

First-year priorities

The first year is focused on moving from formation to delivery. Priorities typically include:

- operationalising governance, including initial board meetings and committee structures;
- establishing the secretariat and equipping it to deliver the annual workplan;
- strengthening and expanding stakeholder relationships beyond the Taskforce phase;
- building credibility and momentum through early activities that create visible wins;
- participating in GSG Impact Partnership initiatives, events, and peer learning opportunities.

Continuous improvement

Once accredited, National Partners become part of the global GSG Impact Partnership, and are expected to actively contribute to its mission and objectives. To support continuous improvement and accountability, all National Partners participate in an annual self-assessment process, and are monitored through a quarterly performance index.

The annual self-assessment provides an opportunity for National Partners to reflect on their progress, strengths, challenges, and priorities for the year ahead. It is designed to support organisational learning and strategic development, while helping GSG Impact understand how National Partners are evolving and where additional support may be required. The assessment covers areas such as governance, financial sustainability, knowledge development, execution capacity, policy and advocacy, and capital mobilisation.

In addition, GSG Impact assesses National Partner performance on a quarterly basis using a performance index. The performance index uses similar criteria as the self-assessment, but is completed by GSG Impact. It helps identify areas of strong performance, emerging risks, and opportunities for support. The index also enables GSG Impact to monitor the overall health and effectiveness of the Partnership, and ensure that all National Partners continue to operate as active, inclusive, and representative platforms within their national impact ecosystems.

Together, the annual self-assessment and quarterly performance index provide a 360° review of the GSG Impact Partnership. They are intended not as compliance exercises, but as tools to help National Partners strengthen their effectiveness, deepen their impact, and contribute to the collective success of the global Partnership.

Performance tools

Prospective and newly accredited National Partners can better understand these processes by seeing examples of the annual self-assessment questionnaire and the quarterly National Partner performance index.

Part 3. GSG Impact support throughout the National Partner journey

GSG Impact actively supports prospective National Partners on the journey from first contact to formal membership. The level and nature of support evolves with each stage.

GSG Impact's role

Throughout the process, GSG Impact acts as a partner – it does not seek to prescribe who should lead, or what the National Partners' strategy should be. Local context is paramount, and the National Partner's strategy, governance, and identity must reflect national ownership. GSG Impact provides criteria and guidance, to help stakeholders identify the right leaders and build an effective coalition.

Stage	How GSG Impact supports	
Scope Build	Assessing country readiness. Introducing relevant ecosystem actors and peer National Partners. Guidance on coalition building and leader identification. Brainstorming potential board members.	Online calls, supporting tools, sample documents, and governance templates. Introductions to ecosystem stakeholders and strategic partners. Facilitating connections across the global impact community.
Diagnose	Advice and feedback on landscape report approach. Connections to research partners. Access to National Partner examples from comparable contexts.	
Design	Review of draft strategy and governance documents. Facilitating connections to the GSG community. Arranging for a GSG Board member or Ambassador to attend a stakeholder meeting in-country where possible.	
Apply	Advisory support on all application documents. Due diligence. Introductory calls between National Partnership leadership and the GSG Impact Chair and CEO.	
Launch	Formal welcome and public announcement at the Global Leadership Meeting. Introduction to the full GSG Impact Partnership and regional peers.	

Appendix 1 Frequently asked questions

What are the benefits of becoming a National Partner?

Becoming a National Partner connects your country to the GSG Impact Partnership – a global network of 43 National Partners representing 48 countries: more than half in emerging markets.
Direct benefits from being part of the GSG Impact Partnership include:
access to global events such as the annual Global Leadership Meeting;
peer learning from National Partners that have already tackled topics – such as governance, policy advocacy, or capital mobilisation – that you are looking to progress;
credibility, via association with the GSG Impact brand, that opens doors with funders, governments, and international partners;
access to resources including research, frameworks, tools, and a growing body of field intelligence from around the world.

Does GSG Impact financially support the National Partner during setup?

Not directly. GSG Impact provides significant in-kind support, including knowledge, tools, connections, event access, and advisory time. Each Taskforce needs to develop its own sustainable funding plan. More detail on how to go about this is available in the **Funding guide for National Partners**.

What does GSG Impact expect from a Taskforce?

GSG Impact expects a Taskforce to operate with transparency, inclusivity, and genuine national ownership. This means communicating regularly with their GSG Impact regional coordinator, sharing drafts and progress updates throughout the application process, operating in a consultative and collaborative manner with ecosystem actors, and driving their own development process forward.

What if a similar organisation already exists in the country?

Check it is genuinely equivalent in scope, mandate, and influence. In most cases, existing organisations cover only part of the ecosystem. Because of the breadth of the National Partner mandate, few organisations fully qualify. Where organisations covering part of the ecosystem exist, they are often best positioned as founding members, strategic partners, or part of the governance structure, not as the National Partner itself.

What's the difference between GSG Impact and other organisations working in this space?

What makes the GSG Impact Partnership unique is:

- We are a truly global partnership of local actors: with 43 National Partners representing 48 countries, spanning every continent, and with more than half in emerging markets.
- We work across public, private and non-profit sectors, building connections between governments, investors, business, and civil society, rather than working in the interests of any one group.
- We work to transform how economic systems function, so that everyone is incentivised to put environmental and social impact at the heart of decision-making.
- Through our connections to global platforms such as the G7, G20 and United Nations, we bring local voices to international discussions.

Where our work intersects with others, we collaborate to expand our collective impact – building partnerships with regional market builders, industry trade bodies, technical specialists, and others that share our goals.

How long does it typically take to become an accredited National Partner?

The journey from first contact to formal admission typically takes 12–18 months. Where there is a strong base of existing activity, it can take as little as six months; where more building blocks are needed, it can take two years or more.

What is the relationship between GSG Impact and its National Partners?

GSG Impact helps establish, strengthen and connect independent National Partners – trusted, local organisations that drive impact economy development in their countries.
Working alongside our National Partners, we:

- help countries strengthen their impact ecosystems;
- create policy and regulatory solutions to national priorities;
- mobilise capital for inclusive and climate-aligned growth.

National Partners are fully locally led and operated. They are co-created by leaders from all parts of a country's impact ecosystem – bringing together government, investors, businesses, and civil society to drive long-term economic systems change.

- National Partners lead implementation in their own countries, while GSG Impact equips them with the relationships, guidance, and tools they need to drive change. Together we tailor international best practice to national realities.
- Collaborating through the GSG Impact Partnership, National Partners work peer-to-peer to share knowledge and co-create innovative solutions.
- GSG Impact gives National Partners a global voice, bringing their on-the-ground experience to international discussions through platforms such as the G7, G20, and the United Nations.

How should a National Partner engage impact enterprises and grassroots voices?

Taskforces and National Partners often find that while impact investing – the supply of impact capital – is more established as a recognised field, users of impact capital – social enterprises, impact-driven organisations, and voices close to the communities being served – are more fragmented and it can be less obvious how to engage with them. Doing so is both a requirement to become a National Partner, and a practical advantage in progressing towards an impact economy.
National Partners should create meaningful opportunities for demand-side stakeholders to shape both strategy and decision-making. This can include involving social enterprise support organisations, founders, and community representatives in roundtables, working groups, national strategy consultations and validation workshops, as well as seeking out experienced leaders from social enterprises and support organisations to serve in board or other governance roles.
Some National Partners play a direct role in bridging the gap between the supply of capital and demand for it, such as by connecting entrepreneurs and impact-driven organisations with investors and other sources of finance, or supporting enterprises through investment-readiness programmes.

Where can we find examples of strategic documents and governance structures from other National Partners?

The **National Partner Portal**, exclusive to Taskforces and National Partners, has examples, guides, toolkits, webinar recordings, and key contact information. Your GSG Impact regional coordinator can connect you with other National Partners to share knowledge and collaborate.

What happens once a National Partner is admitted?

Onboarding begins immediately after the GSG Impact Board of Trustees approves an application. The official public welcome takes place at the annual Global Leadership Meeting. National Partners gain access to all GSG Impact activities, resources, and services, and are introduced to the full GSG Impact Partnership and other GSG Impact team members.
From the outset, National Partners have opportunities to collaborate with other National Partners, and with GSG Impact – on joint initiatives and projects, sharing expertise and adapting approaches across countries and regions. Collaborations often form part of global or multi-country initiatives that benefit from strong local knowledge and delivery.

Appendix 2 National Partner models

There is no single right model for a National Partner. The right structure depends on the state of the ecosystem, the nature of the founding coalition, the political and cultural context, and how the National Partner defines its mandate. What matters is a structure that enables the National Partner to convene credibly, act collectively, and sustain itself over time.

Many National Partners start in one configuration and evolve into another as the ecosystem matures and the National Partner's role expands. The list below describes the most common current approaches.

Model	Description	Strengths	Risks	Examples
Independent entity	Standalone legal entity with its own governance, board, staff, and funding	Autonomy; neutral convening authority; clear identity	Requires sustained independent resourcing	*UK (Impact Investing Institute), US Alliance, SpainNab*
Hosted*	National Partner functions embedded within a pre-existing organisation that provides operational support	Lower formation barrier; leverages host's networks and infrastructure	Risk of perceived capture; harder to position as neutral multi-stakeholder platform	*Switzerland (SSF), Luxembourg (LSFI), Bangladesh (Build Bangladesh), Brazil (Din4mo)*
Membership body	Formal association funded through practitioner membership fees	Sustainable revenue base; strong practitioner alignment	Tends to skew toward investors; can underrepresent social enterprises, beneficiaries, and government	*India (IIC), Taiwan*
Consortium	National Partner function shared among two or more co-leading organisations	No single dominant organisation; shared ownership and legitimacy	Coordination costs; harder to present a unified external voice	*France (FAIR + FIR + France Invest)*
Government-sponsored	Established with direct government leadership, hosting within a public agency, or primary government funding	Strong policy proximity; authorising environment for private sector engagement	Independence constraints; may be perceived as a government initiative rather than a multi-stakeholder platform	*Finland (Treasury-led, supported by SITRA)*

*It is important to establish a clear distinction between, and define roles for:

- the host organisation, which typically acts as a fiscal host, providing financial and administrative infrastructure;
- the secretariat, which leads the day-to-day implementation of activities.

Appendix 3
Application templates and examples

Contact your regional coordinator or visit the **National Partner Portal** to access.

- **Cover letter template**
- **Governance summary template**
- **Board commitment letter template**
- **Secretariat description template**
- **Budget and resourcing plan template** (with three-year projection)
- **Action plan template with SMART KPIs**

Appendix 4
GSG Impact brand usage

Brand usage before formal admission

- The GSG Impact name and branding assets cannot be used by any individual organisation without prior written consent.
- This includes Taskforces working towards National Partner status, which may not use the GSG Impact name or logo on websites, publications, or fundraising materials unless and until accredited as a National Partner by the GSG Impact Board of Trustees, or explicitly granted an exception in writing by GSG Impact for specific uses.
- GSG Impact does not endorse individual organisations or actors working within Taskforces.

Brand usage after formal admission

Use of GSG Impact branding must be in line with the **GSG Impact branding guidelines**.

- We encourage National Partners to display the GSG Impact logo alongside their own branding in communications, events, publications, and other activities. This demonstrates their place in the GSG Impact Partnership, and boosting the National Partner and the global Partnership.
- National Partners are independent legal entities and must not present themselves as branches, franchises, or national offices of GSG Impact.
- National Partners may reference their status as a part of the GSG Impact Partnership when engaging stakeholders, including for fundraising, but cannot make commitments on behalf of GSG Impact, other National Partners, or the GSG Impact Partnership in part or in whole.

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