POLICY ON CO-LENDING BY BANKS AND NBFCs TO PRIORITY SECTOR



RISK MANAGEMENT DEPARTMENT CENTRAL OFFICE KARUR



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I. Introduction

Banking industry has been witnessing lot of changes and challenges in the last two decades in terms of technology, alternate delivery channels, operational environment, and new credit growth avenues leading to a shift from the conventional lending methods / products.

Scores of Fintech entities have come in place with exclusive technologies in support of taking the banking products to the ultimate consumers.

RBI, on 21st September 2018, vide circular no. RBI/2018-19/49 FIDD.CO.Plan.BC.08/04.09.01/2018-19 has introduced co-origination model between Banks and NBFC-ND-SIs for providing competitive credit to priority sector. The arrangement entailed joint contribution of credit at the facility level by both the lenders as also sharing of risks and rewards

RBI has vide their letter dated FIDD.CO.Plan.BC.No.8 /04.09.01 /2020-21 November 05, 2020, communicated revised guidelines on "Co-Lending by Banks and NBFCs to Priority Sector", to provide greater operational flexibility to Banks and NBFCs and to better leverage the respective advantages.

The primary focus of the revised scheme rechristened as "Co-Lending Model" (CLM), is to improve the flow of credit to the unserved and underserved sector of the economy and make available funds to the ultimate beneficiary at an affordable cost, considering the lower cost of funds from banks and greater reach of the NBFCs. Arrangements under this policy would be an alternate source for the growth of our retail and small value advances.

In the light of the guidelines issued by RBI dated 5.11.2020, the "Policy for Co – lending by Banks and NBFCs to Priority sector" has been framed.

II.1. <u>Co-Lending</u> <u>Partners (CLPs)</u> and the criteria

The bank shall enter into Co-Lending Arrangements (CLA) with only the Co-Lending Partners (CLPs) satisfying the following criteria:

- The CLP shall be a NBFC (including HFC) registered with RBI
- Minimum external rating shall be "BBB" from any of the accredited External rating agencies.
- The CLP shall be in existence for a minimum period



- of 3 years and shall meet the regulatory prescriptions of CRAR & other bench mark ratios viz Leverage ratio etc.,
- The CLP shall have reasonable portfolio / product vintage, better underwriting standards, efficient collection reflecting in their asset quality standards like GNPA, NNPA, etc.
- The CLP to submit a copy of its audited financial statement every year forthwith.

Exposure ceiling & Overall cap under Co-lending arrangements:

Exposure limit under the co – lending arrangements, to a single CLP shall not exceed the program limit approved by the Board.

The overall ceiling for co-lending advance under priority sector shall be capped at 4% of the total outstanding advances of the bank as at the end of the previous quarter.

Risk Management Department shall monitor the overall exposure under Co-lending periodically (both Priority and Non-priority).

Business units shall carry out an enhanced due diligence exercise on the CLPs. While engaging in Co-Lending arrangement, inter-alia, the bank / CLP is required to,

- Adhere to extant guidelines on outsourcing of financial services issued by RBI in Nov 2006 and March 2015 and in particular, the partner bank and CLP shall have to put in place suitable mechanisms for ex-ante due diligence by the bank as the credit sanction process cannot be outsourced under the extant guidelines
- to comply with the Master Directions Know Your Customer (KYC) Direction, Feb'16, and updated from time to time, which already permit regulated entities, at their option, to rely on customer due diligence done by a third party, subject to specified conditions.
- The CLP should communicate information regarding any regulatory action initiated by any Statutory Regulator, within 7 days.



2. Activities / segments proposed under Co-Lending Arrangement

The Bank may enter into tie-up with CLPs to improve the flow of credit to the unserved and underserved sector of the economy and make available funds to the ultimate beneficiary at an affordable cost. Further Bank shall not

- a. in to tie-up with CLPs for lending to any speculative purpose
- b. enter into co-lending arrangement with an NBFC belonging to the promoter Group

III. 1. <u>Basic</u> features of Co-Lending Arrangement (CLA)

- The amount lent by the Bank, to the ultimate borrower under CLA would be an advance in the Books of the Bank duly complying with applicable regulations.
- The CLP shall not be entitled to include the Bank's share of lending for any purpose in their books unless specifically permitted by the Bank in the CLA. Specifically, the Bank's share of the advances shall not be included by the CLP while calculating Priority Sector lending achievement or for similar purposes etc.
- The priority sector assets on the bank's book shall at all times be without recourse to the CLP. Further, the loans extended by foreign banks under the Colending framework shall be restricted only to loans qualifying as priority sector assets.
- Banks and CLP shall formulate Board approved policies for entering into the CLM and place the approved policies on their websites. Based on their Board approved policies, a Master Agreement / Co-Lending Agreement may be entered into between the two partner institutions which shall inter-alia include, terms and conditions of the arrangement, the criteria for selection of partner institutions, the specific product lines and areas of operation, along with provisions related to segregation of responsibilities as well as customer interface and protection issues etc.
- The Master Agreement / Co-Lending Agreement may provide for the banks to either mandatorily take their share of the individual loans originated by the CLPs in their books as per the terms of the agreement & mutually agreed parameters, or to retain the discretion to reject certain loans after their due diligence prior to taking in their books



- The Master Agreement / Co-lending Agreement may contain necessary clauses on representations and warranties which the originating CLP shall be liable for in respect of the share of the loans taken into its books by the bank.
- The co-lenders shall establish a framework for monitoring and recovery of the loan, as mutually agreed upon.
- The co-lenders shall arrange for creation of security and charge as per mutually agreeable terms.

2. Sharing of the lending

- ➤ The share of KVB in the amount lent to the ultimate borrowers under the CLA may range from 20% to 80% as may be mutually agreed upon between the Bank and CLP.
- ➤ CLPs shall be required to retain a minimum of 20 per cent share of the individual loans on their books. The share may vary for different types/classes of loans, depending on the amount, credit rating of the borrower or any other such criteria as may be mutually agreed between the Bank and CLP.
- At any point of time CLP shall not dispose / divest / transfer / assign their share of loan to any other third party at any time, without obtaining prior consent for the same from the Bank. If the Borrower is entitled to subsidy / incentives / Interest subvention either at the time of lending or subsequently, the same shall be credited in the loan account and shared as per the loan proposition of Bank and CLP.
- ➤ The Bank may retain the option to convert the Co-Lending into sole lending on circumstances that may be mutually agreed upon. However, if the bank can exercise its discretion regarding taking into its books the loans originated by CLP as per the Agreement, the arrangement will be akin to a direct assignment transaction.
- Accordingly, the taking over bank shall ensure compliance with all the requirements in terms of Guidelines on Transactions Involving Transfer of Assets through Direct Assignment of Cash Flows and the underlying Securities and Master Directions on



	Transfer of Loan Exposures issued by RBI from time to time, with the exception of Minimum Holding Period (MHP) which shall not be applicable in such transactions undertaken in terms of this CLM. MHP exemption shall be available only in cases where the prior agreement between the banks and CLPs contains a back-to-back basis clause and complies with all other conditions stipulated in the guidelines for direct assignment.
	The CLP shall give an undertaking to the Bank that its contribution towards the loan amount is not funded out of borrowing from the Co-Lending Bank or any other group of the partner Bank, if any availed from them.
3. Credit Criteria	The Credit underwriting terms and CIBIL Score Benchmarking for sanctioning of loans under CLA shall be mutually agreed between the Bank and CLP, which include but not limited to CIBIL, CMR Rank, Key financial ratios like Current ratio, gearing ratio, total outside liabilities to total tangible net worth, debt equity ratio, DSCR, vintage, customer geography, distance, constitution, securities offered, rates charged etc.,
	CLP shall share a brief on their customer sourcing, underwriting methodology, scoring parameters, recovery strategies, digital process flow, vendors engaged for various activities and their execution capabilities, vintage and portfolio seasoning and delinquencies, compliance to KYC, outsourcing regulations, business continuity strategies. The detailed features of the product shall be captured in the Master agreement / Co-Lending Agreement between the Bank and CLP.
	KYC verification of borrower shall be in line with KYC/AML guidelines of RBI/Bank. CLP shall ensure that the borrower is not in RBI Defaulters list, Wilful Defaulters List and Central fraud registry. Bank shall ensure that the borrower is not in Banks Defaulters list.
4. Sanction decision	The Bank shall take its own independent decision regarding sanction of any proposal received under Co-lending arrangements without any commitment to accept the loans. The Bank shall not be obligated



5. Interest on the	>	or constrained in anyway by the co lending arrangements in respect of the sanction or terms and conditions and Bank shall be free to reject any application after their due diligence prior to taking in their books. Bank shall not outsource its part of credit sanction component to the NBFC or any other third party agencies, such that none of the Bank's credit standards are diluted in the co-lending model. Interest rate applicable for the Bank's portion
Loan		of the loan amount shall be linked to Policy Repo rate / MCLR as applicable to the MSME / non - MSME class of borrowers in lines with our internal policy provisions. Further the ROI shall vary for each product / portfolio depending on the historic defaults in the product / portfolio identified for Co-lending program.
	>	CLP shall keep the Bank informed about the ROI changes as and when effected by the CLP
	>	Master / CLP agreement shall provide for resetting the rate payable to the Bank on an agreed frequency.
6. Security for the advances	<i>\(\)</i>	The Bank shall retain first charge/primary charge / paripassu charge/hypothecation charge as the case may be (movable or immovable) on the Primary security and Collateral securities that may be offered by the ultimate borrower or guarantor or any other person in connection with the loan.
		Master agreement shall provide for modalities for disbursement of loan and execution of mortgage documents, creation of MODTD (Memorandum of deposit of title deeds) based on the requirements of the respective locations, preservation and safe keeping of documents, arrangements for sharing of documents as and when required by the Bank for audit / inspection purpose.
7. ESCROW Account Maintenance	>	The Bank and the CLP shall open an escrow type common account for pooling respective loan contributions for disbursal as well as to appropriate loan repayments from borrowers, without holding the funds for usage of float.
	>	All transactions (disbursements/ repayments) between the banks and CLPs relating to CLM shall be



	routed through an escrow account maintained with
	the banks, in order to avoid inter-mingling of funds.
	➤ Regarding loan balances, the CLP/ Bank shall maintain individual borrower's accounts and shall also be able to generate and share a single unified statement to the customer, through appropriate sharing of required information with the Bank/ CLP. The Master Agreement / Co-Lending Agreement shall clearly specify the manner of appropriation between the co-lenders
	Daily /Weekly/Monthly MIS to be maintained by Bank/CLP. If the Escrow account is maintained with our bank, then the operational modalities of Escrow account, concurrent checking by the Bank internally or through engaging audit firms, shall be captured in the Master agreement / Co-Lending Agreement.
8. Disbursement of the Loan	Loan disbursals for the respective share of the CLPs, shall be routed through common escrow account maintained, in line with the Master agreement / Co-Lending Agreement terms, for loan contributions and disbursal
	In case of any partial disbursements, as mutually decided in Master agreement / Co-Lending Agreement, the other party gives instructions to the Bank/CLP for such disbursement after obtaining the necessary documentary evidence.
	Bank shall open individual loan account in the name of the Borrower in Bank's Core Banking System/Loan Origination System for Bank's Share, as the case may be.
9. Repayment	Any repayments received from the Borrower shall be parked in the collection Escrow account. In case the CLP collects the payment from the Borrower through any mode – cash, cheque, electronic transfer etc., the amount received by the CLP shall be deemed to be held in trust on behalf of the Bank and CLP. The amount would not be a part of the property of the CLP. Only on appropriation of the amount as per the terms of CLA, the amount of share of the CLP out of the repayment instalment would be part of their receipt.
	The agreement for apportioning the instalment amount paid by the Borrower shall be appropriately

	>	worded and shall take into account the possibility of steep increase in the ROI by one party alone. The Master Agreement / Co-Lending Agreement shall clearly specify the manner of appropriation between the co-lenders. Bank and CLP shall put in place concurrent checking arrangements for verification of the disbursement and collection in escrow accounts, reconciliation, appropriation of disbursement and collection on a defined frequency.
10. End use of funds		The Master agreement / Co-Lending Agreement with the CLP shall specify the roles and responsibilities of the Parties in ensuring proper end-use of funds disbursed under the loan. The necessary documentary evidence of the same needs to be made available to the Bank under the Co-lending Arrangements or MIS of such details to be maintained.
11. Loan documentation	>	The Loan documentation to be executed by the ultimate Borrower / Co-borrowers / Guarantors would be mutually decided by the Bank and CLP. The Bank shall have the right to modify the format / content of the loan document or stipulate additional documents as may be considered necessary by it at any time.
		Depending on the type of the loan and other factors, the co - lenders shall arrange for creation of security and charge as per the mutually agreed terms. The format and content of the loan documents (and any variations to it thereafter) under co-lending arrangements, shall be approved by the Legal Department of the Bank prior to origination of loans under the co - lending arrangements. Further changes if any from time to time in the format and contents of the loan documents shall have to be approved by the Bank's legal department upfront.
	>	Bank and CLP shall engage a suitable legal consultant / legal firm as mutually decided by the Bank and CLP for drafting all the related loan documents, agreement, letter of authority / power of attorney etc., to safeguard the interest of the Bank.



12. Execution of	The Loan documentation shall be executed by the
the document	Borrower in presence CLP and / or Bank as mutually agreed by the Bank and CLP.
13.Registration of the document	Wherever the loan documents or any other connected document or information is required to be filed / submitted / registered with any authorities as applicable to type of facility/ies, the responsibility for arranging for the same lies with CLP and the same need to be detailed in the Co-Lending Agreement between the Bank and CLP and their respective roles and responsibilities.
	In case of the failure of the CLP to carry out their responsibilities within time in this regard, the Bank may, without any prejudice to its position, cause the filing / submission / registration of such documents.
14. Insurance	All securities should be sufficiently and suitably insured by CLP wherever applicable as mutually agreed between the CLPs.
15. Letter of	
Authority	of CLP, alternatively the master agreement shall
	provide appropriate clause, in the absence of
	specific letter of authority, authorizing CLP to
	undertake the following on behalf of KVB:
	a) For execution of Mortgage Deed in favour of the Colenders and depositing the title deeds with CLP.
	 b) Accepting the deposit of title deeds by CLP on behalf of the Bank.
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	of the Bank. c) Lodging of the originals of the loan documents, mortgage documents and title deed documents with another third party agency, like Stock Holding Corporation etc. for preservation purpose (both
	of the Bank. c) Lodging of the originals of the loan documents, mortgage documents and title deed documents with another third party agency, like Stock Holding Corporation etc. for preservation purpose (both digital and hard copy) d) Handing over of one set of scanned copy of loan documents, mortgage documents and title deed documents executed by the borrower, to the Bank within 15 days of execution of the concerned



The **master agreement clause** / Letter of Authority to be given to the CLP to undertake the above on behalf of the Bank and such authority to be used only for the loans sanctioned under Co-lending arrangements between the Bank and the CLP. **Group Head of the respective business unit** shall be empowered to issue such Letter of Authority to the competent authority of the CLP.

16. Inspection & Record

- ➤ The Bank shall have full rights for inspection of the primary / collateral security and the loan documents, if held with the CLP.
- ➤ Bank and CLP shall maintain complete and accurate records in relation to the transactions executed by the Bank and CLP under Co-lending arrangement.
- ▶ Bank shall have the right to audit the books of accounts of CLP through an auditor appointed by Bank in respect of the disbursals, the recoveries received and other charges received by CLP in respect of the shared Loan. It is specifically agreed between the Bank and CLP that the scope of audit shall be confined only to inspection of the entries and documentation in the accounts under the Colending programme.
- Business unit shall establish a mechanism whereby the Bank Officials or other nominated person / firm shall verify
 - All the copies of the loan documents, title deeds and MOD for the mortgage backed loans at periodic intervals to ensure adherence to terms of the agreement and extant regulatory requirements.
 - Annually not less than 5% of the original loan documents. EM and MODTD documents may be undertaken preferably on a quarterly basis.
 - Annual Inspection of physical assets/securities financed on a random basis, as agreed with co – lending partners
 - In case of Personal Loan, Two wheeler loan, Four Wheeler loan, Gold Loan, Business loan (unsecured), Merchant Cash Advance, SME Loans, loan documents and other post



	disbursement documents like RC, Insurance, CERSAI (wherever applicable) to be verified for all loans.
	 RBI's representatives shall have the right to access the Bank's/CLP documents, records and information stored by the Bank and CLP. In this regard, banks/CLPs shall provide all the information like loan details including interest rate and other charges, details of risk sharing arrangement, etc., as and when called for by the RBI.
	 Depending on the nature and tenor of the loan, the Bank may agree for that, the documents duly executed by the Borrower are retained by CLP and disposed of as per the extant guidelines and basis the Co-Lending Agreement between the Bank and CLP, after closure of the loan.
17.CLP's position	The Co-lending arrangements with the CLP shall clearly stipulate that the CLP is not constituted as an Agent beyond the degree permitted in the Agreement. Without the specific authority of the Bank, the CLP shall not represent the Bank in any forum for any matter except to the extent prescribed in the master agreement.
18. Collection and Recovery	Repayments made by the borrower/s shall be appropriated between the Bank and CLP as per the agreed sharing ratio and their proportionate share alone will be adjusted in the respective loan account.
	In case of default of repayment by the Borrower, CLP shall follow up with the Borrower for recovery of overdue amount in lines with the mutually agreed terms.
	➤ In case the loan becomes NPA, the Bank in consultation with CLP shall decide on all matters pertaining to the course of action to be taken for recovery. The Bank in consultation with CLP may offer one-time settlement to the Borrower on terms and conditions as deemed appropriate by the Bank.
	Recalling of advance shall be done by the Bank as majority stakeholder. Joint action on SARFAESI shall be carried out by the Bank after obtaining authorisation letter from CLP. SARFEASI Action can be initiated by the Bank against the Borrower as per

	the provisions of the SARFEASI Act. Recovery of EMI from any means will be shared as per the risk sharing basis.
	➤ In the case of security being sold to Asset Reconstruction Company / entity provision shall be made available enabling the bank to affect the full sale to Asset Reconstruction Cell on behalf of CLP.
	In the case of complaints filed before the consumer forum by the borrower, if the deficiency of service on the part of the Bank/CLP is proved, then the deficiency party should indemnify accordingly.
19. Provisioning and Reporting Requirement	Each lender shall adhere to the asset classification and provisioning requirement, as per the respective regulatory guidelines applicable to each of them, including reporting to Credit Information Companies, under the applicable regulations for its share of the loan account.
	Master agreement shall provide methodology for sharing of details/data on frauds if any identified by CLP to our Bank, facilitating reporting of frauds to RBI. CLP to share all connected original documents to our Bank to facilitate further course of action including filing complaint with LEA. The timeline shall be as per the RBI guidelines Master Directions on Frauds - Classification and Reporting by commercial Banks and select FIs and the provisions of Fraud Risk Management Policy of our Bank, on identification of fraud by the Bank or CLP and on receipt of complete information relating to fraud incidents at our end.
20. Right of set- off	The Bank may exercise the Right Of Set Off against any eligible assets of the Borrower / Guarantor that are with the Bank shall be restricted to the Bank's portion of the loan amount outstanding. The benefit shall not be available to the CLP for their portion of the loan.
21. Sharing of the losses including fraud cases	 As per mutually agreed terms and conditions defined in the master agreement / Co-Lending Agreement.
22. Maintenance of accounting records	The Bank shall obtain the account related information from CLP through Application Programme Interface /Excel /other means and to be pushed to our Loan Origination System/Loan



	Automated Processing System for customer creation/loan account opening/disbursement in CBS.
	The Bank shall have adequate information to create and maintain the loan records of the Borrower independently from the CLP. Maintenance of accounting records shall be as per the PMLA act as amended from time to time.
23. Assignment / Change in Loan Limits:	Any assignment of loans by any of the lenders can be done only with the mutual consent of both the lenders. Further, any change in loan limit of the Co- lending can be done only with the mutual consent of both the lenders.
24. Grievances Redressal:	The CLP shall be the single point of interface for the customers and shall enter into a loan agreement with the borrower, which shall clearly contain the features of the arrangement and the roles and responsibilities of CLPs and banks, products dealt by CLP and the one offered under Co –lending arrangements.
	All the details of the co-lending arrangements, roles and responsibilities of CLP and Bank, <i>shall</i> be disclosed to the customers upfront and their explicit consent shall be taken.
	The extant guidelines relating to customer service and fair practices code and the obligations enjoined upon the banks and CLPs therein shall be applicable mutatis mutandis in respect of loans given under the arrangement.
	With regard to grievance redressal, suitable arrangement shall be put in place by the co-lenders to resolve any complaint registered by a borrower with the CLP within 30 days, failing which the borrower would have the option to escalate the same with Banking Ombudsman or the Customer Education and Protection Cell (CEPC) in RBI.
	In the case of complaints filed before the consumer forum by the borrower, if the deficiency of service on the part of the Bank/CLP is proved, then the deficient party should indemnify accordingly.
25. Business Continuity Plan:	The business continuity plans of the Co-lending arrangement shall ensure continuity of critical loan operations and system management for conducting



Co-lending during disaster and minimize the disruption of critical operations by putting a robust system and framework while meeting regulatory and compliance requirements.

- Business continuity plan shall adopt ownership for crisis management, business recovery and system recovery, retrieval of data / information / documents.
- Records being maintained by one of the CLPs, the said CLP shall individually have BCP in place with suitable strategies and recovery from the disaster. BCP is to manage the impact of significant disruptions and shall endeavour to resume business and operations within a reasonable time in the event of disaster.
- ➤ The CLP agree and understand that the business continuity plans of both the Parties are interdependent and continuity of business shall depend on functioning of respective business continuity plans. Compliance to this arrangement, disaster recovery strategies are to be ensured by both the partners.

In the event of any difficulty in performing the respective obligations by the CLP as agreed under this Co-lending Agreement, CLPs shall make reasonable efforts to make alternative arrangements to ensure that the said respective obligations continue to be performed.

It is further agreed between the Parties that, upon termination of this Agreement:

- i) For all Borrowers under the Co-lending program the revenue sharing and collection arrangement shall continue till the closure of the Loan.
- ii) Customer service for all Borrowers under the Colending arrangement shall be provided by CLP.
- iii) Further origination under Co-lending arrangement shall be stopped.
- Iv) Subject to the size of the shared portfolio and NHB/RBI guidelines a buyback arrangement can be agreed between the CLP.



26. Governance	Further the master agreement shall provide for continuing the existing terms of agreement, in the event of any change in the Key Managerial Persons (KMP) /ownership/ control/ structural or strategic merger / takeover of co-lending partner with any other NBFCs Board of Directors:
framework	The Board of Directors shall
	 a) approve and annually review the policy on collending priority sector b) approve broader parameters / guidelines and strategic guidance for financing under collending arrangements c) assess the effectiveness of the implementation through RM ALM
	Risk Management and Asset Liability Management Committee of the Board (RM ALM):
	This Committee is responsible for ensuring effective implementation of the policy provisions; The broad functions of the Committee are:
	 a) Foresee future changes & challenges b) Review the development & implementation of operational guidelines and methodologies including underwriting arrangements. c) RMD, Chief Risk Officer along with the business verticals shall ensure adherence to the provisions of the Policy on co – lending (priority sector) approved by the Board / RM ALM
IV. Other Operational Modalities	Business vertical/s shall maintain operational guidelines / Standard Operating Procedures with regard to the Co-Lending arrangements separately covering all aspects of this Policy.
	Inspection and Audit Department shall conduct the audit of portfolio under co – lending model, annually or as and when required, to assess the effectiveness of the co – lending arrangements with regard to adherence to internal policies of the Bank,



regulations, operational arrangements and controls and suggest / recommend measures to fix the gaps if any, observed during the audit process.

The Bank and CLP shall adhere to the guidelines on Digital Lending issued by RBI in Sep 22 wherever applicable.

Half Yearly review note to be placed before the Top Management on the performance of Co-Lending arrangement by the respective Business verticals through Chief Risk Officer.

MD and CEO would be the competent authority to approve the other operational modalities if any, including the commercials, interest rates with Co-Lending Partner.

V. Ownership & Review of the policy

Policy shall be owned by RMD and reviewed annually or on the basis of guidelines issued by Reserve Bank of India from time to time.

