Policy on Co-Lending to Priority Sector 2025



Consumer Banking Department Assets (CBDA), Chennai

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POLICY ON CO-LENDING TO PRIORITY SECTOR 2025

1. Introduction and Purpose

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.

2. Co-Lending Partners (CLPs) 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.

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.
- Adhere to extant guidelines on outsourcing of financial services is applicable if the co-lending Agreement entails a prior, irrevocable commitment on the part of the bank.
- To take into its books its share of the individual loans as originated by the NBFC.
- The CLP should communicate information regarding any regulatory action initiated by any Statutory Regulator, within 7 days.
- 3. 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
Basic features	 The amount lent by the Bank, to the ultimate

4. Basic 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 Co-lending 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. > The share of KVB in the amount lent to the ultimate 5. Sharing of the borrowers under the CLA may range from 20% to lending 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.
6. 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.
7. 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 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.
8. Interest on the Loan	>	Bank may fix a fixed or floating rate for the Bank's portion of the loan amount as mutually agreed with CLP. In the case of floating rate loans, interest rate applicable for the Bank's portion of the loan amount shall be linked to Policy Repo rate/ MCLR as applicable.

- > The ultimate borrower may be charged an allinclusive interest rate as may be agreed upon by both the lenders conforming to the extant guidelines applicable to both.
- 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.
- Changes in interest rates if any, due to changes in the underlying rates of CLP or Bank, during the tenor of the loan and the modes / methods of communicating the same to the borrower shall have to be clearly defined with clear responsibilities on CLPs to avoid complaints later.
- ➤ However, the repayment / recovery of interest shall be shared between the bank and the CLP in proportion to their share of credit and interest rates.
- 9. Security for the advances
- > 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.
- ➤ The charge on the securities for the Bank portion of the loan may be retained by the Bank directly. In cases where the charge on the securities for the Bank's portion of the loan is retained through the co-lending partner holding in trust on behalf of the Bank, the terms and conditions to be mutually agreed and proper documentation to be ensured besides obtaining legal opinion for such documentation". Security retained by a third party-trustee is not entertained.

		Whenever security interest is held by the transferor in trust with the transferee(s) as the beneficiaries, it will subject to documentation of mutually agreed terms and binding mechanism for timely invocation of such security interest, if the need arises.
10. 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.
	A	The CLP and Bank shall maintain individual borrower's accounts for their respective portion of the loan. CLP shall also be able to generate and share a single unified statement to the customer, through appropriate sharing of required information with the Bank. 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.
11. Disbursement of the Loan	<i>A</i>	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.

12. 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.
	7	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.
13. 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.
14.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.
15. Execution of the document	The Loan documentation shall be executed by the Borrower in presence CLP and / or Bank as mutually agreed by the Bank and CLP.
16.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.
17. Insurance	All securities should be sufficiently and suitably insured by CLP wherever applicable as mutually agreed between the CLPs.
18. Letter of Authority	Letter of Authority shall be executed by the Bank in favour 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:
T	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.
	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 documents.

e) Collection of monthly instalment amount from the individual borrower and remitting the dues to KVB periodically in the escrow account maintained by the CLP with the Bank.

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.

19. 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. 20. CLP's position ➤ The Co-lending arrangements with the CLP shall clearly stipulate that the CLP is not constituted as an beyond the degree permitted 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. 21. Collection and > Repayments made by the borrower/s shall appropriated between the Bank and CLP as per the Recovery 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. Since NBFC is the single point of interface for customers, recalling of advance initiation of action under SARFAESI to be permitted to be carried out by the NBFC. There could be chances that the property is in areas where our branch presence is low. However, CLP has to inform to the bank about the proceeding once in a month and the recovery should be shared in the ratio of risk proportion.

		In the case of security being sold to Asset
		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.
	>	Both the lenders (co-lenders) to establish a framework for monitoring and recovery of the loan, as mutually agreed upon. This framework is part of the necessary documentation executed between both the parties and must be approved by the respective Business Heads.
22. 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.
23. 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.
24. Sharing of the losses and fraud reporting	>	Losses as per mutually agreed terms and conditions defined in the master agreement / Co-Lending Agreement
	>	The complete fraud reporting process needs to be adhered to the RBI MD on fraud risk management and Bank's extant policy on Fraud Risk Management and Fraud Risk SOP.

25. 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.
26. 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 and it should be part of the master agreement
27. Grievances Redressal:	 master agreement 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, shall 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.

28. Business Continuity Plan:	The Master Agreement shall cover details of business continuity plan / measures to ensure uninterrupted service to the borrowers till repayment of the loans under the Co-lending agreement, in the event of termination of co-lending arrangement between the co-lenders.	
29. Governance 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 MCB	
	Management Committee of the Board: 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 / MCB 	
30. 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 regarding 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.
31. Ownership & Review of the policy	, , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , , ,
32. Program Limit	Business verticals shall get the program limit fixed and approved by the Board / as per delegation of powers approved by the Board based on the underlying type of facility / segment, to:
	1. Avoid concentration of business risk to a specified segment / class of assets with due reference to the sectoral caps stipulated in the credit policy (example: Housing, Mortgage, unsecured loans, Jewel loans etc.)
	2. have a diversified asset class based on the risk appetite of the partnering institutions
33. Exposure Ceiling & Overall Cap	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.
under Co- Lending arrangements	The overall ceiling shall be interchangeable between priority and non-priority sector with overall ceiling
