

The Partnering with Governments Navigator



Building effective collaboration with the public sector in Africa

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Foreword



Sustainable development is a complex process and no one can achieve it alone. Cross-sector partnerships between government, business and civil society combine capacities and resources, stimulate economic activity, improve public services and thus are vital to the fight against poverty and under-development. Nevertheless, multi-stakeholder approaches are not easy to manage.

This is why GTZ, on behalf of the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), joined hands with the IBLF in 2007 to support an initiative to examine and enhance cross-sector partnerships. This programme was Partnering with Governments. One important outcome of this programme is the Navigator in front of you.

Practitioners within companies will find key reflection questions to consider when aiming at entering into cross-sector partnerships with governments. These include questions around issues such as partner selection and what capacities may be available, but also the extent to which government involvement is appropriate and feasible, and even whether a cross-sector partnership is the right solution for this specific development objective at all.

Of course, we cannot provide exhaustive answers to these major questions, let alone a one-size-fits-all concept. But we want to spread the lessons learnt from our programme, and we are sure that the Navigator will be of real use for all practitioners creating new or maintaining ongoing cross-sector development partnerships.

Published at the end of the Partnering with Governments programme, the Navigator is nevertheless a beginning. GTZ will continue to support stakeholders, public and private, to partner more effectively and understand each other better, thereby creating fruitful development partnerships – for the benefit of people around the globe.

Ellen Kallinowsky

Coordinator
Cooperation with the private sector – Africa
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One of the lessons from nearly 20 years of IBLF's work in supporting cross-sector collaboration is that all partnerships are unique. Their shape and dynamics develop over time within a complex and often messy set of drivers and influencing factors such as the socio-economic-political context; the characteristics, needs and resources of the partners and stakeholders; and individual people's commitment, skills and personalities.

Effective partnering with governments – wherever it may be in the world – can be particularly challenging. Changing political imperatives, a lack of continuity of (often under-resourced) staff, a regulatory framework designed for procurement and a lack of mutual understanding between the public and private sectors can all be inhibitors.

The complexity of context and the variety of challenges means there can be no step-by-step route map to building successful government/business partnerships. It is a journey that can easily be blown off course, lurch forward with a strong wind before being becalmed for months or take several wrong turnings before eventually ending up (hopefully) close to the desired destination.

The aim of this publication, in concert with the collection of The Partnering Initiative's tool books, is to help partnership practitioners to navigate such a partnering journey – to understand the elements which may buffet them and hence to steer an informed and robust course.

It is tricky to find the right balance between guidance that is specific enough to provide helpful direction while also being relevant to a wide variety of contexts. We hope that the Navigator successfully achieves this balance and would welcome your feedback and comments as you put it into practice.

Darian Stibbe

Director
The Partnering Initiative
International Business Leaders Forum

Introduction

This booklet has been designed as a practical navigator to assist understanding of the opportunities and challenges of working in cross-sector partnerships with African governments. Cross-sector partnerships involve different sectors (public, private and civil society) working together in order to achieve common or complementary goals in a more effective and sustainable manner than when each operates separately.ⁱ The Navigator outlines a selection of key issues for consideration when working with public sector partners and shares pointers for reflecting upon and addressing these.

Although written primarily for partnership brokers or practitioners who build connections across sectors, the Navigator is also directed towards representatives from the business sector, non-governmental organisations (NGOs), and bilateral and international agencies wishing to build, or improve, their partnering activities with African governments. As the Navigator seeks to promote reciprocal understanding of how different partners can work together more fruitfully to achieve development targets, it is also hoped that it may be of use to those working for African governments themselves.

The work which informs the Navigator is derived from the Partnering with Governments (PwG) programme (2007-10) developed by GTZ's Centre for Cooperation with the Private Sector and IBLF along with a number of major companies.ⁱⁱ Through case study research in countries such as Gabon, Ghana, Guinea, Kenya, Madagascar, South Africa and Zambia, the PwG programme sought to capture the experiences, insights and perspectives of those involved in cross-sector partnerships, while also exploring how to build the capacity of governments in Sub-Saharan Africa to achieve the targets of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) by partnering more effectively.

Governments throughout the world have recognised that development goals cannot be addressed by them alone and that partnerships, through access to complementary resources such as funds, skills and expertise, offer the possibility of achieving greater impact and scale. The potential of cross-sector collaboration is increasingly being acknowledged in Africa where socio-economic challenges are particularly marked. The "development, coordination and sustaining of networks of relationships and partnerships at national, regional, continental and global levels" was outlined as central to the implementation of the 2001 New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD), a pledge by African leaders to commit their governments to do more to promote "sustainable development" both individually and collectively. Such thinking was reinforced during the 2002 World Summit on

The hypothesis underpinning a partnership approach is that only with comprehensive and widespread cross-sector collaboration can we ensure that sustainable development initiatives are imaginative, coherent and integrated enough to tackle the most intractable problems.¹

Governments have the potential to institutionalise sustainable development in ways that few other organisations can manage. And, they have the potential to do this on a large scale.²

ⁱ Unlike Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) or government-tendered partnerships, cross-sector partnerships are not built around contractual arrangements but draw more flexibly on the diverse resources of their stakeholders. See Defining Cross-sector Partnership (p9)

ⁱⁱ See back cover for details.

Sustainable Development (WSSD) in which partnerships between different sectors were placed firmly on the agenda as vehicles for achieving sustainable development.

Working in cross-sector partnerships is not an easy process in any context. While there is no doubt that many common historical and systemic factors have marked the environment for partnering in Africa, the implementation challenges faced in building partnerships are similar to those elsewhere in the world. In addition, although the PwG programme had an overarching focus on Sub-Saharan Africa, an appreciation of the enormous diversity among African countries is essential. Particular socio-economic, political, geographic, linguistic and cultural environments have conditioned an assorted range of national government approaches and development trajectories. These differences reinforce the fact that there can be no “one size fits all” partnership model for the African continent and that contextual nuances must be carefully considered when promoting such arrangements.

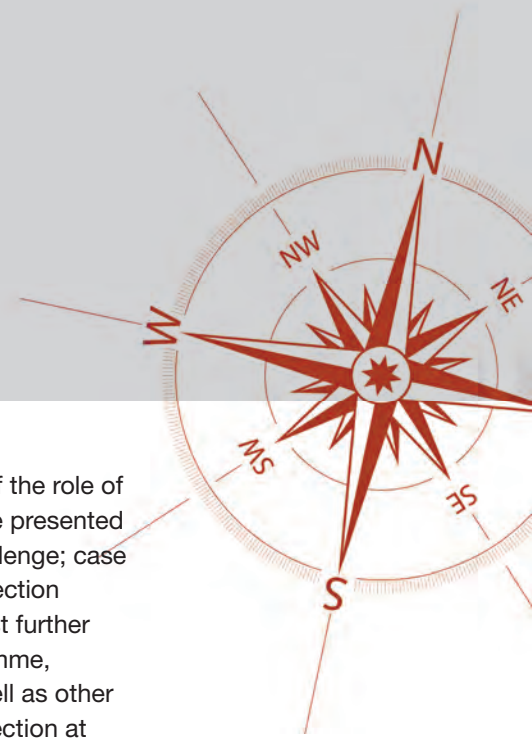
As well as a thorough understanding of specific operational contexts, awareness about what cross-sector partnerships are and how they work is required among all social actors, not just the public sector. Negative stereotypes and poor understanding of different sector roles and motivations for partnering, as well as absence of the requisite knowledge and skills for working collaboratively, are prevalent across all sectors of society. In addition, effective partnership implementation relies upon a realistic understanding of the situation and needs of target groups or project beneficiaries; clarity around the costs involved; and mutual agreement on the relative value of both cash and in-kind contributions.

With these caveats in mind, the Navigator explores how more effective partnering relationships with African governments might be developed. The topics selected for this enquiry have been derived from material gathered during the PwG programme and a review workshop. Their scope is not exhaustive and, rather than providing potential partners with easy answers or checklists, the intention is to promote deeper consideration of each of the issues covered. In this way it is hoped that partnership options involving the public sector in Africa will be approached with greater appreciation of the careful preparation and planning necessary for successful partnering.

The chapters cover the following areas:

1. Checking on appropriate government involvement
2. Exploring the enabling environment for partnering
3. Identifying the right government partner/s
4. Engaging government partners
5. Addressing limitations in capacity and skills
6. Understanding government timeframes
7. Promoting partnership accountability
8. Monitoring and evaluating partnerships

The partnering process requires a mindset that sees across traditional sector lines and finds common interests in a better understanding of the bigger picture; cross-sector partnering should be introduced in this spirit.³



Following a definition of cross-sector partnerships and short summary of the role of government in relation to such initiatives, the topics for consideration are presented in a standard format which includes: a brief overview of the issue or challenge; case study vignettes from PwG that illustrate the issue in practice; a set of reflection questions for consideration and discussion; and a list of sources to assist further investigation of the issue. More detailed information on the PwG programme, including tentative findings, progress reports and full case studies, as well as other materials used to inform this document, can be found in the reference section at the end of the Navigator.

Tips for using the Navigator

The Navigator is written for those with experience of working in cross-sector partnerships and assumes prior understanding of the different steps necessary to build partnerships. Those who are new to the field may find it helpful to familiarise themselves with some of the issues and challenges explored in the Navigator by first reading through the case studies from which the content is drawn. A list of the PwG case studies is included in the reference section and the studies themselves can be found on the PwG website www.thepartneringinitiative.org/PwG.

The Navigator does not aim to cover all aspects of partnering, but is instead designed to work as a companion to other guides covering the partnering process, for example The Partnering Initiative's tool book series that includes the Partnering Toolbook and the Brokering Guidebook (available at www.thepartneringinitiative.org).

Key terms and concepts

Much of the language used in relation to partnerships creates unrealistic expectations about their potential. Greater clarity around partnership terminology can support a more pragmatic appreciation of the possibilities that partnering with governments might offer. Although the partnerships outlined in the Navigator are focussed on the achievement of “development” goals, interpretations of what “development” means and how it should be achieved in particular contexts varies. In addition, distinct expressions may be used by individual partnerships for specific or technical terms central to their activities. While recognising that universal definitions may be hard to arrive at, this section seeks to provide a clear and common understanding of some of the key concepts used in the Navigator.

We turn to a cross-sector partnership to create an approach to sustainable development that will be more innovative and far-reaching in social, economic and / or environmental terms than single sector approaches.¹

Defining cross-sector partnership

The term “partnership” can be confusing because it encompasses a range of different collaborative relationships, including those within and across different sector groups. A frequent misunderstanding is made between the cross-sector partnerships that are the subject of this booklet and Public Private Partnerships (PPPs).ⁱ PPPs are formal contractual relationships between the private and public sector in which the private sector provides an upfront investment in infrastructure or technology in return for a long term concession, lease or fees for the provision of public goods or services. Cross-sector partnerships involve organisations from government, businesses and civil society working together in areas of mutual interest to achieve common – or at least complementary – goals. These relationships tend to be informal and ad hoc and rely on wider stakeholder involvement than PPPs. In addition, because they do not result in a business profiting directly by providing public goods, they are not heavily regulated or subject to lengthy tendering procedures. To assist clarification, some core differences between PPPs and cross-sector partnerships are highlighted below (Fig.1.).

Fig.1. The difference between Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) and Cross-sector Partnershipsⁱⁱ

Public-Private Partnerships (PPPs)	Cross-sector Partnerships
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Contracts or transactions-based arrangement (with clear vertical accountability structures) ● Specific performance targets / deliverables and timeframes ● Operate within legal / regulatory constructs ● Limited stakeholder consultation which is clearly proscribed in the agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Less emphasis on transactions with significantly more emphasis on horizontal accountability among partner institutions ● Greater flexibility around targets, deliverables and timeframes as they are expected to evolve organically based on processes with stakeholders ● Partners operate within legal / regulatory constructs but partnership itself is unregulated ● Extensive stakeholder engagement is a critical success factor

ⁱ Confusingly, in many of the countries involved in the PwG programme, the term PPP was also used to describe cross-sector partnerships.

ⁱⁱ Source: Caplan, K. & Stott, L. Defining our Terms and Clarifying our Language, in Svensson, L. & Nilsson, B. eds. *Partnership – As a Strategy for Social Innovation and Sustainable Change*, Santérus Academic Press, Sweden, 2008



Government and partnerships

Government plays two broad roles in relation to partnership: it sets the policy and regulatory environment for partnerships; and, through its service delivery activities, it can also be an implementing partner. Policy is the course of action that government chooses to guide its activities, while the regulatory environment encompasses the laws and regulations that are put in place by government to ensure compliance with policy decisions.

When government functions well, the basis of its mandate rests upon the incorporation of the views of a majority of the population in appropriate policies, while also ensuring that minorities are not marginalised. In order to promote good governance, governments are increasingly being encouraged to enhance citizen involvement in policy decision-making processes. This relies on improved connections across different levels of government and with social actors in the business and civil society sectors.

Governments are also responsible for the delivery of essential services that meet basic needs such as shelter, health, education and security. In recent years, in recognition of the complementary contribution of their particular resources and expertise, both the private sector and civil society have begun to play an important role in service provision.

Normally, governments do four simple things. They arbitrate competing claims through a political process. They set policy and laws which establish targets and standards for what has been decided. They implement policy. They account for achievement against policy.²

1: Checking on appropriate government involvement



While partnership with African governments is posited as important and, in many cases, essential for the achievement of successful development outcomes, collaborative arrangements with the public sector in Africa are often held back by significant concerns about government as a partner. These include negative perceptions of bureaucracy, slowness, risk-aversion and political expediency. The public sector, conversely, may be wary of partnering with other sectors because of sensitivities about specific interest groups seeking to obtain favours or evade public sector accountability processes. This is particularly the case with the private sector whose motives for partnering with government may be viewed with suspicion. Another common concern is the unjustified expectation that, once a partnership project developed by other sectors is up and running, government will step in to either endorse or contribute to it. Collaborative efforts can additionally be challenged by disquiet among all sector players about the commitments of time and effort required for their development and scepticism about their added value in delivering on MDG commitments.

Partnerships are no easy fix to the most difficult policy challenges, often requiring considerable investment of time and sometimes also financial resources. Public sector actors should assess carefully the level of ongoing commitment that is required before entering into partnerships that may effectively be unsustainable.⁴

Before embarking upon a partnering relationship it is helpful to ask whether, or to what extent, it is necessary, obligatory or feasible to have government as a partner in a specific partnership project. This is not to suggest that ways should be found to bypass the public sector, rather that the nature and extent of their involvement should be carefully explored in order to ensure that there is an appropriate “fit”. Public sector engagement in partnerships that have a direct link to policy and public service provision has been highlighted as critical and may, in many cases, be mandatory in particular areas. The achievement of sustainable development goals such as the MDGs also relies on government to ensure that targets are harmonised, monitored and reported within an overarching national policy framework. However, MDG objectives can be pursued through a diverse range of context specific approaches, a number of which may not necessitate close involvement of the public sector. In other cases, government participation may only be required at specific junctures and in certain areas. In Africa, government planning cycles may often revolve around a Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (PRSP). Studying the relevant PRSP can assist in assessing to what extent government involvement may be needed in particular areas, and how partnership goals and objectives might align with their needs.

Partnerships which touch on public services and which do not include government as a partner or where government is not sufficiently engaged or active, may never reach their full potential, can be difficult to scale up and may not achieve long term sustainable outcomes.⁵

Public sector involvement in partnerships in Kenya and Ghana

In Kenya, the Information Communication and Technology Trust Fund (Kenya ICT Trust) was set up to mobilise and provide ICT resources to Kenyan public schools and community resource and learning centres. Microsoft, the private sector partner driving the partnership, realised early on that public sector participation in the partnership was vital: "...for this initiative to get to the scale required or be integrated as part of the National ICT education curriculum it would need to work with the public sector and the civil society as well as other private sector partners not only because of the huge resource requirement but also because policy change is more easily accomplished with the involvement of all stakeholders." Considerable time and effort was dedicated to bringing the public partner on board and involving key champions within the Government willing to allocate the resources and commitment needed to drive the Fund.

Source: Odo, G. & Harrison, T. *The Kenya Information Communication and Technology Trust*, 2009

Two partnerships from Ghana illustrate the importance of ascertaining whether government is truly required as a partner. The Knowledge and Skills Centres (KSC) Partnership focussed on the provision of vocational and technical education in order to address skills gaps. The partnership included the public sector in Ghana, the Dutch Cooperation Ministry and Ghanaian and Dutch companies and has resulted in the emergence of the Ghana Industrial Skills Development Centre (GISDC). According to the researcher, "...it is not clear that a partnership structure was necessary to bring all of these elements together, as it is possible that a joint-venture structure between the private partners, leveraging Dutch government funding, would have achieved the same results, or possibly even avoided some of the issues that have reduced flexibility and slowed progress."

The other partnership centred on the development of sustainable supply chains in the fishing industry and involved the Ghanaian Ministry for Fisheries and the Netherlands Development Cooperation Ministry (DGIS) as well as marine, fishery, trading and consulting companies; a parastatal; fishing associations and an NGO. "By engaging the government as a partner, an opportunity may have been missed to move to a commercial model that could have remained "outside" of the tangled systemic issues, but could still have contributed a solution to at least some of these issues had it been successful. Perhaps in this case the role of government should have remained a more distant one, as the industry regulator, and as a behind the scenes enabler of the project. Asking the government to be a "partner" in such a complex project was not, in hindsight, as positive a move as would have been hoped."

Source: Harrison, T. *The Sustainable Development of the Fishing Industry Partnership in Ghana and The Ghana Knowledge and Skills Centres*, 2009

Reflection Questions

- 1 Is a partnership with government required for the achievement of our goals?
- 2 How far can we realise our objectives without public partners?
- 3 What can the public sector bring to specific elements of our partnership's work?

- 4 To what degree do we need political endorsement versus governmental ownership and engagement?
- 5 Does our proposed partnership focus on areas in which there are legal obligations involving government?

- 6 Have we consulted key government policy and planning documents? To what extent are they relevant to our partnership theme?
- 7 Are there openings for linkages and/or integration with government planning processes?

Useful resources

- IBLF *Business and the Millennium Development Goals, A Framework for Action*, IBLF, London, 2003 <http://www.iblf.org>
- Peters, A. *The Role of Governments in Promoting Corporate Responsibility and Private Sector Engagement in Development, United Nations Global Compact and the Bertelsmann Stiftung*, New York and Berlin, 2010 <http://www.unglobalcompact.org>
- Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers (PRSP) International Monetary Fund <http://www.imf.org>
- World Bank <http://web.worldbank.org>
- UN Development Group (UNDG) *MDG Good Practices*, 2010 <http://www.undg-policynet.org/>
- Ward, H., Fox, T. Wilson, E., & Zarsky, L. *CSR and Developing Countries, What scope for government action?* IIED, 2008 <http://www.iied.org>

2: Exploring the enabling environment for partnering



Partnerships are conditioned by particular and changing contexts. An enabling environment in which conditions for partnership are favoured by stability, good cross-sector relationships and positive histories of collaboration is absent in many African countries. Weak private and civil society sectors often operate guardedly alongside government in contexts where levels of political uncertainty, economic difficulties and social challenges make connections across conventional sector boundaries difficult. In more extreme cases corruption, civil unrest, conflict and environmental and human disasters impede the development of effective programmes and projects.

To ascertain how far a particular context is conducive to partnering it is helpful to conduct an enquiry into the overarching enabling environment for the achievement of development targets. Research can then be conducted into: what different sector representatives think of one another; policies that might encourage or discourage cross-sector collaboration; availability of skilled individuals and/or organisations capable of working with different stakeholders; and the extent of interest and commitment to partnering across all sectors. Established structures and traditions of social dialogue, as well as previous partnership experiences, should be examined. Complementing the work of donor agencies can also assist a more harmonious development approach that reinforces existing connections and avoids funding duplication. It is also worth noting that an apparent challenge can sometimes serve to stimulate partnering, e.g. a particular incident or crisis may provoke different sectors to work together systematically to address an urgent resulting need.

In examining the partnership context it is useful to identify “enablers” or positive “pushes” that might support a partnership approach, and “disablers” or negative “pulls” that could create obstacles. Enablers such as a favourable policy environment and good partnering support facilities need to be weighed, for example, against disablers such as poor cross-sector relationships and a lack of interest in working collaboratively. Once enablers and disablers have been assessed, decisions can be made about whether it is worthwhile pursuing a partnership option and what action might be taken to address challenges. This process involves analysing disablers and looking at how they might be influenced/overcome, circumvented or redirected.¹

The manner in which a partnership unfolds is directly related both to the context in which it is situated and to an understanding by partners and stakeholders that different kinds of developments and responses are necessary.⁶

In preparing for a multi-sector partnership, experience shows that definition of a goal which is mutually beneficial is important, but it is also important for partners to consider more specifically what moving towards that goal will involve. This includes a careful analysis of events, processes or other aspects that will slow down or prevent progress (disablers), or, on the contrary, speed up and assist it (enablers).⁷

¹ See Newborne, P. & Caplan, K. *Creating Space for Innovation, Understanding enablers for multi-sector partnerships*, BPD, London, 2006

The nature of the enabling environment in South Africa and Zambia

The implementation of partnerships between the public sector, the private sector, communities and civil society in South Africa has grown steadily since the late 1990s. A comprehensive legislative framework and processes have been developed for the implementation of formal public private partnerships (PPPs) – commercial contracts between government institutions and private companies, where the private partner assumes substantial financial, technical and operational risk in the design, financing, building and operation of a project in return for specified benefits. In addition to formal PPPs, many municipalities and other public sector agencies are involved in multi-stakeholder partnerships on a range of issues such as tourism, health, education, local economic development, and community development around mines. In spite of this situation, however, different sectors complain about the difficulties of working together. The need for further partnership awareness training and skills development, as well as the institutionalisation of partnership

practices, reinforce the fact that a positive partnership enabling environment does not simply rest on a constructive legal framework. In Zambia, the case for the use of cross-sector partnerships to help achieve sustainable development has been made at the very highest levels of government, and such partnerships are incorporated explicitly in the country's policy and development plans. Nevertheless, despite the enthusiasm from the top (in part due to the influence of a number of champions), the use of partnerships is far from institutionalised at lower levels of government, and there appears to be very limited awareness on the private sector side also. Given this, there are few examples of cross-sector partnerships in operation. In contrast to South Africa where the case for partnerships has already been made, in Zambia the focus at this stage must be to raise awareness of their potential, rather than on advanced partnering skills training.

Source: Partnering with Governments, Phase 1 Summary Report

Responding to a changing enabling environment in Gabon

The Ndougou Department of Sustainable Development Support Programme (PADDN) was set up by Shell Gabon / Shell Foundation in 2004 to identify and implement capacity-building and income-generation initiatives that enhance sustainable livelihoods in the N'Dougou area. The partnership involves local and national government partners as well as

international organisations such as WWF and UNDP. Progress was slow until 2010 when a contextual analysis suggested that the PADDN partnership was at a strategic turning-point and positive results could be achieved by taking advantage of a series of "enabling" changes.

Source: Casado Cañeque, F. *Mission Report of PADDN Evaluation Status*, 2010

Reflection Questions

1 Do sector relationships favour partnership? Is there a positive history of cross-sector collaboration?

2 Is there a positive policy/regulatory environment for partnership? What legal rules and procedures will steer partnership connections?

3 Are partnership support facilities available?

- Do reputable intermediary organisations/brokers who can work across different sectors exist?
- Can institutions such as universities, donors, NGOs etc. play a role in awareness-raising, facilitating and developing capacity for partnering?

4 Is there awareness/interest in partnership? Is it a timely and topical issue?

- How much political appeal/priority does it have?
- What structures are in place within government to promote and/or support and/or govern collaboration, e.g. a government partnership unit and/or systems within ministries?
- How far are donor organisations promoting partnership?

5 If the enabling environment for partnership is unfavourable:

- How feasible is it to address the obstacle directly?
- Can we find ways to address lack of interest, skills, knowledge and expertise?
- Can we find innovative ways to move around the obstacle?
- Can we enlist the support of other organisations to push through the partnership project?
- Can we shift the partnership focus and adopt a different approach or work in a new location?
- Should we reject the idea because the circumstances are not right? Can we afford to wait? Is it likely that things will change? Who or what might precipitate this?

Useful resources

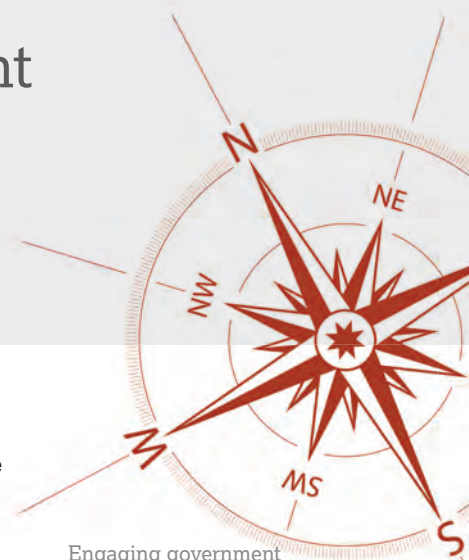
Brinkerhoff, D. 'The Enabling Environment for Implementing the Millennium Development Goals: Government Actions to Support NGOs', *Paper presented at George Washington University Conference, "The Role of NGOs in Implementing the Millennium Development Goals"*, Washington DC, May 12-13, 2004

GTZ Partnership Landscape: *Country Profile Kenya*, GTZ, 2009

Newborne, P. & Caplan, K. *Creating Space for Innovation, Understanding enablers for multi-sector partnerships*, BPD, London, 2006 <http://www.bpdws.org>

Stibbe, D. *Mapping the Enabling Environment for Business/Government Collaboration*, Partnering with Governments (PwG), The Partnering Initiative and GTZ, 2009

3: Identifying the right government partner/s



When a decision has been made as to the appropriate level of public sector participation, the right government partner/s needs to be approached. Before selecting government partners it is useful to look carefully at: which part/s of government are needed in a partnership; what their roles and remits are; who is responsible for them; and what their interest might be in partnering.

Governments, anywhere in the world, do not function as a coherent “whole” and African governments are no exception. They are complex structures which operate at multiple levels through different ministries, units and departments with varied responsibilities. More often than not partnerships are related to issues which cut across the responsibilities of various ministries and/or work at diverse national, regional or local levels of administration. The difficulty of identifying who to involve in a partnership is compounded by confusion regarding the policy and implementation roles assumed by government and uncertainty about where to seek the right connections.

Disjointed planning and lack of coordination between different elements of government may increase decision-making difficulties in relation to partnerships. The culture within different government levels can also vary enormously. In several countries the PwG programme found that ministries had as much, if not more, difficulty in partnering with each other than with other sectors. In addition, government structures in Africa may often be in transition with, for example, moves towards more decentralised planning and policy implementation by local government. For many partnerships, local levels of government may be the most appropriate to work with, but may not yet be resourced properly or have an appropriate level of political support in order to be an effective partner.

Following a careful organisational analysis, potential partners are advised to check the policies and plans pertinent to the partnership as expressed at different government levels. It is also important to confirm where relevant prioritisation and budget allocation powers are vested.

Engaging government in a partnership may not be as simple as getting support from one Ministry or government function where responsibility for the underlying issues crosses between different such functions.⁸

Our first task when talking about “government” is to say which part of government and explain how it relates to other parts. We might also need to explain its roles, responsibilities, size, and organisation, processes, who is in charge, how it is accountable, what size its budget is, what it does not do. Or put another way, we might need an organisational analysis of the part of government we are planning to partner. They might require something similar in return – they may not be very familiar with other sectors’ operations.²

Finding the right government connections in Gabon

A key issue for a partnership between a company and the government in a region of Gabon was to clarify the relationship between the national and the local government and to find out how to use national budgets for development goals in the region. Although it was clear that the partnership would benefit from a single counterpart that acted as a catalyst for inter-ministerial dialogue, it was not clear which department or ministry would be best.

Source: Casado Cañeque, F. *Mission Report of PADDN Evaluation Status*, 2010

Unrealistic expectations of government in South Africa

In South Africa the College Industry Partnership (CIP) programme provided an overarching framework for college-industry partnerships and support to the construction, steel and mining sectors. However, an interviewee from the Department of Education commented that industry perhaps had unrealistic expectations as to what colleges could and could not do and that this still needed to be resolved. In addition, there were suggestions that the selection process for the two colleges in the construction sector partnership was inappropriate and the views of provincial departments should have been taken into greater account.

Marock, C. *Partnerships in Education, The College Industry Program*, 2008

Government representation in Guinea

In Guinea a cross-sector Trans-Guinean Transport Committee was established to look at transportation of the country's iron ore and reconcile government preference for a system entirely within Guinean territory with that of mining companies willing to use the infrastructures of neighbouring countries in order to reduce costs. The tripartite committee was dedicated to finding an acceptable solution for both the two mining companies involved and the government, whilst taking into consideration political, economic, environmental and social factors. The companies were led by their executive directors while government was represented by five ministers responsible for mines, transport, public works, environment, and economy and finance respectively, all of whose different interests needed to be taken on board.

Source: Ousmane Wann, T. *Trans-Guinean Transport Committee*, 2008

Reflection Questions

1 Have we fully understood how the government works (structures, functions, layers and roles)?

2 What policies and plans are relevant to our partnership as expressed at different levels of government?

3 Which government level/s is/are appropriate for our project?

- To what extent do we need to have multiple interactions with government at different levels? What kinds of connections will these be?

● Will it be necessary to work between different ministries or departments within national government?

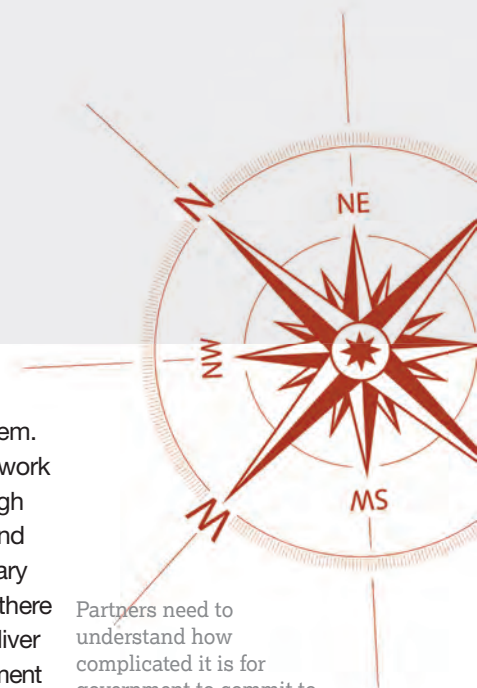
- How far do we need to work with central government if we require relationships with decentralised levels of government?

4 What is the decision-making power of the government representative we negotiate with? How far are they authorised to make relevant decisions?

5 What implications are there for partnership governance when power and accountability reside at different levels in a government?

6 If political change is likely, what can we do to ensure that our partnership will be sustained?

4: Engaging government partners



Once a government partner has been identified, the next challenge is to engage them. Like all prospective partners, government agencies are unlikely to be motivated to work in partnership if they are unclear about whether the benefits of participation outweigh the drawbacks. It is therefore useful to carry out an assessment of organisational and individual “motivators” for involvement in a partnership. Motivators will obviously vary according to specific contexts and levels. They might range from a position where there appears to be no reason for participation, to interest in what partnerships might deliver and, finally, to clear understanding of their advantages. In order to fully engage government partners it is vital that other partners also share their reasons for wishing to collaborate. In this way there is greater clarity around expectations and accountability is promoted.

Partners need to understand how complicated it is for government to commit to a partnership.²

Governments have to balance concerns over the appropriate and transparent use of public assets and resources with the advantages that may accrue through participation in collaborative projects. In many situations the lack of a legal framework or guidelines to assist in making judgements about when and with whom to partner, or not to partner, mean that public sector representatives are unable to take decisions with respect to engagement. Plans may also alter if there is political change and this can threaten a partnership dependent upon a particular policy area. Potential government partners may thus appear to be risk averse, particularly when separation of benefits and accountabilities is unclear.

In Zambia there is need for constant dialogue, particularly between the government, development partners and the private sector in the delivery of programmes. This helps to build trust amongst the stakeholders, which can give partnerships a solid platform to grow from.⁹

Well-formulated and transparent presentation of a partnership’s aims and objectives to government representatives can encourage their engagement. Such discussion may also assist in mitigating negative views, raising awareness about the potential of cross-sector partnership, and clarifying different understandings of key partnering concepts and terms. As concerns about costs may contribute to lack of interest in partnering, it is particularly important to ensure that the budgetary implications of a partnership project on government are outlined upfront. If there is a possibility that partnership activities may be outsourced to service providers, government partners will need to be advised about this as their involvement is likely to be conditioned by procurement regulations concerning the assignation of such arrangements, availability of qualified service providers, and the nature of contractual agreements.

...the likelihood of seeing the potential need for, and benefits deriving from partnerships, is higher the higher up in Government one moves. At the higher levels in Government, office bearers potentially, have more security and greater authority to seek flexible solutions to delivery dilemmas.¹⁰

In some cases public sector officials may be unwilling to act without senior authorisation or because of alliances/rifts that relate to wider societal groupings which influence how effectively a government can partner externally. Corruption, though not particular to the public sector, can be an additional problem. In some countries corruption in interactions between different sectors is highly institutionalised. Such systemic issues may be coupled with problems such as poor partnering knowledge or skills and lack of interest or motivation, often because individuals feel powerless to effect change. Although individuals do not, and cannot, represent government as a whole, searching for “champions” who demonstrate an interest in partnerships and the capacity to promote them is worthwhile. When making these connections careful attention should be paid to ensuring that levels of representation are appropriate / correspondent to those in government.

Incentives for partnering in Kenya and South Africa

In the Kenya ICT Trust project the private sector partner's motivations for partnering were linked to their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) strategy and the need to raise their profile in the eyes of the public and shareholders. NGO partners, meanwhile, were keen to ensure that services were delivered to the underserved. The public sector partner, as well as ensuring service delivery, wanted to develop clear policies to regulate and guide ICT in the education sector. From the perspective of the Ministry of Education, the ability to leverage resources and invest in ICT in schools to complement their limited resources was a real motivation. In addition there appeared to be a

strong belief that working in partnership was useful as a mechanism to coordinate activities, something greatly welcomed by government.

Source: Odo, G. & Harrison, T. *The Kenya Information Communication and Technology Trust*, 2009

In South Africa the motivation for government partners to work in two partnership projects involving municipalities revolved around the need to find creative and innovative ways in which to deliver essential services in an efficient, sustainable and equitable manner. It was noted that, "While the provision of these basic services remain vital, it is equally important for local

government to ensure that the maintenance of municipal services that are currently working does not deteriorate and that there is still room to engage new ideas on how to expand local economies through partnerships with the private sector... These partnerships are aimed at boosting the performance of government, specifically local government, in order to operate smarter in realising its developmental mandate."

Source: Lodi, J. *Partnerships at Municipalities; Experiences from Ethekwini Metropolitan and Buffalo City Municipalities*, 2007

Reflection Questions

1 How clear are government decision-making powers and processes for working in partnership?

2 Do our partnership objectives meet the underlying interests and needs of government, as expressed in policies, plans and legal remits?

3 What are the budgetary implications of our partnership project on government? How will we ensure that these costs are made transparent?

4 Are we likely to need service providers for the partnership's activities? Have we discussed this with government partners?

5 What individual relationships are important to develop in order to partner successfully? Who are the key senior people we need to involve in government?

6 What level of person within our organisation is most appropriate for introductory connections and early meetings with government representatives?

7 Have we shared our incentives for partnering with government counterparts? Do they understand and endorse them?

Useful resources

Caplan, K., Gomme, J., Mugabi, J. & Stott, L. *Assessing Partnership Performance: Understanding the drivers for success*, BPD, London, 2007 <http://www.bpdws.org>

5: Addressing limitations in capacity and skills

Weak public sector capacity and the absence of wider partnering skills have a huge impact on the quality of cross-sector relationships in Africa. Although there are variances across countries, shortage of technological, human and institutional capacity has been highlighted as limiting the ability of African governments to plan, deliver and monitor development programmes.ⁱ While these shortfalls also exist among other sectors, their absence is of particular concern in relation to government as its oversight and responsibility for basic service provision risks being undermined through over reliance on other partners. At the same time, opportunities for working collaboratively are threatened by a general lack of understanding and/or awareness of cross-sector partnerships and the requisite competencies for developing them. Identification of skills and capacity gaps are vital when working in partnership. Mandated capacity-building programmes run by donor agencies can support both the public sector specifically, and all sectors generally, so that they are able to build successful partnerships. Taking such a step demands analysis of the resources and time this might require. Capacity and skills-building processes need to be carefully managed so that they form part of the partnership agenda, rather than sidetracking from it.

Public sector capacity

In many countries in Africa public bodies do not sufficiently possess the analytical, technical and management skills, organisational structures and procedures, or adequate institutional and legal frameworks for working successfully with wider stakeholders to deliver on the MDGs. Progress in overcoming capacity gaps is impeded by fragmented capacity support, lack of sector-specific approaches, poor utilisation of available instruments and tools, and inadequate quality assurance.ⁱⁱ Greater accountability in public decision-making processes and resource allocation have also been emphasised as central to addressing capacity limitations.ⁱⁱⁱ Capacity levels may be particularly poor at lower levels of government where decentralisation or other policies have been imperfectly implemented. This situation can result in too much responsibility being placed upon too few individuals in key positions. Donor agencies, and linkages with other sectors, can play a key role in building both individual and organisational skills within government while also working to strengthen institutions and promote accountability.



The public service plays a central role in enabling the achievement of development goals. Governments should therefore continuously seek new and better ways to build service institutions that have the capacity to champion and advance the course of development.¹¹

ⁱ The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) <http://www.acbf-pact.org>

ⁱⁱ World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, *Capacity Building in Africa: An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support*, 2005

ⁱⁱⁱ See reference i above.

Public sector capacity and skills gaps in South Africa

The City of Tshwane municipal partnership was centred on building, maintaining and operating a new Municipal Headquarters complex for the municipality over a period of 25 years. Partners stressed the need for a trained municipal staff member to be contracted to see the project through and transfer the necessary skills. One member stated that the partnership needed, "...somebody that has been with the project from

the beginning and knows the ins and outs and why certain things were negotiated and why certain conditions were set and can then take it forward. I think it is critical that municipalities identify somebody internally that can provide that sort of skills transfer as well as the continuity that is needed." Another partner asserted that, "...the kind of training for municipal officials must give them the opportunity to also come up with their own

solutions and answer questions about what they would do if they do not have money and resources and how they would solve this problem."

Source: Swart, C. *Partnerships in infrastructure, The City of Tshwane Municipal Headquarters*, 2008

Reflection Questions

1 Are public sector partners capable of delivering on commitments made to the partnership?

2 What particular public sector capacity gaps exist? How will these gaps impact our partnership?

3 Are donor-funded programmes available to support public sector capacity-building?

4 How much time and resources will public sector capacity-building require? How far will this divert from the core partnership focus?

Partnering skills and capacity

Both government and other sector partners frequently lack understanding of cross-sector partnerships and an awareness of their potential. Additionally, those wishing to partner often do not possess the skills required for working with different stakeholders. Partnerships rely upon the use of both "hard" technical skills and a range of "soft" skills, including interpersonal and relationship-building abilities. Partners are advised to assess their partnering skills and capacity in order to ascertain whether support or training may be needed in particular areas and how this might be acquired. Where challenges are systemic, concentrating on building partnership awareness and skills may be ineffective. In such cases it is necessary to ensure that partnership roles and responsibilities are allocated in accordance with a realistic appraisal of what is possible.

Zambian stakeholders strongly stressed the need for capacity-building, which should include assistance to both the public and private sector around skills development and innovation.⁹

The PwG programme identified three areas in which partnership capacity-building might focus:

- **Awareness raising** – so that all sectors understand the potential of cross-sector partnerships in order to invest their time in trying to build them.
- **Capacity development** – to promote and support a legal framework which helps to enable partnerships so that organisations can put the systems and processes in place for partnering and provide skills training for individuals to be able to build and run effective partnerships.
- **Opportunity building** – to enable a systematic way in which the public, private and civil society sectors can discuss and develop new partnerships.

Partnering skills limitations in South Africa

The Africa Drive Project (ADP) was established in 2002 to address the shortage of qualified primary and secondary school science and mathematics teachers in South Africa. Challenges included the lack of public-sector staff and funds dedicated to the partnership as well as poor partnering, technical and project management skills. One representative noted that public sector partners needed critical skills in two areas: “*Strategic competencies (to be able to know*

what they want to do in the long term); and project management skills (to be able to work in a democratic/decentralised management style and not be the sole driver)”. Meanwhile lack of capacity on the part of the private sector was also highlighted by partners who were sceptical about its ability to understand and support development issues.

Source: Bahri, G. *Africa Drive Project*, 2008

...it is not always possible for partners to participate at the requisite level; there are capacity constraints that exist as well as competing pressures. This suggests that in conceptualising partnerships realistic roles need to be agreed upon and these roles need to be considered when determining what the partnership is able to achieve.¹⁰

Reflection Questions

1 What is the level of understanding of cross-sector partnerships? How can we work to widen this awareness?

2 Do all partners have adequate skills and competencies for working in partnership?

3 What skills gaps exist? How will these impact our partnership?

4 What can be done to build partnering skills and capacity? Who should be involved?

5 Are donor funded programmes available to support partnership skills and capacity-building?

6 How much time and resources will partnership capacity-building require? How far will this divert from the core partnership focus?

Useful resources

The African Capacity Building Foundation (ACBF) <http://www.acbf-pact.org>

EQUAL Guide for Development Partnerships, European Commission, 2005 <http://ec.europa.eu>

Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) Capacity development and/or state building in fragile situations – what are the challenges? *Note resulting from the OECD Informal Group on Capacity Development Event: “Capacity building in fragile situations”* 28 April 2009 <http://www.oecd.org>

Tennyson, R. *The Brokering Guidebook*, IBLF, London, 2005 <http://thepartneringinitiative.org>

Tool 4, Partnering Roles & Skills Questionnaire in Tennyson, R. *The Partnering Toolbook*, IBLF/ GAIN, London/Geneva, 2004 <http://www.thepartneringinitiative.org>

UN Public Administration Network (UNPAN) UNPAN Africa <http://www.unpan.org>

World Bank Operations Evaluation Department, *Capacity Building in Africa: An OED Evaluation of World Bank Support*, 2005 <http://www.worldbank.org>

6: Understanding government timeframes



The lengthy response time of government partners in Africa emerges consistently as a key challenge. Although building and maintaining support for partnership in any sector is time-consuming, “slowness” is highlighted as a particular characteristic of the public sector everywhere. It is therefore helpful to reflect on the underlying causes of this. Because governments are so large and complex their approval processes rely on a series of checks and balances that can appear both prolonged and bureaucratic as decisions need to be checked and endorsed across different government levels and within various units and departments. Adherence to accountable decision-making processes, however, is a fundamental aspect of good governance. Thus decisions to partner with other sectors, or to make partnership inputs, cannot (and should not) be taken without giving these procedures due diligence. If partners want to move more quickly they may decide not to partner with government at all. This may be a mistake as many partnerships will only really achieve their objectives and be sustainable at scale if government is involved.

While rigorous and standardised processes should be accepted as a sign of good government culture, sometimes tardiness in decision-making can be aggravated by weak institutional systems and conflicting accountabilities. When dealing with the time issue and perceptions of too much “red tape”, it may therefore also be useful to identify whether slowness is due to legal constraints and procedures which cannot be avoided, or to self-imposed restraints relating to particular working cultures and personalities. In the latter case, openings may be available for appropriate public sector organisations to address the situation through awareness-raising or capacity-building activities across different staff levels (both policy and implementation) in order to ensure quicker action and improved institutional buy-in.

National, regional and local election cycles are also highlighted as influencing the time dedication of government partners. When government personnel change there may be delays as decisions are made about the continuation of programmes or projects and as new staff settle into position. It is important to note here that all sector partners are likely to be constrained by the particular time schedules within which they work, e.g. donor funding and business planning cycles, and that staff entries and exits can occur in any organisation. Managing this kind of change depends critically on the extent to which a partnership is institutionalised within its member organisations. Where partnering responsibilities rely solely on single individuals, whichever sector they come from, a partnership is unlikely to be sustainable.

Cross-sectoral partnering means confronting the culture of organisations that do not operate as you do.²

Stakeholders believed that change management in partnerships should be better understood. Partnerships may need to allow partners to exit, new ones to join, and changes in how partner resources are distributed. There may also be a need for flexibility in the way the partnerships are implemented.⁹

Understanding slow response in Kenya

In the Kenya ICT partnership, the slow speed in realising the scale-up phase of the project's operations following the pilot funded by Microsoft caused huge tension. An 18-month delay between the government making a resource commitment for additional schools and the actual implementation of this commitment triggered mistrust within the private sector and civil society partners who saw this as slow responsiveness on the part of the public sector. A key point of contention was to get the Treasury and the Central Tender and Procurement board to sign off on a procurement system that was practical, flexible and acceptable to the partners. Non-government partners found it difficult to understand that the public sector delay was due to an emphasis on the accountability of public funds.

Source: Odo, G. & Harrison, T. *The Kenya Information Communication and Technology Trust*, 2009

Election schedules and change in South Africa

In the Tshwane Municipal Partnership, the time challenge was related to electoral cycles and changes in political leadership. The project was conceived in one political term and given implementation timelines and key milestones for delivery. However, as it straddled over into a new political term, a new leadership that emerged subsequent to local government elections had to carry the project forward. The immediate challenge was whether the project would be relevant to the imperatives identified by the new leadership. Furthermore with the exception of the project officer and transaction advisor, the rest of the participants changed and most of the new officials were not aware of basic partnership principles.

Source: Swart, C. *Partnerships in infrastructure, The City of Tshwane Municipal Headquarters*, 2008

The slow process of institutionalisation in South Africa

In the College Industry Partnership Programme in South Africa it was noted that partnership interventions rely on institutions and need to be seen in a more long-term manner: "...institutional change is a long term process and includes the need to affect the institutional culture. This suggests that partners need to understand what their short term and long term objectives can realistically be. Critically, it emphasises that the key to the partnership working is that partners are well selected and that partners must have the commitment and the people to implement the change."

Source: Marock, C. *Partnerships in Education, The College Industry Program*, 2008

Reflection Questions

1 Do we fully understand government timeframes and can we work with them?

2 Do government partners understand the type of timeframes other partners work to?

3 What are the timescales for elections? How might these have an impact on our partnership?

4 Can we identify whether public sector delays are due to legal constraints or whether they are self-imposed restraints?

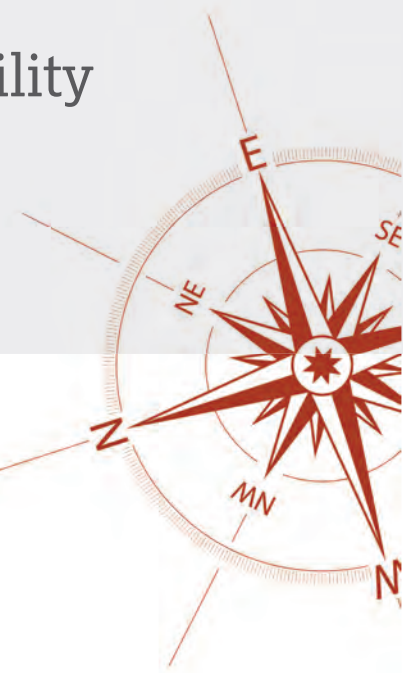
5 If delays are due to self-imposed restraints what actions can we take to address them?

Useful resources

Economic Commission for Africa *Public Sector Management Reforms in Africa, Lessons Learned*, Development Policy Management Division (DPMD), Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, December 2003 <http://www.uneca.org>

Hyden, G., Court, J. & Mease, K. *The Bureaucracy and Governance in 16 Developing Countries, World Governance Survey Discussion Paper 7*, Overseas Development Institute, July 2003 <http://www.odi.org.uk>

7: Promoting partnership accountability



The accountability of partners to delivering on their commitments is central to the success of cross-sector partnerships. In the PwG programme, partners complained that some government actors claimed ownership of a partnership but were unwilling to assume corresponding responsibilities, while others were happy to make decisions for the partnership but not work towards the achievement of results. In other situations private sector and NGO partners were accused by government players of renegeing on partnering agreements and disengaging from their work. Power dynamics and the perception that particular sector players dominated or acted independently of others were central to such grievances.

In seeking to promote accountability, it is helpful to make certain that the roles and responsibilities of all partners are absolutely clear and that the structures and procedures through which partners work are able, as far as possible, to hold partners to account and ensure that they deliver on their commitments.

Partnership accountabilityⁱ relies upon the promotion of:

- **Compliance** (being held to account) – Partners know what is required of them to achieve objectives. Clear standards and commitments are in place to which they must adhere.
- **Transparency** (giving an account) – Accessible information and documentation exists on decisions and related actions, performance and expected outcomes.
- **Responsiveness** (taking account) – Stakeholder feedback is carefully considered and the reasons why a particular decision or action has been taken can be publicly demonstrated.

... for the project and the partnership to succeed, roles must be clearly specified, quantified, and communicated at all levels.¹²

Partnership structures and procedures

As well as finding the right systems for working together, it is helpful for partners to examine the kind of governance mechanisms that will most promote accountability. Attention should be paid to seeking a partnership structure that all partners will buy into. In the case of government, for example, it may be a requirement to work through a formal legally registered entity or centralised management system.

In some cases, a more informal structure with perhaps a committee representing different members, one partner acting on behalf of the partnership, or a rotational system in which partners carry out different management tasks over time, may be appropriate. This is likely to be less bureaucratic, incur less cost and may be more suitable for partners working in smaller-scale or local partnerships. At the same time as developing a structure partners should also spend time thinking about the procedures they will adopt for working together and ensuring that all partners endorse them.

If government is to be engaged directly then there needs to be an effective governance structure that allows all partners to be properly accountable to each other ('the partnership'), and also to be able to contribute efficiently to the partnership activities.⁸

ⁱ Caplan, K. Partnership Accountability: Unpacking the Concept, *BPD Practitioner Note*, BPD, June 2005

Partnership governance and accountability in Zambia and South Africa

An agricultural partnership initiative in Zambia failed to live up to its expectations largely due to poor governance arrangements. The partnership was described as being “loosely arranged.” Essentially this meant that all partners relied upon the initiating partner contacting the other two on a need-to and often one-to-one basis. There was no forum for all partners to discuss issues. When an issue arose the initiating partner identified the partner(s) concerned and took up the matter with them. The partners did not have a partnership agreement or mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the partnership.

Source: TPI, *Partnership Roadblocks: A Tale of Two Initiatives*, 2008

In the Africa Drive Project in South Africa public sector commitment was a key challenge. As well as lack of clarity around the government partner’s role and tasks, one observer noted that

although it was easy to get the public partners on board, it was difficult to make them discharge their responsibilities and there was reluctance/inability to “give content” to the partnership. The importance of an overarching policy push was identified as crucial for the achievement of government accountability as the University (government partner) eventually made a fuller commitment to the partnership because it was politically important to support government-backed community-education initiatives.

Source: Bahri, G. *Africa Drive Project*, 2008

A partnership in South Africa between the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, GTZ and Pick ‘n Pay was set up between suppliers and buyers of the agriculture value chain in Limpopo to decrease the transition costs and address some of the market entry barriers that the poor face when engaging in

commercial agriculture. According to the researcher, “Each group brings a number of expertises to the partnership that are necessary in order for it to function effectively. The overall management and coordination of the project requires a lot of time and commitment from each partner. This should be governed by regular project management meetings where, despite the geographical distance between stakeholders, one representative from each organisation/group meets regularly to ensure progress is made. In this way each partner will understand the objectives that need to be achieved and accountability to undertake the necessary tasks.”

Source: Paterson, C. *Partnerships in agriculture, Market based crop production*, GTZ, 2007

Reflection Questions

1 Are partnership roles and responsibilities clear?

- Have key contact points for each partner organisation been identified?
- Do partners agree on the relative value of their respective financial and/or in-kind contributions?
- Is there a common understanding (where appropriate) of who target groups are and how they will be involved in the partnership’s activities?

2 Is the partnership structure acceptable to partners?

3 Are there clear standards and commitments in place to which partners must adhere?

4 Do all partners fully understand and endorse the partnership’s management and decision-making systems?

5 Have clear monitoring and evaluation systems been established? Is there an acceptance of mutual responsibility for sustaining or rolling-out the partnership and/or its results?

6 Are all partners clear about the action that will be taken if a partner decides to leave or a new partner wishes to join the partnership?

Partnership Agreements

An agreement among partners is also a useful way of seeking to ensure accountability to a partnership. As well as binding the different partners together, it can assist to achieve clarity about objectives and the management of activities, and provide clear timeframes for the accomplishment of commitments.

A partnership agreement also serves as a useful point of reference if there are misunderstandings or changes. The kind of agreement developed will depend upon the level and nature of the partnership. In some cases a formal contract or legal agreement may be a government requirement, in others a less formal Statement of Intent or Memorandum of Understanding may be acceptable. Whichever type of agreement option is chosen it is important to check how far it is likely to be adhered to in the case of political change and what risks might be incurred to partners if there is uncertainty about this.

Paperwork should promote a clear understanding of what partners expect (rewards and milestones) in return for their commitment.¹³

Partnership coordination can be limited because of a lack of partnership agreements that capture 'horizontal' commitments and mutual benefits between implementation partners.¹⁴

The absence of agreements

Few of the PwG case studies record information pertaining to the preparation and signing of a Partnership Agreement. While the signing of an agreement may not signal full commitment to a partnership, it can nonetheless be a useful accountability tool. In addition, consideration of the contents and the process of negotiating an agreement can also assist in awareness-raising and engagement.

Reflection Questions

1 What type of agreement document is required to formalise the partnership?

2 In order to increase the chances of commitment and sustainability, how legally binding and valid is the partnership agreement from the perspective of government? Is it embedded in public processes (e.g. budget planning, procurement law)?

3 What kind of risks might influence the sustainability of the partnership vis-à-vis government follow-through on contractual commitments?

4 Are the following clearly outlined in the agreement:

- Roles and responsibilities?
- Governance structure?
- Timelines and expected milestones?
- Performance indicators?
- Financial arrangements including total partnership cost and who contributes what?
- Monitoring and evaluation procedures?
- Intellectual property rights, use of logos, liabilities etc.?

5 What action will be taken if partners do not follow through on their commitments?

6 What steps can we undertake to make sure that an agreement holds if the partnership environment changes?

Useful resources

AccountAbility <http://www.accountability21.net/>

Caplan, K. *Partnership Accountability: Unpacking the Concept*, BPD Practitioner Note, BPD, June 2005 <http://www.bpdws.org>

EQUAL Guide for Development Partnerships, European Commission, 2005 <http://ec.europa.eu>

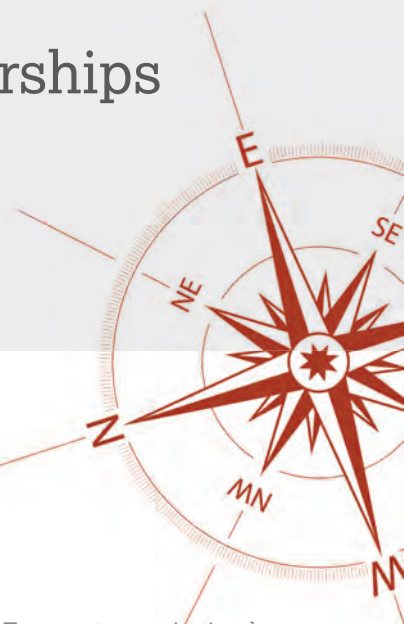
Evans, B, McMahon, J. & Caplan, K. *The Partnership Paperchase: Structuring Partnership Agreements in Water and Sanitation in Low-Income Countries*, BPD, 2004 <http://www.bpdws.org>

Finkel, T. & Koch, C. *Steering and Monitoring Partnerships with the Private Sector (SMP), Guidelines for Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) GmbH*, Center for Cooperation with the Private Sector, GTZ, Eschborn, Germany, 2009

The Partnership Governance and Accountability (PGA) Framework <http://www.pgaframework.org>

Tennyson, R. Tool 3, Sample Partnering Agreement, *The Partnering Toolbook*, IBLF/ GAIN, London/Geneva, 2004 <http://www.thepartneringinitiative.org>

8: Monitoring and evaluating partnerships



Systematic partnership monitoring and evaluation can reinforce the added value of cross-sector partnering by demonstrating achievements and sharing learning about working in this way. While all partners need to justify partnering engagement, in view of the onus on good governance in public sector processes it is of particular importance for government to be able to demonstrate that working in partnership is both effective and accountable.

Most of the partnerships researched during the PwG programme had weak monitoring and evaluation systems. In a number of cases individual partners undertook their own appraisals with timescales and methodologies that did not coincide with those of others. Furthermore, little effort was made to disseminate findings strategically so that lessons were shared and improvements made. The evolution of joint monitoring and evaluation frameworks is often hampered by lack of resources and capacity. Where common assessment frameworks exist, they tend to focus on looking at the results of the partnership's work in terms of tangible outputs as opposed to outcomes.¹ Very few seek to examine working relationships among partners and the link between process and performance.

Greater effort is required by all partners to ensure that adequate resources are made available for more rigorous partnership monitoring and evaluation and that the requisite skills for this are identified and developed. This requires putting in place systems that assess both the effectiveness of a partnership's results (outputs and outcomes) and review the benefits derived by different partners from the process of partnering. Ideally monitoring and evaluation systems should be established at the very start of a partnership's development and, where relevant, ensure consideration of the needs and circumstances of target groups and intended beneficiaries in order to make certain that goals are being met efficiently and effectively.

As partners are likely to have diverse views and expectations on how partnership knowledge and information is acknowledged, stored and used, clarity around intellectual property rights is helpful (see Chapter 7). It is also important that documentation of a partnership's work is undertaken and diffusion of relevant review and assessment findings are targeted appropriately for different audiences. Long-term sustainability of partnership activities relies upon sharing and incorporating the learning gained from monitoring and evaluation into institutional practices. In view of the policy and implementation roles of government, and the scope of their reach, proactively ensuring their involvement in partnership dissemination activities in Africa is particularly important in supporting sustainable change.

To promote organisational accountability, different sector partners are under both internal and external pressure to justify their engagement in, and value derived from, working in partnerships. These different demands have broadened the call for the monitoring and evaluation of not just the project activities of partnerships but of the partnerships themselves.¹⁵

Even when governments are aware of partnerships, they often have very poor information as to how effective they are.¹⁶

¹ In a development context outputs are classified as the concrete results of a project or programme, e.g. products and services delivered, or number of people reached. Outcomes, meanwhile, are the impacts/benefits/changes that take place over time as a result of a specific intervention.

Resource and duplication issues in Ghana

In the partnership working on sustainable supply chains in the fishing industry in Ghana the Steering Committee lacked the capacity to monitor the project and report quarterly to the Ministry of Fisheries. In addition, there was also an overlap between this monitoring and reporting, and what was required by the Dutch Government.

Source: Harrison, T. *The Sustainable Development of the Fishing Industry Partnership in Ghana*, 2009

Partnership documentation in Kenya

In the Kenya ICT project, partnership learning was not documented. The researcher noted that this would help with its review and contribute to its redesign for greater sustainability as well as replication of the model. *“Documenting the partnership could be beneficial to future plans and this could involve developing a more detailed case study as well as attempting to quantify its impact. Already there is evidence that some of the teachers and students who have gone through this programme have gone on to become successful in the broader economy.”*

Source: Odo, G. & Harrison, T. *The Kenya Information Communication and Technology Trust*, 2009

Appropriate monitoring and evaluation in South Africa

In the partnership between the Limpopo Department of Agriculture, GTZ and Pick ‘n Pay in South Africa it was noted that, *“When embarking on a project of this nature, it is important to identify the indicators of success on which to measure the project deliverables at the end of the project. A baseline study should be undertaken at the start of the project or in the early stages so that there is a means of comparison at the end of the project. Contractual agreements between the partners should have timeframes allocated to each task to assist in meeting project deadlines. As this is a pilot study, many of the objectives will change during the implementation of the project, making monitoring and evaluation more challenging.”*

Source: Paterson, C. *Partnerships in agriculture, Market based crop production*, 2007

Reflection Questions

1 Are we monitoring and evaluating the partnership in a systematic way?

2 Does evaluation include assessment of the added value of working in partnership?

3 Are we reporting and documenting our work effectively to our stakeholders?

4 How are findings shared and disseminated with government? Are these methods appropriate?

5 Have we located the right government people to work with on information distribution and learning?

6 What connections have been made to link to wider government stakeholders?

7 How will partners support continuing efforts to work with government?

8 How will partners internalise and act on partnership learning?

Useful resources

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On behalf of
Federal Ministry
for Economic Cooperation
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The Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit (GTZ) is a federally owned organisation that works worldwide in the field of international cooperation for sustainable development. GTZ's mandate is to support the German Government in achieving its development objectives. It provides viable, forward-looking solutions for political, economic, ecological and social development in a globalised world. GTZ promotes complex reforms and change processes, and its corporate objective is to improve people's lives on a sustainable basis. GTZ has pioneered the concept of public-private partnership projects for sustainable development.

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The International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) works with business, governments and civil society to enhance the contribution that companies can make to sustainable development. It is an independent, not-for-profit organisation currently supported by over 100 of the world's leading businesses. The Partnering Initiative (TPI), a specialist global programme of IBLF, aims to drive effective cross-sectoral collaboration for a sustainable future. Working directly with business, governments, bi-lateral donors, NGOs and the United Nations, TPI performs cutting-edge research to help systematize the process and set professional standards for effective partnering and builds partnering capacity through training and direct support to organisations and partnerships.

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Partnering with Governments

The 'Partnering with Governments' (PwG) programme (2007-2010) was conceived to explore ways to develop the capacity of business and government in sub-Saharan Africa to collaborate more effectively in addressing sustainable development challenges. The programme has been active in a number of countries including Gabon, Guinea, Ghana, Madagascar, South Africa and Zambia. PwG was a collaboration between the IBLF, GTZ and a number of major businesses including Microsoft, Rio Tinto, SAP, Shell and the Shell Foundation. It was implemented on behalf of the partners by The Partnering Initiative.

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