2.1 MANAGING AND MAINTAINING

Identifying and managing risk

USE IT
To identify, prioritise and mitigate the risks a partnership faces

WHEN
From the moment partners consider a partnership, then throughout the partnering cycle

WHO
Partners together, and each partner for its own risks

Partnerships can produce extraordinary outcomes, but the benefits can come with considerable risk to individual partners and to the intended outcomes. Success depends on all partners sharing an understanding of the risks and working together to reduce them. Building an explicit risk process into the partnering approach creates regular opportunities for frank discussion of potential risks, their impact and their probability.

A risk is any event or condition that threatens the objectives of the partnership or of the individual partners. Common risks to partnership success include power imbalances (tool 2.3) and conflicts of interest (tool 2.2). Risk management starts as soon as partners consider entering a partnership, continues throughout, and is closely tied to performance measures and agreed costs and benefits.

Three categories of risk

Distinguish risks that threaten each of these. They often inform one another. The process is the same for each, though more open, collaborative approaches may be needed to engage all partners.

Individual partner risk
Risks to the objectives of each partner organisation.

Risk to the partnership
Risks to the partnership itself and its collaborative aims: the “how”.

Risk to outcomes
Risks to the outcomes the partnership aims to achieve: the “what”.

Four steps

1

Identify risks

Decide the focus (your organisation, the partnership or its outcomes). Prompt discussion using the three categories, then keep adding risks until everyone’s ideas are represented. This becomes a risk register to refer to throughout the partnership.

2 **Assess and prioritise**

Map each risk on the matrix below by its impact on objectives and its probability. High impact and high probability risks are the top priority; high/low risks are moderate priority; low/low risks may merit monitoring but rarely active management.

3 **Plan mitigating actions**

Starting with the highest priorities, break each risk into risk factors: the specific actions, inaction or changing conditions that cause it. Then identify actions that reduce its impact, its probability, or both. Add actions, owners and timelines to the register or project plan.

4 **Monitor and manage**

Review the risks and mitigating actions regularly, and update the register.



Risk register

Risk	Category	Impact (H/L)	Probability (H/L)	Risk factors	Mitigating actions	Owner and timing

Adapted from Better together (Tool 8). © The Partnering Initiative. More tools at thepartneringinitiative.org/resources/type/tool/