5.3 BUILDING ORGANISATIONAL CAPABILITY

Mapping and categorising your partnerships

USE IT
To map your organisation's partnerships, see the value they create, and find the gaps

WHEN
When developing a partnering strategy, and at regular portfolio reviews

WHO
Your organisation, ideally a cross-functional group

This tool uses the partnership spectrum to help you understand the range of partnerships you are involved in, the value they create, and which kinds you could or should pursue to deliver your strategic objectives. One person can use it, but a cross-functional group will see the whole range of your partnerships.

Step 1: Map and categorise

What partnerships are we engaged in? Place each of your partnerships on the spectrum to see your portfolio.

Leverage or exchange

Doing more and better. One (usually larger) organisation gives resources so another can do its work better or bigger; or two organisations exchange resources each values. A strategic social investment is often this type.

Combine or integrate

Doing new things together. Partners combine assets and resources of all kinds to deliver more than the sum of the parts: more efficient, effective, innovative or sustainable impact. Each still applies its core competence, but in a different, unconventional way.

System transformation

Doing change together. For complex, deep-rooted issues, many stakeholders collaborate towards structural change, for example aligning a company's long-term investments with a region's development plan.

Most organisations have partnerships across the spectrum. The categories overlap, hybrids are common, and partnerships can move from one to another. In emergencies there are often creative, short-term, informal collaborations, a sign of strong, trust-based relationships.

Step 2: Analyse

What value are our partnerships creating, and where are the gaps? For each partnership, ask:

1. What strategic value is it creating, for us and for key stakeholders, including the value of good stakeholder relationships?
2. How does that value compare with our investment of money, social capital and time?

3. Could it deliver more value with adjustment?
4. Should it continue as it is, close, or be developed further?

Then ask: taken together, does the portfolio fully deliver our strategic objectives? If not, what gaps need filling? See also the value assessment framework (tool 1.7).

Step 3: Develop

How will we strengthen our partnerships and our portfolio? Decide how many partnerships to develop, of which type, and for what purpose. Build a project plan with the timing and ambition for strengthening existing partnerships, creating new ones, or ending some. It might be a series of short, exploratory "design sprints" in which small teams learn from existing partnerships and work out how to extend, replicate or build on them. The output is a simple action plan for strategic partnership development.

Partnership portfolio

Partnership	Type: leverage, combine or transform	Value to us and stakeholders	Investment	More value with adjustment?	Continue, close or develop

Gaps in our portfolio	Action	Who	By when

Adapted from Partnering for our common future (Tool 1). © The Partnering Initiative. More tools at thepartneringinitiative.org/resources/type/tool/