

Planning for Partnerships

A framework for establishing and measuring
partnership and collaboration for the
Sustainable Health Review

Prepared by the Western Australian Council of Social Service



Government of **Western Australia**
Department of **Health**

Acknowledgement of Country

WACOSS respectfully acknowledges the Traditional Owners of Country throughout Western Australia and recognises their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We pay our respects to them, their cultures, and to elders both past and present. We acknowledge the land on which we live and work was, and always will be, Aboriginal land. Sovereignty was never ceded.

About WACOSS

WACOSS is the peak body for the community services sector in Western Australia and works to create an inclusive, just and equitable society. We advocate for social and economic change to improve the wellbeing of Western Australians, and to strengthen the community services sector that supports them. WACOSS is part of a network consisting of National, State and Territory Councils of Social Service, who advance the interests of people on low incomes and those made vulnerable by the systems that have been put in place.

Funding Partner

The Planning for Partnership Framework was developed by WACOSS and funded by the Western Australian Department of Health.

Recommended Citation

E Perroni, 2022, Planning for Partnerships: A framework for establishing and measuring partnership and collaboration for the Sustainable Health Review, Western Australian Council of Social Service, Perth, Australia.

Authorised Use

© Western Australian Council of Social Service, 2022

This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nd/4.0/).



Background

WACOSS has been contracted to develop measures for partnership and collaboration across the Sustainable Health Review (SHR) Program. The intent is to develop indicators which support stakeholders across the SHR to understand the health and strength of partnership and collaboration across sectors, with consumers and clients, to achieve the outcomes and vision of the SHR.

The [SHR Final Report](#) expressly notes the importance of shared responsibility and partnership to achieving positive health outcomes for the community and transformational change across the WA health system. Health inequities are complex and advancing health equity requires consideration of the wider social, economic, cultural, and environmental determinants of health. The SHR Final Report¹ acknowledges that in the context of these complexities, only services and initiatives delivered in partnership will lead to better outcomes for the health sector and in public health.

Success is dependent on an acknowledgment that problems cannot be solved by the health system alone. Sustainability is highly reliant on purposeful partnerships and active engagement with people receiving services, government and non-government organisations, and the use of both state and national policy levers (p. v).

Change is inextricably linked to creating purposeful partnerships with people, communities, industry and the non-government sector, and between levels of government to address the myriad of factors that are essential to health and wellbeing... Consumer and clinician engagement through partnership is recognised as the most effective and enduring catalyst for sustainable change (p. 4).

Good health outcomes require the health system to be decisive, and partner with the community to collaborate (p. 9).²

1 Department of Health (2019). [Sustainable Health Review: Final Report to the Western Australian Government](#). Government of Western Australia.

2 Ibid.

Some health services and government departments already work collaboratively or in partnership with a range of stakeholders, and do it well. However, the term partnership can be interpreted widely, leading to great variation in what partnerships look like in practice, with differing rates of participation, experience and outcomes. Indeed, a one-size-fits-all approach to partnerships is unlikely to be appropriate or successful, given the diversity of issues those partnerships seek to address, the range of stakeholders engaged, and the complexity of the environments in which they operate.³

This tool has been developed to assist SHR stakeholders to explore key elements needed to successfully develop healthy partnerships and collaborative working methods. This resource defines the common elements of working in partnership and the various levels of working collaboratively. It provides an overview of the essential requirements for putting a partnership in place, developing partnership structure and infrastructure, and implementing and measuring collaborative action. It also details what dynamic and effective partnerships look like in practice. It outlines:

- ▶▶ Levels and forms of stakeholder engagement, from communication through to partnership
- ▶▶ How partnerships are conceptualised and defined and the building blocks of effective collaboration
- ▶▶ The different stages of developing and maintaining partnerships: from scoping and establishing, through to planning and designing, implementation, monitoring and evaluation
- ▶▶ Examples of partnering in practice
- ▶▶ Sample evaluation questions to help measure partnership effectiveness

While this tool is designed to assist the implementation of the SHR and can be used internally within the Department of Health, as well as with and by external stakeholders, it also holds relevance for sectors and organisations outside of health.

³ Kelly, C. (2012). Measuring the Performance of Partnerships: Why, What, How, When? *Geography Compass*, 6(3), 149–162. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2012.00476.x>

Using this document

The Framework has been designed to provide an overarching frame of reference to support SHR stakeholders to build, sustain and measure effective relationships with external stakeholders to help achieve Program goals.

Locating Partnership and Collaboration

The Framework begins with a Collaboration and Partnership Model, adapted from the Department of Communities' [Partnership Framework](#), to help categorise and locate the level of collaboration required when working together with different stakeholders. The Collaboration and Partnership Model clarifies the appropriate level and type of collaboration, as well as methods and structures for working together to achieve a desired outcome. The levels and methods include Communication, Cooperation, Consultation, Collaboration and Partnership.

Partnership and Collaboration in Practice

This model has been expanded upon to incorporate the common "elements of effectiveness" or building blocks of partnerships and what these elements may look like in practice. Collaborative arrangements and stakeholder engagement strategies are varied and unique, characterised by different levels of formality, duration, structure and membership in order to achieve diverse goals and outcomes. Not all circumstances require a partnership and there is no standardised partnership model to adhere to. The general principles outlined in this framework will provide guidance in customising a context-specific approach to engagement, collaboration and partnership that best suits project goals and intended outcomes.

Planning for Partnership

This framework sets out two interlinked concepts: Partnership Stages, the process that a partnership follows and the different stages that it goes through, and Partnership Building Blocks of effective partnering that need to be established across the lifecycle of the partnership to develop successful, healthy partnerships.

Partnership Stage	Partnership Building Blocks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scoping and Establishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Relationships, Power, Vision and Mission
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Planning and Design 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resources, Membership and Partner Roles
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Infrastructure, Processes and Protocols
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Results 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitoring, Evaluation and Outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Exit or Scaling Up Options

In practice, partnership building blocks are not a series of separate items to tick off in a sequence. Rather, they are strongly interconnected and require regular attention throughout the duration of the partnership. Depending on the nature of the partnership, partners may only need to apply a subset of these Partnership Building Block elements. It's good practice to go through these with all partners to decide which ones should be applied.

Measuring Partnerships

Groups with more robust processes and resources are more likely to achieve better outcomes, especially where there is continuous measurement that is used as learning and a catalyst for ongoing development and improvement of the collaboration.⁴

Different evaluation needs call for different designs, types of data and data collection strategies.⁵ After each partnership element is detailed, a set of sample evaluation questions is provided so that partnership groups, forums and committees can create an evaluation questionnaire that is tailored to their unique collaboration, selecting components that incorporate and reflect the intent and organisation of the partnership.

The sample survey items can be used with either numeric or verbal pre-populated answer choices, such as, "On a scale of 1–5 what extent do you agree with the following statements, where 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree." Quantitative analyses can then be used to summarise survey responses, for example, "x % of respondents strongly agree to the question."

Alternatively, questions can be modified for the purpose of conducting interviews or focus groups so that further elaboration on partnership elements can be provided by respondents.

The sample evaluation questions are not exhaustive and serve as a guide only. It is recommended that evaluation questions be developed with stakeholders connected to the partnership, project or program, as well as relevant community members and organisations. Additional sources of information to inform partnership evaluations include: terms of reference, meeting frequency and notes, action registers and status, grant requirements, and wider surveys of stakeholder perceptions, engagement and experience of the partnership.

It is beyond the scope of this framework to outline the varying types of evaluation design and methods for collecting data.

4 Corbin, J. H., Jones, J., & Barry, M. M. (2016). What makes intersectoral partnerships for health promotion work? A review of the international literature. *Health Promotion International*, 33(1), daw061. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daw061>

5 Baker, A.M. & Bruner, B. (2010). A Bruner Foundation Guidebook for Nonprofit Organizations and Their Evaluation Partners. The Bruner Foundation.

Methodology

The set of 'elements of effectiveness' of partnerships outlined in this framework have been drawn from the literature across a broad range of fields and are considered to be the key generic ingredients for successful partnership work. A range of feedback sessions were held with representatives from the Department of Communities, Department of Health, Health Consumers' Council, WA Primary Health Alliance, Aboriginal Health Council of Western Australia, Youth Affairs Council of Western Australia and the Western Australian Council of Social Service, as well as health service providers and lived experience advocates. Feedback sessions were held with the intent to ensure the Framework incorporates multiple perspectives across the health, social care, consumer-carer and lived experience sectors, making it a more robust and widely-applicable tool.

This Framework draws upon a variety of existing tools and methodologies focused specifically on measuring collaboration and partnership, including:

- [Collaboration Health Assessment Tool \(CHAT\)](#) by Centre for Social Impact
- [Communities Partnership Framework](#) by Department of Communities
- [Stakeholder and Partnership Engagement Framework](#) by Mental Health Commission
- [Partnership Self-Assessment Tool](#) by National Collaborating Centre for Methods and Tools
- [Guide to Successful Partnerships](#) by OECD
- [SDG Partnership Guidebook](#) by United Nations
- [Partnerships Analysis Tool](#) by VicHealth
- [Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory](#) by Wilder Foundation, and many others.⁶

The indicators and measures from these frameworks have been summarised, synthesised and re-framed to create a set of sample evaluation questions for consideration.

⁶ Please see the references list for the full range of resources used in the development of this framework.

All contexts are different and all partnerships are unique.

Not all examples outlined in this framework will necessarily apply to all partnerships. This practical framework is designed to help SHR stakeholders and other groups to build original, appropriate, robust and high-achieving partnerships adapted to their own contexts and situations.

Ways of Working Together



Partnership

Stage **1**

Scoping and Establishing

Partnership Building Blocks: Relationships, power and vision, mission and purpose

The scoping and establishing stage of a partnership involves bringing prospective partners together, establishing trust and addressing power asymmetries, and developing a shared vision and purpose.

Building mutually rewarding partnerships and collaborative working methods is a purposeful process that involves identifying people and organisations with appropriate and complimentary skills sets, resources, knowledge and expertise. Trust, transparency, strong commitment and mutual benefit are vital for creating a strong foundation for partnerships just as much as the right skills, structures and resources.⁷

In some instances, it may be possible to build upon partners' previous history and relationships with one another. In others, it may be necessary to identify prospective partners through a stakeholder analysis and solid partner scoping process.

Partnership implies parity.

While partners may not be 'equal', in size, in control of monetary resources or funding, or in organisational capacity, they should always strive to be 'equitable', by placing equal value on each partner's unique contributions and recognising the benefits of these contributions in reaching their goals more effectively. Sharing risk within partnerships helps to ensure engagement and build equity and trust among partners.

Part of this work includes:

Building trust and relationship-building mechanisms into the formation and duration of the partnership.

Sharing power by identifying and addressing asymmetries and dynamics between partners and providing the appropriate support. Power in partnerships must include the power to define problems and propose solutions.

Developing a shared vision and mission that addresses the partners' individual or institutional goals and helps establish shared purpose and goals.

⁷ Tennyson, R. (2011). The Partnering Toolbook: An essential guide to cross-sector partnering. The Partnering Initiative, International Business Leaders Forum.

Relationships

What is the history and strength of relationships underpinning the partnership?

How is trust and respect upheld in the partnership?



Communication

Relationships are short term and the decision-making and accountability remains with the consulting organisation.

Members may or may not have a previous relationship.

Relational timeframe: short.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Relationships may be one-way where information flows from the sender to the receiver and ends there. This can include communication through newsletters, websites, social media, or printed materials.

Relationships may be two-way where information continuously flows back and forth from the sender to the receiver. This can include online or in-person meetings, presentations with Q&A.



Consultation

Relationships are short term and the decision making and accountability remains with the consulting organisation. Consultation is a two-way flow of information in which the consulting organisation actively seeks the opinions of interested and affected groups.

Members may or may not have a previous relationship.

Relational timeframe: short.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Consultations may be one-way and involve little interaction or prior relationship, for example through surveys or written submissions.

Consultations may be two-way and be more interactive, for example through focus groups, public meetings.



Coordination

Members may or may not have a previous relationship.

They do not have to work together on other challenges or opportunities beyond coordinated activities.

Internal coordination includes establishing relationships between departments, managers, executives, co-workers etc. *External coordination* includes establishing relationships with others such as the public, government agencies and NGOs.

Relational timeframe: medium.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Relationships are developed between government agencies to share information and work cooperatively towards shared goals.

Two organisations establish a relationship with the aim to coordinate advocacy efforts on a particular policy matter.



Collaboration

Members may or may not have a previous relationship.

Relationships formed between organisations can vary in terms of the formality of arrangements and how activities or functions are shared or integrated.

Collaborative relationships are characterised by respect, trust, open communication, and a willingness to work together towards common goals. A culture is built to support this.

Relational timeframe: medium- to long-term.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Arrangements can range from informal agreements for information sharing, such as inter-agency or other network meetings, through to more formal agreements that outline what the organisations will try to achieve together and mutual expectations.



Partnership

Trust and relationship-building mechanisms are built into the partnership-forming stage and sustained throughout the partnership process.

Relationships among partner organisations are characterised by deep trust, mutual respect, open-mindedness, regular and effective interaction and clear expectations and roles for members. A culture is built to support this.

Solid partner scoping process.

Relational timeframe: long-term.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Existing relationships and networks are mapped, identifying different stakeholders' strategic, organisational and resource fit.

Partnership agreement or memorandum of understanding (MOU) signed by all relevant partners.

Negotiation and communication at the outset around trust and mutual interdependence, including identifying tensions beforehand and resolving them.

Clear process for escalating and resolving difficult issues.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- The individual, operational and organisational reality and capacity of partners has been taken into careful consideration
- The strategic, organisational, and resource fit between the partnering organisations has been considered
- The partnership provides a supportive environment to develop and maintain relationships and interact with other members
- The reason why each partner is engaged in the partnership is understood and accepted
- The culture, values, methods and approach of the partnership enable good relationships to thrive
- Strong alignment between all partner organisations is ensured on a continual basis
- Collaborative relationships extend beyond the boundaries of partnership meetings and are sustained over time
- The partnership is mutually beneficial to all partners

Power

What is the distribution of power amongst members?

How are asymmetries between partners addressed?



Communication

Power typically lies with the distributing party and may shape what, where and when information is shared.

Issue is short term, straightforward, and the risks and rewards are low for each party.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Efforts can be made to reduce power asymmetries by choosing appropriate and accessible communication tools and methods for different groups and contexts.



Consultation

Power typically lies with the consulting organisation who generally retain much discretion over access and process of consultation(s) and response to feedback received.

Benefits and costs may be skewed between members. No real shared risks or rewards.

Efforts on behalf of the consulting organisation are made to provide all interested persons an opportunity to participate in the consultation, ensure that less powerful actors are not ignored or excluded and special interests do not have undue influence, and to respond to all substantive comments received.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Consider more than one form of consultation to cater for age, gender, cultural or linguistic requirements and availability of persons.

Where possible, provide advice to the community on how feedback will be integrated into decisions and actions.

Consultations may be two-way and be more interactive, for example through focus groups, public meetings.



Coordination

The power that members hold because of their position in an organisation or community, and their relative status, may be utilised in working together towards common goals, but not necessarily shared.

Some shared risks and rewards.

Benefits of streamlined activities outweigh perceived costs.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Members may coordinate their actions by providing each other information about their capabilities and intentions and then mutually adjusting their plans or actions based on that shared information.

Sharing of resources and information relevant to the coordinated activities.



Collaboration

Control of monetary resources may skew the power base in cross-sector collaborations, but efforts are made to value the complementary resources other members bring to achieve common goals.

Members share their *expert* power (derived from having unique, in-depth information, expertise, or knowledge about a subject or a topic) to drive collaborative action and solutions.

Awareness of individual and organisational capacity and tailoring of activities accordingly.

Some shared risks and rewards.

Benefits of the collaboration outweigh the perceived costs.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Members may agree together on a set of statements that describe the ways they will work together and treat each other. e.g. MOU.

There are opportunities to make decisions collaboratively or to come to consensus to make decisions.

Sharing office equipment, training and meeting facilities.

Early and mutual agreement on conflict-resolution mechanisms.



Partnership

There is an equivalency in the value each partner brings to the collaboration, e.g. different knowledges, resources, and social legitimacy that community organisations may contribute are valued as much as the financial contributions, resources, and organisational capacities that larger partners may contribute.

Control of monetary resources may skew the power base in cross-sector partnerships, but efforts are made to balance non-negotiable and flexible contract arrangements.

Mechanisms to develop and support shared leadership and build leadership skills.

Power differentials and conflicts are addressed early.

Awareness of individual and organisational capacity and tailoring of partnership activities accordingly.

Risks are born by the appropriate party and rewards are shared.



RELATIONSHIPS IN PRACTICE

Co-creation of partnering agreements.

Representative governance structure. Independent chair or community co-chair.

Partner roles in decision making and influence over partnership activities and outcomes is clearly articulated.

Sharing office equipment, training and meeting facilities.

Support and mentoring for consumer/lived experience members, including fairly paid participation.

Partner capacity development (particularly of lived experience members) integrated into project plans.

Early mutual agreement on conflict-resolution mechanisms.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- Partners are satisfied with the quality and quantity of the contributions of the other partners and these are valued equally
- Partners are willing to distribute power to drive process and achieve goals
- Partners are supported to effectively participate in the partnership's meetings and activities
- Partners are equipped with the relevant skills/expertise/specialisation to participate in partnership activities
- The partnership has designed a safe environment in which disagreements and conflicts between members can be discussed
- All partners are content with how power conflicts have been addressed
- The way the partnership is structured recognises and values each partner's contribution.
- How could partners' needs and priorities be better met?

Vision, Mission and Purpose

To what extent does your organisation align with the partnership's purpose, common goals and objectives?



Communication

No defined shared purpose and/or expectations of members.

Purpose of communication is clear.

Communication should always be consistent with the plans, objectives, policies and programs of the organisation and not conflicting.



SHARED VISION IN PRACTICE

Efforts are made to ensure the message is understandable to recipients.



Consultation

Purpose and objectives of consultation are set by the consulter.

No expectation to share all priorities with consultees, however purpose of consultation is clearly outlined and explained.



SHARED VISION IN PRACTICE

Strategy for the most efficient and meaningful consultation developed.

Consultation documents and presentations should include summaries of the consultation purpose, objectives, key stakeholders engaged and major topics to be covered in plain language.



Coordination

Members may have their own organisational vision and mission, but share a purpose for co-ordinated activities, and can work largely independently to achieve it.

No expectation to share all priorities.

Semi-interdependent goals.



SHARED VISION IN PRACTICE

Members verbally agree on shared vision and purpose for co-ordinated activities (not necessarily formalised in a document).



Collaboration

Members may have their own organisational vision and mission, but share a common vision and purpose for collaborative activities.

Aligned expectations and understandings of what members aim to achieve together and how they intend to do so.

Interdependent goals.



SHARED VISION IN PRACTICE

Vision, mission, values statement co-developed by members and formally incorporated into terms of reference or another guiding document.

Members verbally agree on shared vision and purpose (not necessarily formalised in a document).



Partnership

Collective understanding of why the partnership is being formed and the scope of work that will be undertaken.

Partners are equally involved in defining the problem, defining the vision and purpose of the partnership, designing and delivering the solution (mission), and evaluating the outcomes. Goals are shared.

Partnership vision and mission are based on shared values, partner competencies, what is achievable, and what is important to impacted and relevant stakeholders.

Forms the basis for planning, monitoring and reviewing all activities, expenditures, policies and decision-making.



SHARED VISION IN PRACTICE

Partners co-develop a clearly defined shared vision, purpose and expectations.

Formal vision and mission statement, incorporated into partnership agreement, MoU, ToR or core values document.

Mission/vision is reviewed when setting goals, making decisions, or evaluating the outcomes of the partnership.

Agreed service principles.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- The purpose of the partnership is clearly understood by all partners
- The partnership has a clear vision, shared values and agreed service principles
- An articulated mission and shared vision exists and guides the work of the partnership
- The goals and outcomes of the partnership have been collaboratively designed and are shared
- The partnership purpose and goals are clearly reflected in the MoU and/or partnering agreement
- Participants understand/demonstrate how their participation contributes to the broader vision of the partnership
- The partnership has jointly defined the problem that it wishes to address as well as proposed solutions

Partnership Stage 2

Planning and Design

Partnership Building Blocks: Resources, Membership and Partner Roles

A partnership brings together the complementary or additive resources of a set of individuals and organisations. Each stakeholder brings different resources, competencies, technical knowledge or access to communities that can potentially – through successful partnering – deliver benefit and impact more effectively, efficiently, innovatively, or at greater scale than individual stakeholders could achieve on their own.⁸

Prior to formalising a partnership, partners must consider **what resources will be needed for the agreed program of work**, including resources that support the maintenance of the partnership itself. Typically, this is worked out in terms of a funding agreement, but there are many non-financial partner

resources such as time, skills, expertise, reputation, local knowledge, personal networks and connections that partners can bring to the partnership that should be duly acknowledged.⁹

Partnership size should ideally reflect the partnership’s aims, while membership should represent a cross section of those who have a stake in, or are potentially affected by, the program of work. There may be certain stakeholders who are essential as partners but are not in a position to participate without appropriate support. **Approaches to address inclusivity and diversity among members** should be considered early, for example, by creating a budget to ensure consumers and lived experience advocates are fairly remunerated, or to support the costs of travel to meetings.

Similarly, NGOs will usually require funded capacity to be able to mobilise their resources, whether they be access to communities, facilitating engagement with their sector, or providing feedback and policy advice with a specific lens.

Once membership is established, partners can **jointly determine the partnership’s agreements and structure**, including the governance, operational and management structures, and clear lines of responsibility so that partners are collectively committed and accountable for the delivery of the partnership.

8 Stibbe, D. and Prescott, D. (2020). 'The SDG Partnership Guidebook: A practical guide to building high-impact multi-stakeholder partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals', The Partnering Initiative and UNDESA 2020.

9 Corbin, J. H., Jones, J., & Barry, M. M. (2016).

Design and Planning

How well have the partnership goals, priorities and strategies been defined and communicated?



Communication

No formal planning or agreement between parties.



DESIGN AND PLANNING IN PRACTICE

Ensure culturally appropriate communication is planned for different parties, considering method, tone, and language.



Consultation

Design and planning mainly undertaken by consulting group.

May be some joint planning with other key stakeholders around logistics or engagement.

Planning may include the identification of issues, stakeholders, goals and objectives, and the determination of resources and consultation methods.

Parameters for the consultation defined and clearly communicated.



DESIGN AND PLANNING IN PRACTICE

Consultation plan developed that identifies the objective of consultations, relevant target groups, appropriate forms of consultation and consultation timeframes.

Proactively identify relevant interested parties and those the program or service will likely affect.

Allow enough time for key stakeholders to undertake their own consultation process within their networks.



Coordination

Members may separately identify priorities and develop own action plans, but coordinate with each other to streamline effort and reduce duplication.

Routine planning of own work and organisation of resources with some joint planning of coordinated activities.



DESIGN AND PLANNING IN PRACTICE

Find a system for planning coordinated activities that works for everyone, such as email, shared calendars, regular meetings etc.

Communicate areas of importance and priority.



Collaboration

Members discuss and agree on membership and responsibilities, and the structure and lifespan for collaboration.

Outcomes are clearly defined and set collaboratively.

All decisions relevant to the collaboration are made jointly. There are clear mechanisms for all members to provide input into the process.

Determine what governance structure and accountability arrangements need to be put in place.

Assess risks and plan for contingencies.



DESIGN AND PLANNING IN PRACTICE

Work plan that serves as a common framework for all stakeholders involved.

Memoranda of Agreement developed.

Collaboration congruent with policies and procedures of all members.



Partnership

Partnership plans and objectives are clearly linked to identified needs.

Members jointly determine the partnership's agreements, structure, and objectives and develop a strategy to work together effectively.

Outcomes, methodology to achieve those outcomes, and indicators are clearly defined and set collaboratively, in conversation with other stakeholders.

Benefits and impact of the project for the organisation, service and community understood by all partners.

Cultural and linguistic considerations addressed at all levels of program and service planning.

Risk assessment and management considered a shared obligation among all of the partners.

Plan stakeholder and citizen involvement.



DESIGN AND PLANNING IN PRACTICE

Partnership agreement/MOU signed by all relevant partners. Early involvement of stakeholders in setting the terms of agreements.

Program logic based on theory of change co-developed with key system level partnership outcomes, sub-outcomes and metrics or indicators.

Collective identity may be formed and demonstrated through branding, co-badging reports etc.

Representative governance structure.

Benefits realisation plan established to identify, execute and measure benefits.

Explicit risk assessment and management process in the partnering approach.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- All partners are involved in planning and setting priorities
- Partners have a clear understanding of what a collaborative approach requires
- The context and purpose of engagement is outlined and clear
- Outcomes and indicators are clearly defined and set collaboratively, in conversation with other stakeholders, in the planning stage of partnership
- Design and planning activities are conducted with the target population
- Methodologies to achieve project outcomes are discussed and set collaboratively
- Partners have assessed the risks and have contingency plans in place

Resources

How sufficient are the resources to achieve the partnership's stated goals and objectives?

How is resource input shared by each party?



Communication

Minimal resource input from respective members.



RESOURCING IN PRACTICE

Communication budget resourced where necessary for targeted communications.



Consultation

Consulters contribute resources proportionate to nature of activity, e.g. surveys, e-forums, public meetings.

Consultees contribute time and expertise.



RESOURCING IN PRACTICE

Funding dedicated to facilitate the participation of Aboriginal, CaLD and other diverse communities in consultation processes, as necessary.

Efforts should be made to ensure contributions are reciprocal, i.e. ensuring sufficient feedback loops.



Coordination

Resources and commitment remain with the respective organisations, e.g. FTE for committees.



RESOURCING IN PRACTICE

Members contribute set/limited amount of time/resources.



Collaboration

Members combine expertise, competencies and resources (e.g. knowledge, information, time, and finance) to ensure value is co-created and to achieve outcomes that would be difficult if acting alone.

Members identify funding sources.

Transparent understanding about decision making regarding resource allocation.

Agreed levels of administrative support and funding responsibilities where necessary.



RESOURCING IN PRACTICE

Secure sufficient funding to ensure that a thoughtful and comprehensive collaborative process will be adequately resourced.

Members evaluate resources and capacities.

Detailed project budget.



Partnership

Appropriate funding sources are assessed.

Transparent budget and financial management.

Acknowledgment and respect of resources of different partners – one partner may have greater financial and operational resources, while others may have greater knowledge of the social issue addressed by the partnership.

Partners all contribute sufficient ongoing resources (e.g. knowledge, information, time, and finance) to accomplish partnership goals.

Organisations are funded in order to allocate sufficient staff hours, engage in satisfactory processes (such as co-design and stakeholder engagement) to deliver on shared goals.

Grant reporting requirements clarified.



RESOURCING IN PRACTICE

Partners adopt and agree on clear systems for how financial decisions are made, how they are implemented, and processes of monitoring and reporting on them.

Funding and resources allocated in planning process to support inclusion of NGO and lived experience partners.

Detailed project budget.

Budget for stakeholder engagement activities allocated.

Sustainable funding.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- There are sufficient funds to sustain operations for the duration of the partnership
- A budget for stakeholder engagement activity is allocated
- Partners jointly identify and contribute resources to accomplish partnership goals (including financial and in-kind)
- Partners contribute adequate in-kind resources (e.g. skills, expertise, information, data, connections, influence, space, equipment) to accomplish partnership goals
- There is adequate program staff support for the partnership
- There is a balance of human and financial resources
- The process for receiving/ distributing funding is effective
- What resources does the project/ program need to be successful?

Membership Diversity, Complementarity and Inclusivity

— How adequate is the membership of the partnership (in terms of stakeholders, priority areas) to achieve its goals?



Communication

Information sharing is limited to specific individuals and organisations.



MEMBERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Determine the right audience, individuals or organisations for your information sharing.



Consultation

Proactively identify relevant interested parties and those the proposal will be likely to affect.

Individuals and organisations: that are *affected* directly or indirectly by a project or a decision (e.g., local communities, affected business, trade unions); who *know* about the subject, (e.g. the academic community, NGOs, people with lived experience); or have an *interest* in the subject (e.g. special interest groups); should be represented in consultation forums.



MEMBERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Define internal and external stakeholders, determine their level of involvement, interest level, and potential impact, their needs and conditions for effective engagement.

Develop a profile of stakeholders to suit the issue being discussed, e.g. gender, age, ethnicity, housing tenure, occupation, geography, religion, etc.

Use targeted advertisements through health services or community organisations with strong links to the community.



Coordination

Members may be intra- or cross-organisation, agency or sector, but are typically limited to coordinating activities with a discrete or short-term purpose. Representation may therefore be limited to specific groups.



MEMBERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Define internal and external stakeholders, determine their level of involvement, interest level, and potential impact, their needs and conditions for effective engagement.



Collaboration

People involved in collaboration represent a cross-section of those who have a stake in what the collaboration is trying to accomplish.

Non-hierarchical membership – everyone has equal status, no matter their seniority (though you may elect one person to organise the collaborative project).

Members have relevant expertise, experience and skills, or can contribute different perspectives.



MEMBERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Find members who have strong links with their communities.

Efforts made to reduce barriers to participation (particularly for lived experience groups) and to ensure safe and respectful engagement spaces and practices.

Acknowledge and understand members' values, cultural background needs and conditions for effective engagement.



Partnership

Well-considered and transparent partner selection process. Partnership size and membership reflects the partnership's aims and multiple levels targeted for change.

Facilitates the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision, including community organisations, consumer peaks and people with lived experience, carer, staff and health service providers.

Partners are sufficiently empowered and enabled to contribute to the partnership and efforts are made to reduce barriers to participation (particularly for lived experience groups).

Senior-level commitment and representatives have a partnering mindset and skill set.



MEMBERSHIP IN PRACTICE

Partners adopt and agree on clear systems for how financial decisions are made, how they are implemented, and processes of monitoring and reporting on them.

Funding and resources allocated in planning process to support inclusion of NGO and lived experience partners.

Detailed project budget.

Budget for stakeholder engagement activities allocated.

Sustainable funding.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- Those affected by the issue are members of this partnership
- There is adequate representation from stakeholder organisations, priority areas, and priority populations
- Partners are representative of the purpose and activities of the partnership (e.g. Aboriginal people/services, peers/lived experience, mental health, justice etc)
- Partners are representative of the context in which the partnership is happening (issues, sector/s, location/s)
- There is a method for identifying membership gaps and addressing them
- Members have the resources or skills they need to ensure the success of the partnership
- Approaches to address equity and diversity of membership have been considered, for example: consumer/lived experience groups are remunerated and reimbursed in a timely manner, meetings are held at convenient places and times
- There is enough variety among members to have a comprehensive understanding of the issues being addressed

Member roles, responsibilities and functions

How well have roles and responsibilities been defined and communicated?

How satisfied are partnership members with the functioning, leadership, and progress of the partnership?



Communication

Obligations to one another do not extend past the specific task/s.

Level of commitment to one another is low.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE

Outline intent of information sharing to the recipient or audience and whether follow-up or reciprocal actions are required.



Consultation

Participants have a clear sense of the scope of the process and their role in it at all times.

Final decisions are still made by the consulting organisation, but with well-considered input from stakeholders.

Obligations to one another do not extend past the designated consultation task/s.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE

Outline consultation commitments to participants, such as how you will consider and assess all input received through the consultation process, communicate how input was used, and how the consultation influenced the final decision.



Coordination

Members may have different understandings and expectations of what their involvement means.

Decisions are made independently, input may be sought but not obligatory.

Clearly defined roles and associated responsibilities.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE

Clarify the coordination parameters through open discussions about the goals expected to be reached through the coordination efforts, the needs of the various organisations for coordination, and roles and responsibilities.



Collaboration

Members respect that they have different priorities, roles and responsibilities beyond the collaboration. They do not let these differences interfere with their collaborative work.

Members have input into priority identification and planning of activities.

Members understand the capability and capacity of one another and use this to inform how their roles and responsibilities will be defined and activities allocated between them.

Level of commitment among the collaboration participants is high.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE

Roles and responsibilities of all member organisations have been clearly defined and agreed upon.

Agree on management procedures and responsibilities.



Partnership

All members have a clear understanding of: desired outcomes; what can be achieved; the timeline and stakeholder involvement; the amount of influence people can have on decisions; the responsibilities and constraints of different partners; and who is ultimately accountable for decisions made.

All partner organisations are equally present throughout the partnership process.

The people in leadership positions for this partnership have good skills for working with other people and organisations.

Level of commitment among all partners in line with the common purpose and expectations set. Partners can be counted on to deliver on their commitments.

Understand obligations to one another do not extend past the designated partnership task, clear partnership end date, timeline and exit strategy.



ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN PRACTICE

Member roles and responsibilities are clearly identified and outlined in a guiding document.

Agree on management procedures and responsibilities.

Be clear about what to expect from consumer representatives.

Ensure there is sufficient capacity for each partner to deliver on their commitments and if not, discuss ways in which this can be addressed, e.g. through capacity building or through bringing in new partners.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- The roles, responsibilities and expectations of partners are clearly defined and understood by all other partners
- Shared roles and responsibilities are measurable
- There is a participatory decision-making system that is accountable, responsive and inclusive
- Partnership members are satisfied with the functioning and leadership of the partnership
- The levels of influence partners have on decisions and outcomes is clear and understood
- Partners value members' input and recognise their contributions
- How do partners create a sense of ownership and genuine joint responsibility?
- Is there sufficient capacity for each partner to deliver on their commitments? If not, how can this be addressed?

Partnership Stage **3**

Implementation

Partnership Building Blocks: Infrastructure, Processes and Protocols

Partnership structure, infrastructure, and communication processes are foundational pillars to help realise a partnership's planned outcomes and to sustain its impact over time.

Day to day management of a partnership emerges from its degree of complexity and the particular partners involved. A relatively simple partnership can be managed without creating significant additional structures if there is strong communication and coordination among the partners. For more complex partnerships, it may be necessary to create new **management or operational structures**, potentially with the support of a backbone organisation to provide the day-to-day management and operations.¹⁰

Partnership **governance arrangements** should be put in place to i) ensure compliance and accountability of the partnership; and ii) deliver the highest quality of decision-making.

Governance structures should reinforce the key partnering principle of equity by being representative and ensuring a diverse cross-section of relevant groups.

It is crucial to the success of a partnership to ensure **strong communication** both within the partnership – contributing to the project and the relationship management – and externally with other stakeholders and external funders to celebrate success and continue to build buy-in. Research has demonstrated that communication quality is significantly correlated with partner participation, partner satisfaction, successful implementation, good relationships and effectiveness.¹¹

Creating a detailed **implementation plan** that outlines deliverables, partner roles and responsibilities, and a structured project and task timeline, can result in better organisation and management of partnership resources, easier collaboration between partners and increased accountability for everyone involved.

10 Stibbe, D. and Prescott, D. (2020).

11 Corbin, J. H., Jones, J., & Barry, M. M. (2016).

Organisational Structure and Infrastructure

What governance structure/s is in place?

What are the processes for making decisions among the partners in this collaboration?

Who are the members of the governance group?



Communication

No real governance or management structure.

Largely administrative protocols for communication strategies.



IN PRACTICE

Formal external communications overseen by a communications officer.



Consultation

Policy makers and project proponents generally retain much discretion over consultation access and process, but can be legitimised by the inclusion of all interest/affected groups and by transparent procedures.

May engage a consultant or firm to design and lead consultation processes.



IN PRACTICE

Define requirements of the consultation and determine suitable consultants or appoint a coordinator to meet those requirements.



Coordination

Members undertake separate activities towards a shared discrete or short-term purpose. Organisational structures remain separate.

Some joint responsibility for shared outcomes.



IN PRACTICE

Plan coordinated activities and processes with members that are suited to individual and organisational needs.



Collaboration

Members jointly decide upon organisational structure.

Members may choose informal arrangements, such as ad-hoc information sharing with agreed timelines and processes, to formal arrangements with governance and accountability mechanisms.

Members jointly work throughout the collaborative process to ensure their concerns and opinions are included in the decision-making process and in the development of solutions.

Collaboration requires interactive processes where there can be opportunities to explore issues in some depth.



IN PRACTICE

Jointly established governance and/or management structure.

Establish rules by which the collaboration operates. Many of these rules may be explicitly stated, while others may be implicit and unstated.

Plan collaborative processes with members that are suited to individual and organisational needs.



Partnership

Governance structures should reinforce the key partnering principle of equity / balance of power.

The administrative, communication and decision-making structures are clearly defined and understood by all other partners.

An investment in efficient organisational structures supporting the partnership and ensuring capacity building (e.g. steering committee, advisory group, working groups, management teams).

Ways of working in the partnership recognises and adjusts to reduce barriers to participation.

There is a participatory decision-making system that is accountable, responsive and inclusive.



IN PRACTICE

Jointly established governance and/or management structure.

Independent chair/third party facilitator/community co-chair.

Appropriate rules of conduct are developed and are adhered to by the partners (Terms of Reference).

Establish systems for contract management or oversight.

Core or dedicated staff for technical and administrative support.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- Supporting processes (terms of reference, governance structures, agendas and minutes) are sufficient to steer the work of the partnership
- Ways of working in the partnership recognises and adjusts to reduce barriers to participation
- Partnership is a collaborative process (e.g. there is opportunity for meaningful engagement, contributions are equally regarded etc.)
- The current partnership model is the most appropriate way to achieve results
- Appropriate rules of conduct are developed and are adhered to by the partners (Terms of Reference)
- This partnership is currently able to keep up with the work necessary to coordinate all the people, organisations and activities related to this project
- How is the project functioning from administrative, organisational, and/or personnel perspectives?
- Setting of agendas and arrangement of meeting logistics ensures inclusivity of all partners
- Cultural differences between organisations are well managed

Communication and information sharing tools and protocols

How efficient and timely are communication processes?

What information and data sharing processes are in place?



Communication

Communicates ad-hoc through limited informal or formalised communication channels.

Information shared is limited to the specific engagement purpose, e.g. letting people know about changes to legislation, health promotion messages.

Appropriate communications materials and information sharing tools determined to meet goals and reach target audiences.



IN PRACTICE

Determine the channels and frequency of your communications to meet your goals. For example, evaluate whether an email or meeting, in-person or videoconferencing is the best way to share information.

Determine appropriate type of external communication, for example, website content, live events and conferences, email and newsletters, social media, media releases etc.



Consultation

Consulting organisation obtains feedback on plans, proposals and processes that may influence current and future decisions and assist with the development of alternative solutions.

Consulted organisations are granted opportunities to provide advice, make recommendations, discuss options and formulate solutions.

Effective consultation needs to have a free flow of two-way communication between the consultor and consultee, and include the provision of feedback.



IN PRACTICE

Provide stakeholders with balanced and objective information to help them understand the purpose of consultation.

Utilise a number of methods to communicate with key stakeholders and the public about upcoming consultations, including website notices, social media and directly emailing stakeholders from stakeholder databases.

Consultation processes should be inclusive by providing relevant information in an understandable format and utilise techniques that are culturally appropriate.

Manage queries during the consultation period.

Collate and maintain list of consultation stakeholders to provide feedback to.



Coordination

Involves exchanging information and altering activities for a common purpose.

Partners communicate on a regular, agreed-upon basis through formal and informal channels.

Members inform one another of responses to specific challenges, policy positions or advocacy strategies, in order to support one another or avoid duplication.

Members only share data relevant to the specific challenge or opportunity, and may only share a limited amount.

Variety of coordination modes or platforms may be used.



IN PRACTICE

Provide flexible formats such as online and face-to-face modes of engaging in coordination efforts.

Assess a range of formats for those who may be time-limited such as an online shared drive for resources, emails with summary of key information, and/or templates to share what is working or common challenges.



Collaboration

Involves exchanging information, altering activities and sharing resources for a common purpose.

The lines of communication, roles and expectations of members are clear.

Members communicate on a regular, agreed-upon basis through formal and informal channels.

Where appropriate, members are willing to share data with each other on a routine basis.

Data is stored in a shared location for the specific collaboration so that it is easily accessible to both partners.

Relevant privacy laws are adhered to.



IN PRACTICE

Ground rules and norms for communication have been established.

Members committed to open, honest and transparent conversations.

Potential use of digital collaboration tools such as apps, software programs, or platforms.



Partnership

Partners receive accessible information given in a timely manner to enhance members' understanding of and participation in partnership activities.

Two-way information flow that ensures alternative views are expressed freely and safely within the partnership so that issues can be genuinely addressed.

There are formal (and informal) structures for sharing information and resolving demarcation disputes.

Partners are willing to share data with each other on an ongoing basis. Relevant privacy laws are adhered to.

Commitment to shared data or data sovereignty, where appropriate.

External communication sharing methods for people and organisations outside of the partnership to be kept informed.



IN PRACTICE

Agreed upon schedule of meeting dates, times and locations to support regular attendance.

Processes are in place for documenting and disseminating meeting minutes and following up on action steps.

Feedback loops that keep people informed about how their knowledge is being used.

Shared data and intellectual property-related protocols.

Conflict management processes and procedures are in place. Address small problems before they grow.

Stakeholder communications plan developed to support efficient communication to a range of internal and external project stakeholders.

Provide community data portals that will assist participating Aboriginal organisations to access, interpret and use data about local outcomes.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- Partners communicate openly with one another and are informed about what is going on in the partnership
- People who lead this partnership communicate well with the members
- The process for discussion and decision-making is clear and involves all members
- The partnership has designed a safe environment in which disagreements and conflicts between members can be discussed and addressed
- Partners are able to clearly communicate to people in the community how the partnership's actions will address issues that are important to them
- Partners communicate and promote the partnership in their own organisations and networks
- Communication of all kinds is sufficiently frequent

Implementing Collaborative Action

How well is the partnership operating?
How are working groups functioning?



Communication

Characterised by frequent interactions and information sharing as appropriate and required.

Determine what communication strategies to use and how to implement them to best achieve goals.



IN PRACTICE

Range of information sharing methods utilised as appropriate, such as: public meetings, briefings, presentations, newsletters, bulletins, social media, websites, fact sheets etc.



Consultation

Can be a one-time or ongoing/iterative opportunities to give feedback to be considered in the decision-making process.

Consider a range of strategies to assist stakeholders who are expected to be significantly affected, but who do not have the resources or capability to participate in the consultation process. Ensure strategies consider issues of accessibility and inclusivity and consider vulnerable populations.

For consultation to be a reciprocal process, participants should come away feeling like their input has been valued, they have participated meaningfully and the process has been beneficial to them.



IN PRACTICE

Field-test questions and survey tools prior to implementation.

Range of consultation methods utilised as appropriate, such as: public meetings, hearings, workshops, focus groups, interviews, surveys, opinion polls, social media, comment forms etc.

Where appropriate, consultations are localised to reflect the local timeframes, context, decision making process and languages.

Timing should occur when citizens have the best chance of influencing outcomes. Give people enough time to express their views.



Coordination

Members identify their own priorities and develop their own action plans, but coordinate with each other to reduce duplication and streamline effort.

Activities are separate but purpose is shared - members each carry out activities that speak to their strengths, but do not duplicate each other and are well-coordinated.

Coordination should not be seen to favour one organisation/program over another, but rather to identify the distinctive competencies of each.

The organisations involved invest the right amount of time in coordinated efforts.



IN PRACTICE

Agree on priorities that can be addressed by all organisations based on common goals or challenges.

Members agree to take on specific actions in line with their organisational capacity and expertise.

Members keep each other regularly informed of progress.



Collaboration

Members agree on action plans for joint activities - consisting of goals, strategies, activities, a timeline and set of responsibilities - to provide basic guidelines for how desired outcomes will be achieved.

Members take responsibility for their deliverables and can rely on each other to complete agreed tasks.

Members optimise overlapping activities and sharing of resources.

Members are open and willing to consider different ways of working and are flexible in their approach.



IN PRACTICE

Organise regular meetings to check the general status of action implementation.

Utilise collaborative software or platforms as necessary.

Identify obstacles to collaborative working and address problems cooperatively as they occur.



Partnership

Partners agree upon realistic and attainable targets for implementation, as well as strategies and action plans to achieve those targets based on available resources.

Adequate investment in the partnership of time, personnel, materials or facilities available for implementation.

Partners are in regular contact both formally and informally to co-ordinate implementation, are kept informed of out-of-session work or meetings, and are able to contribute to decisions that may have been made in their absence.

Partners are accountable to each other vis-à-vis the tasks they have committed themselves to.

Relevant populations are engaged in the co-design and co-production of services or initiatives to ensure that their needs and priorities are met.

Risk associated with project activities is assessed on an ongoing basis and a duty of care is provided to all those participating in project activities.

Partners are open and willing to consider different ways of working.



IN PRACTICE

Partners regularly attend meetings and there is a continuity of personnel. Succession plans/thorough handover notes developed.

Implementation plan developed that includes concrete action steps and activities, timeline, partner roles and responsibilities, measurable outputs and performance indicators.

Appropriate accountability mechanisms to track and assess commitments and the progress of the partnership (eg, milestones and KPIs.)

Incorporate regular check-ins to share progress and concerns.

Realistic timelines with sufficient lead in time for tasks.

Core or dedicated staff for technical and administrative support.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- Partners are present at partnership meetings and representation is from the appropriate level of influence within partner organisation(s)
- All partners are involved in planning and setting priorities for implementation
- Partners have decided on concrete and realistically achievable goals and committed to a mutually agreeable project timeline
- The partnership has an implementation plan that articulates concrete action steps for accomplishing partnership goals
- Partners are open to different approaches for project implementation
- Partners share a stake in both process and outcome
- The partnership is able to adapt to changing conditions and identify new and creative ways of solving problems
- The level of commitment of stakeholders to be actively engaged in partnership activity is consistent and/or high
- The target population is adequately reached by and involved in implementation activities

Partnership Stage **4**

Results

Partnership Building Blocks: Monitoring, Evaluation and Outcomes

Partnerships take considerable time and effort and they need to be able to provide evidence that they deliver more than the sum of their parts. In addition, monitoring the “health” of how well the partnership is functioning, as distinct from its outputs and deliverables, is essential.

In the developmental and formative stages of the partnership, evaluations may focus on partnership structure, infrastructure and relationships, that is, the partnership’s foundations. It is widely recognised that getting these foundational aspects and supportive processes well established will increase the likelihood of an effective partnership achieving their intended objectives. Monitoring progress towards key partnership outcomes in the longer term, beyond developmental and formative stages of the partnership, can be measured against the performance indicators and expectations initially established.

The monitoring and evaluation framework should be co-created and agreed to by all partners at the beginning of the partnership, and metrics of success should form part of the foundational documents, such as funding agreements or MOUs.

It is important to recognise the difference in the use of monitoring and evaluation. Monitoring is a continuous managerial activity, with the aim to keep projects on track and check progress according to pre-defined objectives and indicators. **Monitoring focuses on the overall efficiency of the project.** An evaluation makes a judgement about the project or partnership and assesses their success or failure in relation to effectiveness, impact, outcomes and sustainability. **Evaluation is used for learning and accountability purposes.**¹²

If you have clear measurable benchmarks for your activities, plans or strategies, then evaluation may be quite straightforward. Effective evaluations show what you have achieved and justify the expenditure of time,

energy and money, and determine what worked well and what did not. It reduces uncertainties, improves effectiveness and enhances decision-making.

Evaluation may cost money and at the very least will take up staff time and resources. Be sure to consider the following areas and budget appropriately: staff time; external consultant fees; cost of selected evaluation techniques; travel and incidentals; and publishing and dissemination costs.

Clearly communicating outcomes with partners and other key stakeholders enables partners to make direct changes to operations, policy, or processes, and shape the direction of future programs. Involving broader stakeholders and community members in discussions about partnership outcomes may enhance their knowledge of and engagement with the partnership’s program of work.

12 Morra Imas, L. G., & Rist, R. C. (2009). *The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations*. Washington, D.C., World Bank: Washington, D.C., World Bank.

Measuring Result, Monitoring and Evaluation

How is progress reported by partners?
Who determines the indicators?
Who is held accountable for
accomplishing partnership goals?



Communication

Monitor how communication is perceived by target audience and adjust accordingly.

Short- or long-term goals and objectives of communication initiatives established and metrics of success determined.

Identify evaluation priorities, such as: message dissemination (how well messages are spread by the media or adopted by key audiences); people's satisfaction with direct communications; reach of print, video, online and media communications.

Keep the evaluation focused and apply lessons learned to future communication initiatives.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PRACTICE

Identify what indicators will best show success. These may be actions such as signing up to a program or requesting more information.

If utilising a project/program communication strategy, select the components most critical to its success for evaluation.

If utilising an ongoing communications program, review methods on a semi-regular basis, e.g. web design, direct email open rates, social media reach etc.

Listen to stakeholders and the public to determine which messages are landing and how to make communication more effective.



Consultation

Framework for evaluating stakeholder engagements and public consultation is utilised.

Ongoing monitoring throughout the consultation will help to ensure it is being conducted according to the aims, objectives and methods outlined in the consultation plan. An evaluation at the end of the process will also help determine the effectiveness of consultation and can be used as lessons for future consultation processes.

A clear demonstration of how participants have influenced the outcomes.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PRACTICE

Design an evaluation metric to gauge the success of the consultation strategies; collect, analyse, and act on the data collected throughout the process.

Consulting organisation reports back to stakeholders in a timely manner on consultation outcomes and next steps.



Coordination

Members may agree on some common measures of progress and success, but for the most part retain individual measures.

Members are engaged in assessing their own progress on a regular basis.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PRACTICE

Members keep records and reports of significant activities, results, decisions and share them as appropriate.

Share findings with organisations who are part of coordinated activities and with people in other sectors who could benefit from, or act upon, the findings.



Collaboration

Members discuss types of value creation to measure - the value each individual organisation gains, the value-add of the collaboration as a whole, or both. Members may also decide to measure costs of collaboration.

Members agree on performance measures that will be used to assess progress.

Process in place to report on progress.

Information about activities, services, and outcomes is used by members of the collaborative group to improve joint work.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PRACTICE

Members seek agreement on what project success looks like and what to measure.

Keep the monitoring and evaluation focused and apply lessons learned to other areas.

Conduct an informal or formal "Collaboration Health Check" that reviews gaps in roles, resources or progress towards outcomes.

Share findings with organisations who are part of coordinated activities and with people in other sectors who could benefit from, or act upon, the findings.



Partnership

Resources devoted to monitoring and evaluation.

Members engaged to develop and implement partnership accountability mechanisms and measures and indicators of change and improvement.

Partners agree on common measures of progress towards agreed outcomes and success, and have shared processes and systems for monitoring and measuring progress.

Partners commit to regularly review how effectively the partnership is operating and be willing to make necessary adjustments.

Measurement and monitoring of progress against outcomes take place at multiple levels simultaneously: the micro (impact on individual participants), the meso (impact on other organisations), and the macro (systemic impact).

Regular, transparent progress reporting to internal and external stakeholders.



MONITORING AND EVALUATION IN PRACTICE

Shared commitment to undertake regular partnership reviews captured in the partnering agreement.

Monitoring and Evaluation Plan developed indicating roles and responsibilities of partners, relevant data and data collection methods.

A dedicated individual, working group, or third party has been appointed with responsibility for partnership evaluation.

Identify whether certain voices are being excluded from data collection (e.g. women, older people, people with disabilities, underserved areas, or other marginalised groups) and undertake more targeted evaluations.

Share the results with all relevant stakeholders, as often as possible.

Develop a follow-up action plan for recommendations resulting from the evaluation.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- Partners have a practice of regular reflection to ensure we learn as we go
- There are feedback mechanisms to apply partnership evaluation findings
- There is commitment to evaluate processes and outcomes of project for continuous learning
- A system exists to monitor and report the activities and/or services of the partnership
- Were there any variations from the processes that were initially proposed, and if so, why?
- What/who are the data sources? How will the information be collected and analysed? What types of data are most appropriate? What are the most appropriate methods of data collection?
- What data do we collect to understand our partnership's clinical and/or social impact? Is this data sufficient? Who decides what data to collect?
- How confident are partners in the quality and integrity of our data?
- What can partners learn from the data the partnership collects?

Outcomes

- Has the partnership achieved its agreed goals?
- How has the partnership affected the partner organisations? (Positive/negative)
- How has the partnership influenced policy/programs/systems?
- What was its impact on the target cohort?
- What are the unintended outcomes from the partnership?



Communication

Communication activities are having an impact and audiences are beginning to respond to messages.

People are better informed and have increased understanding of subject matter.



OUTCOMES IN PRACTICE

Revise communication strategies based on outcomes achieved/not achieved.



Consultation

Opportunities for individuals and organisations to provide input. A variety of opinions, values and needs are heard and discussed.

Participant views and needs were accurately and fairly represented in a decision process and/or incorporated into project outcomes.

Increased transparency in stakeholder engagement activities.

Communicate consultation outcomes with the community and how these results may steer decision-making.



OUTCOMES IN PRACTICE

Release drafts of consultation findings for stakeholders to provide more detailed comments and advice on how the program or policy will work in practice.

Pick the right/varied communication channels to disseminate results.

Ensure there is follow up after any consultation and that those who participate know where to access final results/findings.



Coordination

Streamlined efforts, reduced duplication.

Potential shared resources, or place or platform to share learnings.

Outcomes inform ongoing processes.



OUTCOMES IN PRACTICE

Members share relevant information on the outcomes of coordinated activities and next steps where necessary.



Collaboration

Resources, responsibilities and tasks may differ, but the added value of the collaboration to each member is recognised.

Members educate and learn from each other. Outcomes inform ongoing processes.

What members are trying to accomplish through the collaborative project would be difficult for any single organisation to accomplish by itself.



OUTCOMES IN PRACTICE

Members share relevant information on the outcomes of collaborative activities and next steps where necessary. This may include: identifying successful practices in collaborative working (as well as what didn't work); identifying the value added for members and the value-add of the collaboration as a whole.

Promotion of knowledge and learning within member organisations or networks.



Partnership

Partnership can demonstrate or document the outcomes of its collective work.

Shared acknowledgement that the partnership achieves more than can be achieved individually. Success of the partnership is attributed to the partnership (not individual members).

The partnership is adding value (rather than duplicating services) for the community, clients or agencies involved.

Partners take steps to institutionalise and incentivise learning in their policies, systems and practices.

Strategies for replicating, institutionalising, scaling, or further developing the results are in place.

Disseminate the results to a broad audience.

Unintended consequences are assessed and mitigated.

Partners assess the value of sustaining or dissolving the program or project.



OUTCOMES IN PRACTICE

Timely and valid information about outputs, outcomes, and potential impacts shared with internal and external stakeholders.

Learning incorporated into the overall partnership cycle through an effective feedback system.

Recognising, rewarding and celebrating individual and collective successes.

Communication strategy for sharing outcomes with target cohort and broader community members. Engage community partners in the dissemination process.

Develop a follow-up plan to incorporate lessons learned in future decision-making processes or projects, programs and policies.

Co-development of a moving-on or exit strategy.

Agreement on transfer of ownership of partnership assets.

Sample Evaluation Items:

- Have partnership objectives been realised?
- Partner organisations learn new and valuable information/knowledge produced from partnership activities
- Achievement of intermediate and final outcomes produced by collaborative activities
- Partners are better able to respond to existing challenges, or those that arise during the process
- Were the project/program services/activities beneficial to the target population?
- Did the partnership have negative or unintended effects?
- Has the problem that the project/program intends to address been alleviated? Is the target population affected by the project/program equitably?
- Is the cost of the services or activities reasonable in relation to the benefits?
- What factors helped and hindered in the achievement of the outcomes?
- Did the program produce or contribute to the intended outcomes in the short, medium and long term?

Partnership Stage **5**

Partnership Review

What next?

At some stage the partnership will come to the end of its agreement or contract term, and the decision to phase out, continue on, or scale up efforts will need to be made. **An exit or transition strategy should be planned for the partnership** and managed to ensure that the benefits of the partnership, as well as the program of work, are sustained.

Depending upon members' experience of the partnership, the partnership might decide to close, either because it has completed its tasks and objectives, has reached its agreed end date, or is not delivering sufficient value. In other instances, the partnership might choose to continue on, which may include sustaining the partnership beyond the agreed end date, scaling up its activities, or institutionalising its activities into one, or multiple, partner organisations. Some partnerships may involve a complete reimaging, with a change of partners or a redirection of its efforts.

While others may end up evolving into permanent mechanisms, in effect, transforming into a new kind of institution that no longer operates as a partnership.

Whatever arrangement partners may put in place, **the handing over process will need to be managed sensitively and systematically.** Implementing a moving on strategy should be done with as much care as putting in place the building blocks in the creation of a new partnership.¹³

Once arrangements have been decided, partners should inform all stakeholders, including community stakeholders, if appropriate, of the partnership's continuation or termination. Regardless of the partnership's next steps, it is important to share the positive outcomes, celebrate achievements and give credit where it is due. **Key outcomes and learnings may be shared in a final report** or other appropriate communication method.

Communication responsibilities should ideally be shared between the partners as appropriate.

Sample evaluation questions: Moving on

- There is a core group of skilled and committed members that has continued over the life of the partnership.
- Strategies for replicating, institutionalising, scaling, or further developing the results are in place.
- Exit options for partners have been specified.
- Have partners been able to effectively define the 'ownership' of the ultimate outcomes, data or assets of the partnership project?

¹³ Halper, E. (2009) Moving On: Effective Management for Partnership Transitions, Transformations and Exits. International Business Leaders Forum.

Partnerships in Practice

Purposeful partnerships are a central feature of the Sustainable Health Review Final Report and are highlighted as the most effective and enduring catalyst for sustainable change.

By outlining the two interlinked concepts of **Partnership Stages** and **Partnership Building Blocks**, this framework aims to assist potential partners in getting the fundamentals in place for each step of partnership development and management.

This framework can also be used regularly and reflexively, for example every few months as a prompt for discussion in partner meetings to help keep the partnership on track.

Effective partnering requires all involved to **apply the highest standards to all partnering endeavours**. By pooling best practices outlined in the literature and the experience of government departments, community service organisations and lived experience advocates, this framework aims to outline those standards and seeks to provide an accessible entry point to planning for cross-sector partnerships.

References

- Baker, A., Bruner, B. (2010). *Participatory Evaluation Essentials: An Updated Guide for Nonprofit Organizations and Their Evaluation Partners*. The Bruner Foundation.
- Bell, K., & Reed, M. (2021). The tree of participation: a new model for inclusive decision-making. *Community Development Journal*. <https://doi.org/10.1093/cdj/bsab018>
- Carson, L., & Gelber, K. (2001). *Ideas for Community Consultation: A discussion on principles and procedures for making consultation work*. NSW Department of Urban Affairs and Planning.
- Center for the Advancement of Collaborative Strategies in Health (2002). [*Partnership Self-Assessment Tool*](#).
- Center for Disease Control and Prevention (2008). *Evaluation Guide: Fundamentals of Evaluating Partnerships*. Atlanta: U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.
- Centre for Culture, Ethnicity and Health (2017). [*Consumer participation strategies*](#).
- Centre for Social Impact and Collaboration for Impact (2017). [*Collaboration Health Assessment Tool*](#).
- Corbin, J. H., Jones, J., & Barry, M. M. (2016). What makes intersectoral partnerships for health promotion work? A review of the international literature. *Health Promotion International*, 33(1), daw061. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daw061>
- Collaboration Working Group (2019). Collaboration: Build, support and sustain a culture of collaboration between and within Government and the Community Services Sector, Supporting Communities Forum.
- Department of Communities (2021). [*Communities Partnership Framework: Guidelines for establishing and sustaining partnerships with external stakeholders*](#). Government of Western Australia.
- Department of the Prime Minister and Cabinet (2016). [*Guidance Note: Best Practice Consultation*](#). Australian Government.
- Darzin Stakeholder Management App. . (n.d.). [*Public Consultation Guide*](#).
- Halper, E. (2009). *Moving On: Effective Management for Partnership Transitions, Transformations and Exits*. International Business Leaders Forum.
- Hartman, L. P., & Dhanda, K. K. (2018). Cross-Sector Partnerships: An Examination of Success Factors. *Business and Society Review*, 123(1), 181–214. <https://doi.org/10.1111/basr.12139>
- Jones, J., & Barry, M. M. (2011). Developing a scale to measure trust in health promotion partnerships. *Health Promotion International*, 26(4), 484–491. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/dar007>.
- Kelly, C. (2012). Measuring the Performance of Partnerships: Why, What, How, When? *Geography Compass*, 6(3), 149–162. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1749-8198.2012.00476.x>
- King, C.L. (2014). *Partnership Effectiveness Continuum: A research-based tool for use in developing, assessing, and improving partnerships*. Quality Measures. Waltham, MA: Education Development Center, Inc.
- Kusek, J.Z. and Rist, R. C. (2004). *Ten steps to a results-based monitoring and evaluation system: A handbook for development practitioners*. The World Bank, Washington D.C.
- Last, S. (2019). [*Stakeholder Engagement and Consultation*](#). In *Technical Writing Essentials: Introduction to Professional Communications in the Technical Fields*. University of Victoria.
- Mattessich, P., & Johnson, K. (2018). [*Wilder Collaboration Factors Inventory: Third Edition*](#). Amherst H. Wilder Foundation.
- Mental Health Commission (2018). [*Working Together: Mental Health and Alcohol and Other Drug Engagement Framework 2018-2025*](#). Government of Western Australia.
- Morra Imas, L. G., & Rist, R. C. (2009). *The Road to Results: Designing and Conducting Effective Development Evaluations*. Washington, D.C., World Bank: Washington, D.C., World Bank.
- National Indigenous Australians Agency (2022). [*Closing the Gap Community Data Projects*](#). Government of Australia.
- Neill, R. (2021.) [*Approaches to Partnership Measurement: A Landscape Review*](#). Washington, DC: USAID MOMENTUM Knowledge Accelerator.
- Nous Group (2020). [*Strengthening partnership: A program for partnership development*](#).

OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance at ZSI (Centre for Social Innovation) (2006). [*Successful Partnerships: A Guide*](#). OECD.

Prescott, D., & Stibbe, D. (2017). [*Better together: Unleashing the Power of the Private Sector to Tackle Non-Communicable Diseases*](#). The Partnering Initiative (Oxford), UICC (Geneva) and Bupa (London).

Promoting Effective Partnering (2022). [*Promoting Effective Partnering*](#).

Rodrigo, D., & Amo, P. A., (n.d.). [*Background Document on Public Consultation*](#). OECD.

Stibbe, D. and Prescott, D. (2020). [*The SDG Partnership Guidebook: A practical guide to building high-impact multi-stakeholder partnerships for the Sustainable Development Goals*](#). The Partnering Initiative and UNDESA 2020.

THET, Partnerships for Global Health (2022). [*Principles of Partnership*](#).

Tennyson, R. (2011). The Partnering Toolbook: An essential guide to cross-sector partnering. The Partnering Initiative, International Business Leaders Forum.

VicHealth (2011). [*The partnerships analysis tool: A resource for establishing, developing and maintaining partnerships for health promotion*](#). Government of Victoria.

VicHealth (2011). [*Partnership Checklist*](#). Government of Victoria.



