

# Building Equitable Partnerships: Tools with Guidance

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## Introduction

In 2021, Plan International and Social Development Direct began a collaborative initiative to enhance our learning, knowledge and practical innovation on partnerships, based on a shared mission-driven aspiration to build more equitable partnerships with a range of actors.

The tools below are the product of this collaboration. The tools are designed to be adapted to each partnership context – questions and indicators can be edited or removed depending on your needs.



# When and why to use the tools

Tool	What is it?	When can it be used?	Why use it?
<a href="#">The Partnerships Continuum</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A word document showing the continuum and different indicators for each level of partnership ambition (transactional, collaborative, equitable, and transformative).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At any stage.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To identify partnership expectations when entering a new partnership.</li> <li>In existing partnerships, it can be used to understand where the partnership falls on the continuum in practice, and to prompt discussions amongst partners on what level of ambition would be most suitable for the programme and how to get there.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Added Value Case for Partnering</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A word template to be completed by the bid or partnership formation leads.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>At bid stage</li> <li>When the partnership is being considered but is not yet formed.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To clarify whether entering into a particular partnership will add value to our offer, and in what ways.</li> </ul>
<a href="#">Partnership Readiness Assessment</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A Word/Excel document to be completed by the programme team from each organisation, followed by a discussion with all partners.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>During co-creation.</li> <li>During inception workshop.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To understand partnering strengths and weaknesses of each partner.</li> <li>To identify the partnership expectations of each partner and surface any potential areas of tension to be discussed and proactively managed. It will also highlight partnership skills and capacity gaps to be addressed.</li> </ul>

<a href="#">Partnership Health Check</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A survey (online/word)</li> <li>• Followed by a discussion with all partners. It includes a menu of indicators from which the most appropriate/relevant can be selected.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During implementation, for example on an annual basis.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To understand how different partners feel about the partnership</li> <li>• To identify best practices, and area for improvement.</li> <li>• To prompt discussions about partnership expectations, experiences, and aims with the intention of fostering more open and equitable partnerships.</li> </ul>
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# The Partnership Continuum

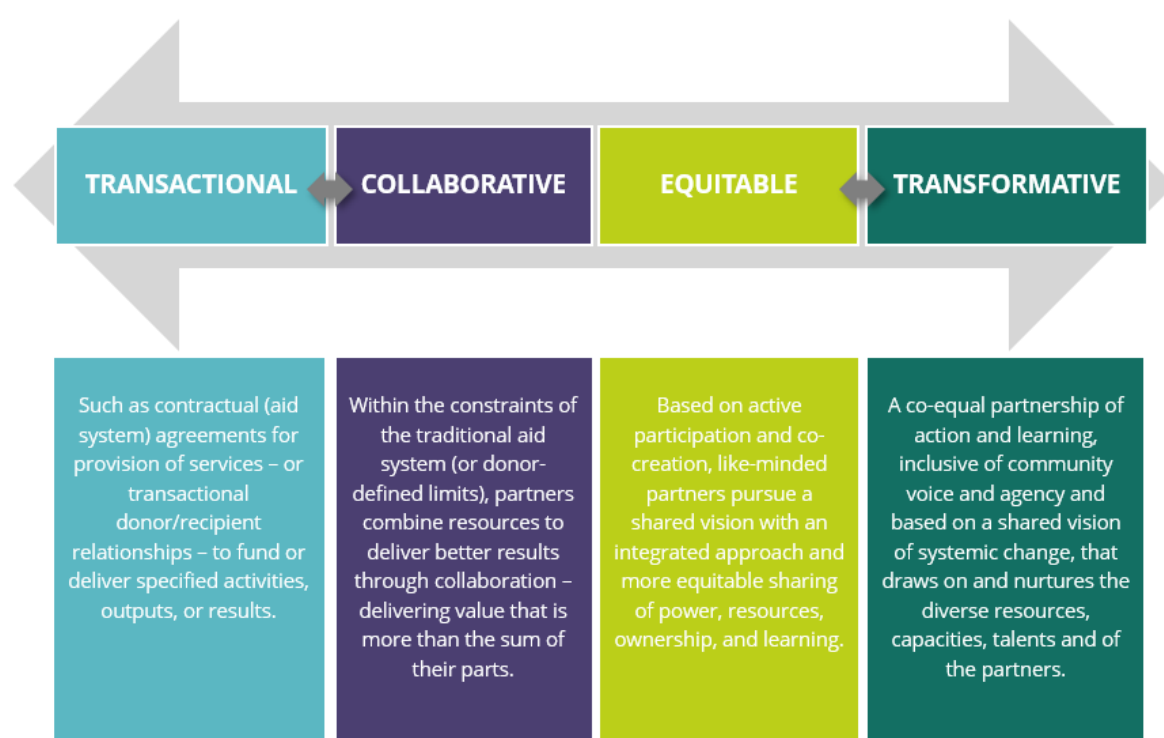
## *How was the Partnership Continuum developed?*

Drawing on a document review and key informant interviews with colleagues from Plan UK, SDDirect and external organisations, we developed the partnership continuum below. The continuum represents (as ideal types) a spectrum of different kinds of partnerships with different levels of ambition. Our assumption is that there can be high quality partnerships at all levels of ambition, however the extent and depth of collaboration increases along the continuum.

## *How can the Partnership Continuum be used?*

The continuum is intended as a tool to understand the qualities, characteristics, expectations, aspirations and standards of partnerships at different levels – and to provide a means for better planning, assessment, monitoring and management of diverse partnerships.

It is important to note that these are ideal types so in practice different aspects of a partnership might fall into different categories. It is also possible to have positive and respectful partnerships at all levels.



	Level of ambition			
	Transactional	Collaborative	Equitable	Transformative
<b>Motivation and expectations</b>	Shaped by practical business interests, needs and delivery priorities.	Driven by donor pipeline opportunities.	Driven by clear partnership principles and strategy.	Driven by aspiration for transformative, impact on social justice issues.
<b>Initiation and ownership</b>	Lead agency decides the programme and identifies delivery partners.	Consortium or coalition chosen and convened by lead agency, based on consultations.	Lead agency enables co-creation and co-ownership of partnership from the outset.	Commitment to long-term partnership and collaboration with shared values and agendas.
<b>Nature of collaboration</b>	Leveraging others' resources or niche services to achieve the lead agency's ends.	Lead agency plays a key role in leveraging resources, expertise and niche services of partners	Draws effectively on the complementary skills, experience and resources to deliver collective excellence.	Brings together complementary skills, experience and resources. Power dynamics surfaced to ensure equitable sharing of power.
<b>Form of engagement</b>	Narrow and focused, revolving around discrete projects and agreements.	Lead agency promotes good communications, open dialogue and targeted access to the donor	Based on open and inclusive dialogue, honesty and timely sharing of information	Based on open and inclusive dialogue, honesty and timely sharing of information
<b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b>	Lead agency sets the parameters and budget, retaining overall decision-making authority.	Information shared and views sought from partners, but final decision making is with lead.	All partners have equitable voice and influence in decision-making.	Shared decision-making and management and mutual accountability.
<b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b>	Terms of exchange, engagement, lines of communication and deliverables outlined in clear contracts/agreements.	Expectations, objectives, terms of engagement and roles of all partners laid out in clear partnership agreements.	Expectations, objectives, terms of engagement and roles of all partners laid out in clear partnership agreements.	Based on trust, shared values and common purpose, with clear terms of engagement.
<b>Risk management</b>	Risk largely transferred to service provider or junior partner.	Risk largely borne and managed by lead agency.	Shared risk analysis and management.	Joint risk analysis and management.

**NB:** A more detailed schedule is provided in Annex 1 below.

# Added Value Case for Partnering

This Template is intended to support you in deciding whether to enter into a partnership, by identifying the added value contributions (both financial and non-financial) of the partners, and what the partnership will achieve, above and beyond what the partners could achieve by acting independently. The Template is also a practical guide for format for developing a succinct 'added value case statement' for partnership. Initial drafts may be developed in a bullet point format.

## Summary of the Proposed Partnership (1 paragraph)

*Who are the proposed partners? What is the shared vision and purpose of the partnership?*

## 1. Strategic Case (2 pages)

*The Strategic Case provides the rationale for why partnership is required, including a description of the outcomes and the potential scope for what will be achieved.*

### Motivation

- *What opportunity drives the need for partnership?*
- *How will a partnership improve on current/previous implementation arrangements?*

### Context and timing

- *Why and how is the context and timing right for this partnership?*

### Contributions of partners

- *What does each partner contribute to achieving the purpose and desired outcome?*

### Alignment of partners

- *Are the partners aligned in their objectives, priorities and values?*

### Time frame and future prospects

- *What is the initial time frame for the partnership?*
- *Is there potential scope for further development of the partnership or scalability?*

### Key risks and constraints

- *Are there any significant risks or constraints to achieving the outcomes, and if so, how will they be mitigated?*

## 2. Management Case (2 pages)

*The management case demonstrates that the proposed partnership can be delivered successfully, in accordance with partnership good practice.*

### Governance and terms of engagement

- *Are the terms of engagement clearly understood and recorded (including roles, the responsibilities, decision-making and ways of working)?*

### Management

- *What arrangements are in place for partnership management, including monitoring the partnership (e.g., through partnership 'health checks') during implementation?*

### Leadership and power-sharing

- *Within each proposed partner organisation, who will provide leadership and be responsible for ensuring that the partnership is effective, terms of engagement are honoured, any disagreements are resolved, etc.?*
- *How will the partners identify and manage power dynamics to ensure equitable power-sharing?*

### Communications, dialogue and trust-building

- *What platforms and mechanisms are planned for on-going communications, transparency, information-sharing, partner dialogue, trust-building and problem-solving?*

### Learning and evaluation

- *How will learning for the partnership be harvested, shared and used to improve effectiveness?*
- *What are the proposed arrangements for regular partnership health checks as well as evaluation processes (during and after joint implementation)?*
- *Can you identify a limited number of indicators (suggested: two or three headline indicators) to measure progress through regular partnership health checks?*

### Planning for partnership transitions

- *What are the contingency arrangements if the partnership unexpectedly cannot continue?*

- What is the strategy for managing project transitions, wind-down or partner exits?

### 3. Financial and Resourcing Case (1 page)

*The Financial and Resourcing Case demonstrates that the project is adequately resourced to facilitate a viable and well-structured partnership.*

- What are the **partnership set-up costs** and how will they be resourced?
- What are the **contractual arrangements** between partners and how will available resources be mobilised and allocated equitably between them?
- Will the partnership be able to **access sufficient resources** (finances, organisational and technical skills, partnership management skills, networks, facilities)?
- What resources are available for **managing the partnership** (and will there any specific partnership costs to cover)?
- Will working in partnership achieve any **savings** or represent **additional value for money**?

### 4. Cost-Benefit Summary (max 1 page)

*This section assesses the costs and benefits of the partnership proposal, based on the three cases described above. Note: Costs are not the same as the financial costs of implementing the programme and might include time needed to manage the partnership, resources for capacity development, governance structures, etc.*

*Please summarise:*

*Costs and benefits of partnering in terms of delivery and operation*

*Critical success factors to achieving the benefits*

*Overall risk assessment*

### 5. Recommendation – Level of Ambition (2 paragraphs)

*On the basis of the cases outlined above, provide a recommendation on whether the partnership should go ahead, highlighting any factors which may need to be considered or resolved prior to partnering.*

*Finally, set an initial **level of ambition** for the partnership, referring to the partnership continuum shown below (see attached detailed description of the different levels of ambition).*



# Partnership Readiness Assessment

## Principles of the Framework

The Partnership Readiness Framework is intended to be used in the early stages of a partnership (or proposed partnership) to assess how prepared each partner is to enter into a partnership and to operate effectively within it. By identifying gaps and capacity needs at this early stage, partners are in a better position to formulate action plans aimed at addressing those gaps, rather than waiting until they pose a problem or create risks for delivery and relationships.

The current draft framework draws on evidence collected during Phase 1 of the Equitable Partnerships project through an extensive literature review, key informant interviews and focus groups with a range of participants. It also draws upon the wider organisational development literature relating to the assessment of Strategic Readiness and Change Readiness within organisations.<sup>1</sup>

In particular, the framework draws on Combe (2014), who proposes three interlocking drivers that support or impede organisational readiness: Culture, Commitment and Capacity. Applying this “Three Cs” approach to partnership readiness, the **Culture**, values and behaviours of an organisation would drive **Commitment** in understanding the needs of a partnership and its alignment with strategic and organisation objectives. This results in the provision of tangible **Capacity** in the processes, structures, knowledge, experience and resources required to implement a partnership effectively.



The interlinked nature of the three drivers is fundamental to partnership readiness. While it is possible to **modify** the operation of a partnership by changing work processes, resources and structures (i.e. organisational capacity), the approach to partnership can only be **transformed** by changing beliefs, norms and behaviours (organisational culture).

The Draft Partnership Readiness Framework appended below therefore sets out self-assessment questions within each of the categories of Culture, Commitment and Capacity.

The framework has been designed to be practical to use. Potential partners are invited to self-assess according to five questions in each of the three categories. By scoring on a range of 1-5 (1=absent 5=excellent) for each question, partners will be able to identify areas where they are strong and weak, and put in place actions to mitigate any gaps. They will also be able to arrive at an overall readiness score, which will give an indication of the extent to which the organisation is realistically in a position to implement the partnership successfully.

Area of Readiness	Proposed Assessment Questions
<b>Culture</b> <i>Embedding shared norms, values and understandings of partnership value and practice, and shared expectations.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The partnership supports and enhances (or at a minimum, does not interfere with) the organisation's ability to deliver its core mission in line with its values.</li> <li>2. There is a clear vision of the partnership's level of ambition, destination and direction.</li> <li>3. Our leaders are walking the talk, providing the necessary support and resources, and prioritising partnership implementation for effectiveness, equity and efficiency.</li> <li>4. Our organisational structure and governance arrangements support the delivery of the partnership.</li> <li>5. The organisation promotes and rewards open communication and sharing of views on partnering, including lessons learned and knowledge – successes, failures and improvements.</li> </ol>
Score each question 1-5 (1=absent 5=excellent).	Total /25
<b>Commitment</b> <i>Alignment of the partnership and its objectives with the overall goals, resourcing and strategy of the organisation, and with the willingness and ability of leaders at all levels to support it to succeed.</i>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The people involved in delivering the partnership at all levels are actively participating in defining the objectives, how they will be delivered, how success will be measured, and who will be accountable for them.</li> <li>2. The partnership has an appointed senior sponsor who wants the partnership to succeed and who will</li> </ol>

	<p>make available the required resources and mandate to succeed.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>By achieving our personal goals, we are individually contributing to the achievement of the partnership goals because our personal and partnership goals are well aligned.</li> <li>There is sufficient autonomy, empowerment, and freedom in executing the partnership.</li> <li>We have a stakeholder management and engagement plan in place that deals with internal and external stakeholders in terms of roles, needs, influences, critical factors, and responses.</li> </ol>
<p>Score each question 1-5 (1=absent 5=excellent). <span style="float: right;">Total /25</span></p>	
<p><b>Capacity</b></p> <p><i>Creating and maintaining the knowledge, skills, abilities, organisational work processes and resources to support successful implementation of the partnership.</i></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We have adequately funded the implementation of our partnership and its activities with realistic budgets that are based on good cost and time estimates.</li> <li>The people who will contribute to successful implementation of the partnership have adequate time and appropriate skills to take on this work, including some people with experience in similar circumstances.</li> <li>Our policies, processes and operating procedures work together in sync to support the partnership.</li> <li>We have sufficient and appropriate facilities, equipment, tools, materials, vehicles, IT etc to successfully implement this partnership.</li> <li>We have identified uncertain events (risks), issues and opportunities when we are developing our partnership plan.</li> </ol>
<p>Score each question 1-5 (1=absent 5=excellent). <span style="float: right;">Total /25</span></p>	
<p>Overall Total <span style="float: right;">/75</span></p>	

# Partnership Health Check

This Template is intended to support you in conducting regular partnership health checks. At the initiation and inception phase of more equitable partnerships, we recommend that an ***added value case for partnership*** be workshopped and drafted (see the draft template, as well as a clear vision, purpose and terms of engagement for the partnership. These foundational documents should form the basis for regular partnership health checks, including on-going feedback, stakeholder and partner surveys, partnership monitoring, self-assessments and annual reviews. The ***partnerships continuum*** framework may provide useful material and points of reference to inform health check tools, processes and indicators.

This Template can be used and adapted for different and complementary purposes:

- As the basis to develop a partnership health self-assessment survey for stakeholders (that could be used as needed gather data and to set the scene for a health check workshop or dialogue session).
- As a flexible basis to organise, set the agenda and guide the process of a partnership health check workshop or dialogue event (adapting the template as needed).
- To frame questions for key informant interviews (KIIs) and/or focus group discussions that feed into regular partnership health checks.
- To suggest a format for partner health check reporting or dashboards.

If used in a participatory stakeholder workshop, following are a few tips and suggestions for the process:

- Assign facilitation responsibility to a designated facilitator or co-facilitators, with a note-taker to help record key points and findings.
- Convene an inclusive cross-section of partnership stakeholders
- Create safe space in which power dynamics are recognised, equal participation is encouraged, and all voices can be heard.
- Agree ground rules for open and inclusive dialogue (see some suggested ground rules attached as Annex 2).
- Make it clear that the process is not about judgement, blame or external scoring of the partnership.
- Introduce the process as an opportunity to learn, build trust, celebrate achievements, identify areas for improvement, and support problem-solving and adaptive programming.
- Use the process to identify priority follow-up actions with clear responsibilities and time frames.

A simple 'traffic light' system for assessment is suggested:

- **Green:** *Strong partnership performance – no major concerns to address*
- **Amber:** *Good partnership progress and performance – some concerns to address*
- **Red:** *Performance needs improvement – significant concerns to be addressed*

It is important to supplement the traffic light assessment with brief (bullet point) details from the dialogue to explain the results. Where issues and concerns are identified, these should be addressed in the follow-up actions.

The menu of standard health check indicators (suggested below in Section 3) is inspired in part by our Template for an ***added value case for partnership***. The list of standard indicators is quite long (although not exhaustive), so we would you to encourage users to be realistic and selective about which indicators to use, taking into account the time available, resource constraints, relevance and the priority areas of concern at this stage in the partnership.

We realise that the language used to express some indicators may need to be adapted or translated for local context and different audiences. Feedback on ways to simplify or improve language usage is welcome.

Please note that the ***partnership health check*** template below draws on models developed by [GNDR](#), [The Partnering Initiative](#) and [WaterAid](#).

## 1. Level of ambition for the partnership

If a level of ambition, using the ***partnerships continuum*** tool (see graphic below), has already been set, please assess overall performance in line with that level of ambition. You can use the traffic light system suggested above, supplemented by brief bullet points to explain your assessment and flag actions that may be needed to deliver on your level of ambition.



See Annex 1 for detailed notes on the characteristics of different levels of ambition.

**NB:** If a level of ambition has not yet been agreed, you may want to identify which level of ambition best describes the partnership and discuss if you want to move to a different level of ambition (flagging any action points this may require).

## 2. Review of progress against existing partnership indicators

If you have already set some indicators for assessing and reviewing partnership performance, please use the traffic light system suggested above (with brief explanatory notes) to capture progress and flag possible action points.

## 3. Standard review indicators (to be used selectively and adapted as relevant)

Using the traffic light system suggested above, assess progress on the following standard indicators (or a selection of the indicators most relevant to your partnership). Please note N/A means 'not applicable'.

Partnership health indicator	Green	Amber	Red	N/A
1. <b>Vision and purpose:</b> There is a clear statement of shared vision and purpose for the partnership that is co-owned by all partners.				
2. <b>Motivation:</b> All partners continue to be motivated by their founding vision and purpose.				
3. <b>Empowerment and equity:</b> The partners feel committed, empowered and enabled, and are moving towards a model of more equitable and mutually beneficial partnership.				
4. <b>Relevance:</b> The partnership continues to be relevant and responds effectively to the opportunities and motivation identified at the start of the partnership.				
5. <b>Added value:</b> The partnership has 'added value,' i.e., the partnership makes it possible to achieve things that would not otherwise be delivered.				
6. <b>Partner contributions:</b> Each partner is contributing as planned, capitalising on its strengths and assets to complement the contributions of the other partners.				
7. <b>Partnership benefits:</b> Partnership benefits are shared equitably among the partners.				
8. <b>Alignment:</b> The partners are aligned on partnership objectives, priorities and values.				
9. <b>Risks and constraints:</b> Partners have identified risks and constraints and have a joint approach to managing them.				
10. <b>Agreements and terms of engagement:</b> Partnership agreements, terms of engagement and contractual arrangements are in place and well understood by all partners.				
11. <b>Roles and responsibilities:</b> Partner roles and responsibilities are clear and well understood.				

12. <b>Ways of working and decision-making:</b> Collaborative, equitable ways of working, sharing power and decision-making are agreed and respected.__				
13. <b>Power analysis:</b> Partners engage in power analysis to understand and manage power dynamics and disparities.__				
14. <b>Governance, management &amp; accountability:</b> Effective partnership governance and management structures, lines of accountability (including mutual accountability) and reporting mechanisms are in operation.__				
15. <b>Monitoring partnership health:</b> Systems are in place for on-going monitoring and discussion of partnership health (including regular 'health checks').__				
16. <b>Trust and mutual respect:</b> The partnership is building trust, understanding and mutual respect among the partners.__				
17. <b>Skills and organisation development:</b> The partnership has a strategy for skills and organisation development and is actively nurturing collaborative leadership and partnering skills (facilitation, listening, convening, dialogue, negotiation, brokering, power analysis, etc.).__				
18. <b>Partnership culture:</b> The partnership is actively promoting a culture of diversity, inclusion, anti-racism, mutual respect, and cross-cultural sensitivity.__				
19. <b>Shifting the power:</b> There is a shared commitment to shifting historic power and resource imbalances, advancing development that is 'locally led and globally connected.'				
20. <b>Leadership:</b> Senior management leaders and 'champions' from all partners are actively engaged to build an effective and more equitable partnership – and to facilitate timely problem-solving.				
21. <b>Inclusive dialogue:</b> Partners are convening safe and inclusive dialogue in which all voices can be heard (including community stakeholders and marginalised groups).				
22. <b>Feedback mechanisms:</b> Safe and accessible feedback mechanisms are provided for partnership staff, stakeholders and community partners.				
23. <b>Context and GESI analysis:</b> The partnership is undertaking and renewing context analysis, including gender equality and social inclusion (GESI) analysis.				
24. <b>Comms and information-sharing:</b> Strong platforms and mechanisms are in place for partnership communications and information-sharing (between the partners and with other stakeholders).				
25. <b>MEL:</b> Good strategies, platforms and systems for partnership monitoring, evaluation and learning have been developed and are in operation.__				

26. <b>Inclusive learning:</b> Partnership learning and review processes are inclusive and participatory (including community partners and stakeholder voices), with learning feeding into partnership and programme improvements._				
27. <b>Access to resources:</b> The partnership has access to sufficient resources (finances, organisational and technical skills, partnership skills, networks, facilities, etc)._				
28. <b>Financial management:</b> Partners take joint responsibility to ensure high standards of financial management and accountability._				
29. <b>Partnership costs:</b> Partners have identified specific costs attached to achieving high quality, more equitable partnership performance and are mobilising resources to cover these costs._				
30. <b>Resource mobilisation:</b> All partners are involved in resource mobilisation efforts and are allocating resources equitably and transparently (respecting legitimate confidentiality requirements that may apply)._				
31. <b>Value for money:</b> The partnership is delivering good value for money (economy, efficiency, effectiveness and equity).				

#### 4. Reporting and capturing action points

As a flexible and adaptable tool, reporting back on the analysis, results and priority actions from a **partnership health check** exercise can take the form that is most suitable and accessible to the partners. Our advice is to keep reporting brief, using bullet points, online brainstorming, graphics or other tools as may be useful.



## Annex 1: Outline of different levels of ambition

LEVEL OF AMBITION	LEAD AGENCY OR PRIME CONTRACTOR ROLE	PARTNER OR SUBCONTRACTOR ROLE
<b>Transactional</b>	<p><i>A partnership generally based on contracting of specific services, or on a transactional donor/recipient relationship, to enable delivery of our desired outputs or results.</i></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shaped by practical business interests, needs and delivery priorities.</li> <li>• Driven by efficiencies and value for money.</li> <li>• Applicable when each partner has something of value to the other, resulting in a net gain on the exchange – generating organisational value (TPI).</li> <li>• Both parties expected to have full capacity to deliver with minimal investment in learning and capacity development</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ‘One party [the lead agency] decides the programme based on their knowledge/experience’ (TPI).</li> <li>• Downstream delivery partners or service providers are identified and contracted by the lead to provide niche services and/or implement specific activities.</li> <li>• Ownership mainly with lead agency as the client and the other partner(s) as service and delivery providers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leveraging others’ resources or niche services to achieve the lead agency’s ends.</li> <li>• One party purchases a service from – or donates to the work of – another <b>or</b> partners exchange resources to allow one or both to deliver more (TPI).</li> </ul>	<p><i>A service delivery partnership in which a lead agency contracts partner(s), or provides donor resourcing, to specific services <u>or</u> an exchange of services or resources between partners to enable delivery of specific outputs or results.</i></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners contracted to provide niche inputs and/or specific deliverables.</li> <li>• Partners engage opportunistically in a reciprocal/transactional exchange of skills, knowledge, or resources with other partner(s).</li> <li>• Ownership usually with lead or initiating agency as the client and the other partner(s) as service and delivery providers.</li> </ul> <p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Contracted service provision <u>or</u> partners transactionally exchange resources to allow one or both to deliver more or better results.</li> <li>• Each party stays in their comfort zone doing what they normally do (TPI)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines clear activities and outputs decided at the beginning (TPI).</li> <li>• Each party stays in their comfort zone doing what they normally do (TPI)</li> </ul> <p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited engagement from parties beyond agreed activities (TPI).</li> <li>• Narrow and focused, revolving around discrete projects and agreements that may be tightly specified - major focus is on a financial transaction (Fowler).</li> <li>• Involves negotiation to maximise lead agency value and gains.</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead agency sets the parameters and budget, retaining overall decision-making authority.</li> <li>• Rules- and compliance-based.</li> <li>• Problem-solving largely about meeting needs of client as well as terms, duration and renewal of contract.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of exchange, engagement, lines of communication and deliverables outlined in clear contracts/agreements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk largely transferred to service provider or junior partner.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as lead agency role.</li> <li>• Relationships mainly focused on funding, resourcing and contribution to organisational priorities, value and the bottom line.</li> <li>• Engage as much as possible in learning dialogue with client, applying good partnership principles and practices.</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One-way vertical accountability (TPI).</li> <li>• Limited or no influence in decision-making, budget or design of relevant partnership initiatives.</li> <li>• Where possible, seeks to influence client practice in line with Plan/SDDirect mission, values and equitable partnerships approach.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk to Plan/SDDirect limited by negotiation of terms and by the transactional and limited scope of partnership.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Benefits/advantages (TPI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Well-defined and manageable commitment</li> <li>• Lower management and administration costs – requires significantly less investment in relationship building</li> <li>• Clear decision-making authority and unambiguous contractual relationship</li> <li>• Predictable procedures and outcomes</li> <li>• Clear lines of authority and accountability</li> <li>• Comfortable</li> <li>• Less risk of clashes between organisations' culture, procedures and values</li> </ul>	

LEVEL OF AMBITION	LEAD AGENCY OR PRIME CONTRACTOR	PARTNER OR SUBCONTRACTOR
<b>Collaborative</b>	<p><i>Within the constraints of the traditional aid system (or donor-defined limits), partners combine resources to deliver better results through collaboration – delivering value than is more than the sum of their parts.</i></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driven by donor pipeline opportunities, calls for proposals and business development systems.</li> <li>• Dependent on leadership and fund/programme management capacity and market positioning of lead agency/prime contractor.</li> <li>• Applicable when bringing together complementary organisations, resources and expertise can result in a winning proposition as well as substantial development results and added value for all – generating organisational and mission value (TPI).</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Consortium or coalition chosen and convened by lead agency, based on significant consultations, negotiations and pre-positioning.</li> <li>• Such partnerships would typically be built around specific opportunities, events, activities or thematic area in which the lead agency has a strong comparative advantage, track record and leadership capacity.</li> <li>• Often driven by donor funding and donor-defined agendas, ToR and conditions.</li> <li>• Primary ownership typically lies with the donor, with an element of delegated co-ownership with lead agency and partners.</li> </ul> <p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead agency plays a key role in leveraging resources, expertise and niche services of partners to deliver high quality development delivery and impact.</li> <li>• Within the constraints of the aid system, Plan/SDDirect promotes a culture and practice of collaboration,</li> </ul>	<p><i>Collaborative engagement in a traditional aid partnership in which multiple partners combine resources to deliver better results through collaboration – delivering value than is more than the sum of their parts.</i></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan/SDDirect identify and respond to an opportunity for a substantive, well-defined role in a traditional aid delivery partnership (such as a consortium led by a conventional prime contractor).</li> <li>• Offers opportunities in line with organisational mission and strategy for development impact, greater effectiveness, efficiencies, innovation or greater scale.</li> <li>• Lead agency and other partners offer complementary resources, skills, experience and presence on the ground.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan/SDDirect respond to RFP or pipeline opportunities and secure place in a winning partnership led by competitive lead agency.</li> <li>• Within the constraints of supply-driven opportunity, Plan/SDDirect promote a culture and practice of co-ownership, collaboration, mutual respect and accountability, transparency, dialogue, good communications and joint learning.</li> <li>• Plan/SDDirect act as champions for good partnership practice as well as investment in partnership-building, regular health checks, and partnership learning.</li> </ul> <p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan/SDDirect promotes a culture and practice of mutual accountability, transparency, good communications and joint learning.</li> </ul>

	<p>mutual respect and accountability, transparency, dialogue, good communications and joint learning</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Defines clear activities and outputs decided at the beginning (in traditional logframes and results framework set by donors).</li> </ul> <p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations, objectives, terms of engagement and roles of all partners laid out in clear partnership agreements.</li> <li>• Lead agency promotes good communications, open dialogue and targeted access to the donor (within constraints of often limited budgets and time as well as tight delivery schedules).</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations, objectives, terms of engagement and roles of all partners laid out in clear partnership agreements.</li> <li>• Information is shared, consultations take place and views are sought from partners, but the final decision-making, access to full information, control of budgets and (where relevant) access to the client/funder rest with lead agency.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Terms of exchange, engagement, lines of communication and deliverables outlined in clear contracts and partnership agreements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk largely borne and managed by lead agency.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Targeted engagement and collaboration but limited joint responsibility for overall partnership performance and results.</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Monitor, report and mitigate risk in area of responsibility with oversight from lead agency.</li> </ul>
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LEVEL OF AMBITION	LEAD AGENCY OR PRIME CONTRACTOR	PARTNER OR SUBCONTRACTOR
<p><b><i>Equitable</i></b></p>	<p><b><i>Leadership of a partnership based on active participation and co-creation, in which like-minded partners (North and South) pursue a shared vision with an integrated approach and more equitable sharing of power, resources and ownership.</i></b></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Driven by clear partnership principles and strategy as well as shared commitment to development impact.</li> <li>• Commitment to negotiate shared vision &amp; values, joint purpose and equitable sharing of power, resources and ownership among partners (North and South)</li> <li>• Applicable when bringing together complementary organisations, resources and expertise offers an opportunity for greater synergies, equity, innovation, development results – contributing to systemic change.</li> <li>• Generates added value for all, especially partners and citizens on the frontline of delivery and change – generating organisational and mission value.</li> <li>• May be based on funding and business development opportunities, as well as opportunities for influencing &amp; comms, thought leadership, advocacy alliances, networking initiatives, etc.</li> <li>• Such partnerships may focus on one or more opportunities for collaboration, with scope to develop a longer-term strategic partnership.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead agency invests in creating time and platforms for equitable partnership-building, regular and inclusive dialogue, partnership health checks and problem-solving.</li> <li>• Lead agency facilitates co-creation of partnership vision, approach, joint purpose, objectives and activities.</li> <li>• Lead agency enables co-creation and co-ownership of partnership from the outset.</li> <li>• Inclusive of the voices and equitable participation of those closest to, and</li> </ul>	<p><b><i>Active participation and co-creation in a partnership among like-minded partners (North and South) that pursues a shared vision with an integrated approach and more equitable sharing of power, resources and ownership</i></b></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to invest time, resources and facilitation into partnership-building and from the outset.</li> <li>• Active participation in co-creation of partnership vision, approach, joint purpose, objectives and activities.</li> <li>• Contribute to voice and equitable participation of those closest to, and most affected by, the challenges at stake (including equitable North-South collaboration).</li> </ul>

	<p>most affected by, the challenges at stake (including equitable North-South collaboration).</p> <p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are high levels of participation and transparency in programme design, learning, adaptation, governance and budget allocations.</li> <li>• Draws effectively on the complementary skills, experience and resources to deliver collective excellence.</li> <li>• Clear agreed outcomes, with an adaptive programming approach.</li> <li>• Power dynamics surfaced and acknowledged with practical action to mitigate power imbalances.</li> <li>• Shared commitment to an integrated, mainstreamed approach to gender equality and social inclusion (GESI).</li> <li>• Gives priority to exchange of learning and knowledge, mobilising evidence to improve decision-making and impact.</li> <li>• Lead agency promotes capacity development of partners to enhance delivery, partnership skills, sustainability and equity.</li> <li>• Joint nurture of an inclusive working culture committed to diversity, empowerment, racial justice and 'making all voices count.'</li> <li>• Stronger engagement and commitment between partners beyond agreed activities.</li> <li>• Intentionally builds strong communications as well as high levels of trust, mutual respect and mutual benefit.</li> <li>• Promotes innovation, new ways of working and harvesting of learning about partnership working.</li> </ul> <p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on open and inclusive dialogue, honesty and timely sharing of information (including, as much as possible, financial transparency).</li> <li>• Requires inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue to understand the system and engage the players required to design and implement successful interventions (TPI).</li> <li>• Lead agency and partners allocate time and resources to joint partnership skills development (e.g., capacities for</li> </ul>	<p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Largely the same as for lead agency role.</li> <li>• Plan/SDDirect has a substantial role in partnership and delivery, with active participation in platforms for partnership-building, on-going dialogue, and problem-solving, and regular partnership health checks.</li> <li>• Plan/SDDirect promotes and benefits from high levels of participation and transparency in programme design, learning, adaptation, governance and budget allocations.</li> </ul> <p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul>
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	<p>facilitation, dialogue, listening, brokering, power analysis, etc.).</p> <p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners have equitable voice and influence in decision-making and (where relevant) in client/funder communications.</li> <li>• Mutual accountability, with understandings and accountability mechanisms outlined in terms of engagement.</li> <li>• Based on organisational and mission-based alignment.</li> <li>• Lead agency convenes regular partnership coordination and review meetings, including annual partnership health checks.</li> <li>• Joint problem-solving actions taken on a timely basis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expectations, objectives, terms of engagement and roles of all partners laid out in clear partnership agreements.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared risk analysis and management.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared risk analysis and management.</li> </ul>
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LEVEL OF AMBITION	LEAD AGENCY OR PRIME CONTRACTOR	PARTNER OR SUBCONTRACTOR
<b>Transformational</b>	<p><i>Leadership of an inclusive partnership based on solidarity, equity and shared commitment to systemic change through collective action, drawing on the diverse and complementary resources and talents of the partners (North and South). May include partner capacity-building as specific objective.</i></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Complex social challenges require multi-stakeholder collaboration to advance systemic change.</li> <li>• Driven by clear partnership principles and strategy as well as aspiration for transformative, sustainable and catalytic impact on social justice issues.</li> <li>• Based on shared vision &amp; values, joint purpose and equitable sharing of power, resources and ownership among partners (North and South)</li> <li>• Commitment to longer-term partnership and collaboration with shared values and agendas.</li> <li>• Applicable when issues in question are sufficiently complex that a systems approach is required – creating organisation and mission value (TPI).</li> <li>• May be based on funding and business development opportunities, as well as opportunities for influencing &amp; comms, thought leadership, advocacy alliances, networking initiatives, etc.</li> <li>• Such partnerships typically focus on multiple opportunities for collaboration over time.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead agency invests time and resources into partnership-building from outset.</li> <li>• Lead agency facilitates co-creation of partnership vision, approach, joint purpose, objectives and activities.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Equitable participation and co-creation in an inclusive partnership based on solidarity, equity and shared commitment to systemic change through collective action, drawing on the diverse and complementary resources and talents of the partners (North and South). May include partner capacity-building as specific objective.</i></p> <p><b>Motivation and expectations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Initiation and ownership</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Commitment to longer-term partnership and collaboration with shared values and agendas.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lead agency enables co-ownership of partnership.</li> <li>• Inclusive of the voices and equitable participation of those closest to, and most affected by, the challenges at stake (including equitable North-South collaboration).</li> <li>• Co-generation based on joint knowledge and experience (TPI).</li> </ul> <p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brings together complementary skills, experience and resources (including social capital).</li> <li>• Clear agreed outcomes, embracing flexibility, agility and adaptive programming.</li> <li>• Power dynamics surfaced and acknowledged with practical action to ensure equitable sharing of power.</li> <li>• Shared commitment to GESI mainstreaming, applying feminist leadership principles.</li> <li>• Shared commitment to exchange of learning and knowledge.</li> <li>• Lead agency promotes capacity development of partners to enhance delivery, sustainability and equity.</li> <li>• Joint nurture of an inclusive working culture committed to diversity, empowerment, racial justice and 'making all voices count.'</li> <li>• Stronger engagement and commitment beyond agreed activities.</li> <li>• Promotes and thrives on high levels of trust, communications, mutual respect and mutual benefit.</li> <li>• Promotes innovation, new ways of working and harvesting of learning about partnership working.</li> </ul> <p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Based on open and inclusive dialogue, honesty and timely sharing of information (including, as much as possible, financial transparency).</li> <li>• Requires inclusive multi-stakeholder dialogue to understand the system and engage the players required to design and implement successful interventions (TPI).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Willing to invest time, resources and facilitation into partnership-building from outset.</li> <li>• Active participation in co-creation of partnership vision, approach, joint purpose, objectives and activities.</li> <li>• Contribute to voice and equitable participation of those closest to, and most affected by, the challenges at stake (including equitable North-South collaboration).</li> <li>• Engage in co-generation based on joint knowledge and experience (TPI).</li> </ul> <p><b>Nature of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Form/extent of engagement</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul>
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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Lead agency and partners allocate time and resources to joint partnership skills development (e.g., capacities for facilitation, dialogue, listening, brokering, power analysis, etc.).</li> </ul> <p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Shared decision-making and management (including maximum budget transparency and co-responsibility).</li> <li>Mutual accountability, with understandings and accountability mechanisms outlined in terms of engagement.</li> <li>Based on organisational and mission-based alignment.</li> <li>Lead agency convenes regular partnership coordination and review meetings, including annual partnership health checks.</li> <li>Joint problem-solving actions taken on a timely basis.</li> <li>Commitment to joint resource mobilisation (financial &amp; non-financial).</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Based on trust, shared values and common purpose, with clear terms of engagement.</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Joint risk analysis and management.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Accountability, decision-making and resourcing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul> <p><b>Agreed terms of collaboration</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as for lead agency role</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Same as for lead agency role.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Benefits/advantages (TPI)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Potential for innovative and transformational solutions</li> <li>More appropriate/implementable approaches</li> <li>More adaptable to changing realities</li> <li>Better-informed decision-making</li> <li>Stronger commitment from partners – willing to go the extra distance</li> <li>Wider potential for influence and change</li> <li>Stronger overall accountability</li> <li>Greater potential for mutual learning</li> </ul>	