

# Partnership Toolkit

**Why work in Partnership?** Partnerships bring together a range of organisations or groups to work together to achieve a common vision. There are many benefits of engaging in a partnership approach including opportunities to: pool resources; develop skills and expertise; improve service delivery; achieve greater impact of desired outcomes; increase awareness; widen networks; and share risks. As a result of these benefits and the greater impact which a number of partners can achieve together, funders increasingly encourage partnership working.

## Issues to consider before setting up a partnership

- What are you trying to achieve through a partnership?
- Which groups or organisations would be most appropriate to partner with?
- Do you have support from within your organisation to work with others?
- Make informal contact with potential partners to understand their interests.
- Take time to plan the partnership.
- Be open and honest to develop and build trust.

## Partnership Checklist

You have agreed that working together is the right way forward - now what?

### Agree Common Goals

- Has the partnership agreed a common vision?
- Is the vision supported by the local community or relevant stakeholders?
- Is there a written partnership agreement?

### Clear Roles & Responsibilities

- Are roles and responsibilities of all partners clearly defined and understood?
- Is there a lead partner? Is their role clearly defined?
- Are all partners valued equally?

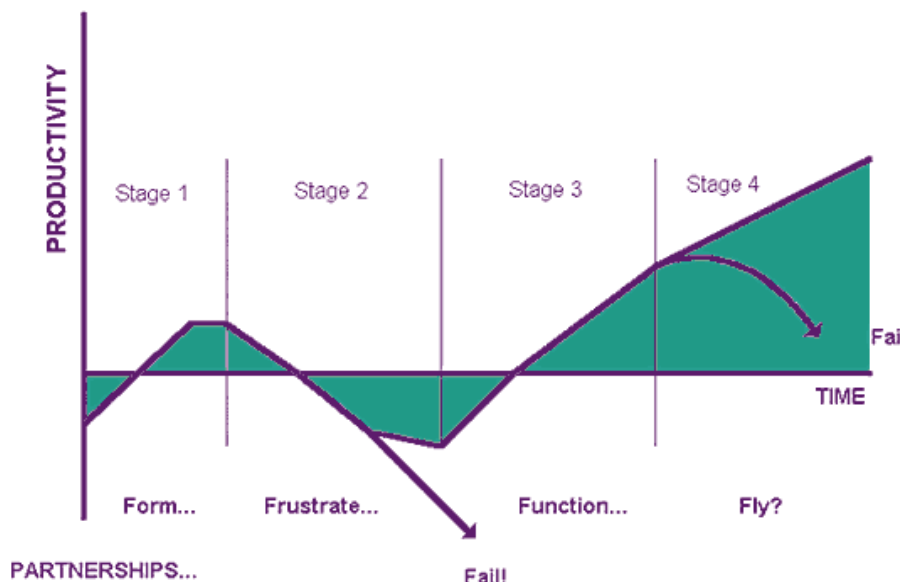
### Partnership Agreement

- Does the partnership agreement clearly define:
- Which body makes the final decisions?
  - Who employs any staff?
  - Who administers the day-day activity?
  - Who contracts with delivery bodies?
  - Who is responsible for financial control and auditing?
  - How disagreements or grievances will be resolved?

### Building Capacity

- Do partners have specific skills or knowledge which can be shared within the partnership?
- Do any partners require training in technical skills to participate fully in decision-making?
- Do partners share a good understanding of the issue being tackled? Is any briefing required?
- Is there a budget for training or capacity building?

## The Partnership Life Cycle



### Characteristics of each stage

**Forming:** Start-up phase, early enthusiasm.

**Frustration:** Uncertainty or doubts.

**Functioning:** Mature phase. Clear vision, roles and responsibilities.

**Flying:** Successful achievement of partnership goals. Trust and Respect.

**Failing:** Disengagement, breakdown in relations.

Source: [www.igpartnerships.com](http://www.igpartnerships.com)

### Successful partnerships have...

- Agreement that a partnership is necessary
- A shared vision, mission and agenda
- Respect and Trust
- Leadership
- Commitment from all partners
- Time to build relationships
- Compatible ways of working
- Clear communication
- Collaborative decision-making
- Effective organisational management

### Potential Pitfalls to look out for...

- Lack of a clear purpose
- Unrealistic goals and time frames
- Poor communication
- Poor information sharing
- Competing values & ways of working
- Partners manipulating, gate-keeping or dominating
- Hidden or misleading agendas
- Key interests missing from the partnership

Communication

Facilitation

Negotiation

Organisation

Trust

**Core Skills  
for  
Effective  
Partnership  
Working**

Openness

Ownership

Commitment

Leadership

Accountability

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