the **Brokering** guidebook

the Brokering guidebook



Navigating effective sustainable development partnerships



the Brokering guidebook

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Preface

All over the world, at both strategic and operational levels, key players from the public sector, business and civil society are working out how to work together as partners to find long-term solutions to the most intractable problems facing us environmentally, socially and economically.

The Partnering Toolbook[1], produced in 2004 and now widely used in different parts of the world in its many different language versions, was written to support those involved as partners in cross-sector sustainable development initiatives. This, its sister publication, has a different focus: partnership 'brokering'. Partnership brokering is that essential intermediary function that enables partners to work well together and ensure the maximum effectiveness of their partnership.

The Brokering Guidebook has been created to:

- **Illuminate the critical part played by brokers in multi-sector partnerships as both process managers and behind-the-scenes leaders** – for the benefit of actual and potential partners, external donors and any individuals or organisations that feel that they may be suited to the broker's role

- **Outline and support in practical ways the many tasks that a broker may undertake on behalf of partners during the life-cycle of a partnership** – for the benefit of those currently operating as brokers in multi-sector partnerships for sustainable development

Many of those involved in partnerships would say that the broker's role (whether informal or formal) has been critical. However, the broker's role must be kept in perspective. Good brokering is not a substitute for good partnering. It is always the partners themselves that are central to, and ultimately responsible for, making their partnership work. So a good broker works continuously to build capacity and systems within the partnership – thereby promoting healthy interdependence between the partners rather than partner dependence on the broker.

The Brokering Guidebook is designed to support brokers in doing such a good job that they render their role as broker unnecessary!

If you are poised to join the growing numbers of those pioneering partnership brokering in diverse settings in different parts of the world, we hope that this publication will be of practical assistance to you in taking on the role with clarity and confidence because, in spite of brokers being 'temporary', they are also vitally important.

1. Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, Published by GAIN, IBLF and UNDP, 2004
Hard copy version available in English and electronic versions available in Arabic, Chinese, English, French, German, Portuguese, Russian, Spanish, Swahili and other languages from www.ThePartneringInitiative.org

1 What is a Partnership Broker?

"The way forward will demand people of stature who are ready to compromise for the greater good of all, not those who remain intransigent by demanding all or nothing. The way forward will require persons of integrity who know that negotiation is the art of how to give and take..."

Archbishop Desmond Tutu[2]
Speaking about Aung San Sun Kyi

Desmond Tutu is not speaking about partnership brokers in his vision of the way forward (see above) – but he could well be. The world needs people of stature and integrity who understand the value of compromise for a greater good, and those people (or as we shall see below, organisations) that have these qualities have critically important parts to play in our increasingly complex world.

Making Sense of Complexity

Multi-sector partnerships for sustainable development are complex. They critically depend on establishing strong working relationships between key individuals often from radically different working cultures. For this reason, they take considerable effort both to establish and to nurture to maturity. In addition, the time required to build strong and enduring partnerships, often in a climate of urgent sustainable development need, can lead to frustration and disappointment.

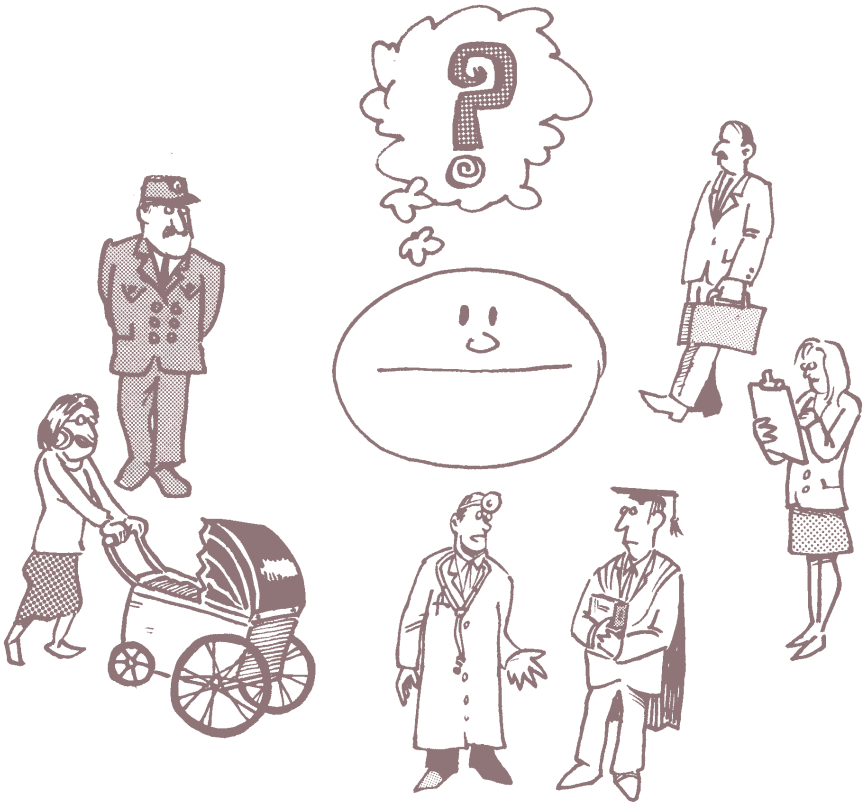
The challenge, therefore, is to form robust partnerships efficiently and effectively so that moving from the exploratory phase to project design, development and implementation is as seamless and speedy as possible without involving compromises in terms of either integrity or sustainability.

How can this best be done? And, as importantly, who will do it?

Who will take the lead in drawing together the partners and help to build and consolidate strong working relationships? Who will ensure that partners agree suitable operating procedures for their partnership? Who will give the partnership itself priority when others are invariably caught up in unrelated tasks? Who will stick with the partnership and help to pull it together if it starts to come apart? Who will assist the partners to hold on to a vision when they risk getting bogged down in navigating major obstacles or simply day-to-day challenges?

2. Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Foreword to the Second Edition of *Freedom from Fear (And Other Writings)*, Aung San Sun Kyi Penguin Books, London, 1995

Scratch below the surface of any successful partnership and you will invariably find someone (or, indeed, often more than one) who has taken on the role of the partnership's 'broker', even if intuitively and unofficially. Their hard work behind the scenes may not be formally acknowledged and it may not even be obvious, but without it the partnership would have been significantly less successful if, indeed, it had got started at all.



Defining the Broker's Role

A **broker** in the dictionary definition is a go-between in making relationships (for example, a marriage broker) or a middleman (for example, a stockbroker or an insurance broker). Similarly, a **partnership broker** operates as an active go-between or intermediary between different organisations and sectors (public, private and civil society) that aim to collaborate as partners in a sustainable development initiative.

A broker may need to adopt a number of different types of behaviours including those of:

- Business manager – Keeping the work results-focused
- Record keeper – Providing accurate, clear and appropriate communications
- Teacher – Raising awareness and building capacity
- Healer – Restoring health and wellbeing to dysfunctional relationships
- Parent – Nurturing the partnership to maturity
- Police officer – Ensuring that partners are transparent and accountable

A partnership broker may also undertake many different types of activity on behalf of a partnership. These are both specific and non-specific in nature. An overview of specific activities is provided in the Brokers in Action section (see page 57). Some of the key non-specific activities for a broker may include:

- Seeding the idea of partnering with potential partners, policy makers and / or donors – explaining how it can work and how it may be better than alternative approaches
- Inspiring decision makers to follow a multi-sector approach to their sustainable development efforts
- Building active collaboration between the partners themselves as well as between the partners, other stakeholders and external donors
- Encouraging (and role modelling) the kinds of behaviour that will help the partnership to function effectively and creatively, as well as
- Protecting the principles and vision of the partnership

Partnership Brokers: Tomorrows Leaders?

While partnership brokers essentially operate as process managers, they also have a behind-the-scenes leadership function. Indeed, brokers can be seen as epitomising a new style of leadership – sometimes characterised as servant leadership[3] – that is particularly suited to the challenges of the 21st century: a leadership role that has shifted from that of figurehead to that of catalyst.

These new types of leader are noteworthy for a somewhat non-traditional set of leadership attributes including:

- **Capacity to create clarity** in the midst of our complex, information-rich, rapidly moving, politically unstable and economically unequal world
- **Skill at convening and facilitating** productive interaction between diverse groups of people
- **Willingness to carry a level of risk** on behalf of, or for the benefit of, others
- **Ability to inspire** others with their vision of a more cooperative future
- **Modesty** with regard to their own achievements so that others are genuinely empowered

Such attributes of non-directive leadership are subtle but increasingly important in many situations and they are fundamental to good partnership brokering. Partnership brokers – essentially operating as non-directive leaders – are at the heart of successful partnering. Their role needs to be better understood, valued and developed.

3. Robert K Greenleaf, *Servant Leadership*, Paulist Press, New York, 1991

" A broker mobilises resources in the very broadest sense of this term to facilitate learning, exchange and action on the ground. All those involved as partners, including local NGOs and community-based organisations, are respected as legitimate and active players in the partnership regardless of their power or resource bases. You should only embark on brokering if you are prepared to be entrepreneurial and experimental in your approach. You also need to be prepared to take and carry a few risks on behalf of the partnership in order to break new ground."

Director of an intermediary organisation operating in Poland

Interestingly, many take on a brokering role intuitively, without seeing themselves (or being seen by others) as brokers. And in any single partnership, more than one person (and sometimes many people) can act as a broker at one time or another.

Brokers: Internal or External?

Individuals could be operating either as 'internal' or 'external' brokers according to whether they are placed within one of the partner organisations or outside of any of the partner organisations (see definitions in Box A).

BOX A: DEFINING 'INTERNAL' AND 'EXTERNAL' BROKERS

Internal Brokers

Managers from within a partner organisation who:

- **Prepare their organisation for collaboration in a multi-sector partnership**
- **Negotiate and represent their organisation's involvement in a partnership**
- **Play a key role in initiating / managing / developing a partnership arrangement**

External Brokers

Independent professionals contracted by one of the partners or by the partnership to:

- **Explore the feasibility of adopting a partnership approach**
- **Facilitate negotiations to develop a partnership and / or a partnering agreement**
- **Maintain or monitor the effectiveness of partnerships over time**
- **Build institutional capacity to deliver partnerships and sustain outcomes effectively**

These definitions are from PBAS (The ODI / IBLF Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme)[4]

4. *Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (PBAS)*, A professional Accreditation programme for partnership brokers established in 2003 by Michael Warner and Ros Tennyson on behalf of the UK's Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF)

There are a range of challenges and constraints associated with being either an internal or an external broker. Perhaps the most obvious for the internal broker is the risk of being (or perceived as being) too partial to their own organisation and therefore unable to be objective enough in helping partners make key decisions about the partnership. For the external broker, the risk (actual or perceived) may be that they are too distant and have too little vested interest in the partnership's success to maintain their commitment when things get difficult.

Whatever the issues are, they will need to be acknowledged openly by the brokers themselves and worked through carefully with partners to avoid them intruding unhelpfully into the partnership and negating the value of having a broker at all.

During the life of a partnership, it may become clear that at certain times an external broker is preferable, in which case those acting as internal brokers can step back into a different role (perhaps simply acting as a representative of their own organisation within the partnership). It is, in fact, not uncommon for individuals to move from being an internal to an external broker (or vice versa) as the requirements for the role change and / or their working relationship to the partnership metamorphoses over time. For example, an internal broker may be seconded to the partnership or an external broker may be employed by the partnership for a period of time.

Brokers: Individuals or Organisations?

The concept of partnership brokering itself is becoming more sophisticated. It is no longer simply a new kind of **professional role** undertaken by individuals (whether internal or external to the partnership). It is increasingly manifesting as a new kind of **delivery mechanism** requiring different kinds of organisational structure.

Specialist **partnership units**, for example, are emerging in multi-national corporations, government departments, international NGOs as well as within many bilateral and international agencies. These units are expected to bring multi-sector experience and partnering expertise into the organisation. Such units typically develop internal partnering guidelines and support systems for a range of partnership activities. They also provide a 'one-stop shop' for external organisations seeking to become partners as well as creating a gate-keeping function to ensure that the organisation's partnering activities are well coordinated and operating within appropriate boundaries.

Independent **intermediary organisations** are also increasing in number and can be found in many different settings. Some may be little more than loose mechanisms offering a portfolio of partnering or brokering services. Intermediary organisations can perform a range of functions including: awareness raising; capacity building; convening multi-sector meetings and managing the partnering process by providing a 'neutral' space; skilled facilitation and other

professional skills and resources. Such organisations can work at either operational or strategic levels.

The different types of broker – defined by whether they are internal or external to the partnership and operating as individuals or organisations – are summarised in Box B.

BOX B: DIFFERENT TYPES OF BROKER

	INDIVIDUAL	ORGANISATION
INTERNAL	**INTERNAL BROKER** An individual operating from within one of the partner organisations with a designated role to build and / or develop the partnership.	**PARTNERSHIP UNIT** A team or department located within a partner organisation specifically tasked with building and / or developing partnership relationships on its behalf.
EXTERNAL	**EXTERNAL BROKER** An individual working externally to the partner organisations appointed either by one (or more, or all) of the partners to build or develop some aspect of the partnership.	**INTERMEDIARY ORGANISATION** An independent organisation or mechanism created specifically to promote partnerships and / or to undertake a brokering function on behalf of different partnerships.

Many of the core activities of brokering are similar whether delivered by individuals or by a number of individuals working within a formal organisational framework (partnership unit or intermediary organisation). For this reason, and to minimise repetition, whenever the term 'broker' is used in the text from this point onwards it should be taken to refer to *either* individual brokers *or* organisational structures providing brokering services – unless clearly stated otherwise.

Effective Brokering

Perhaps an example of effective brokering would be useful at this point.

One of the major reasons for working in cross-sector partnerships is to be able to benefit from the different approaches that each sector takes. For example, the approach of the three main sectors to planning varies significantly as summarised below:

BOX C: SECTOR APPROACHES TO PLANNING

SECTOR	BROAD APPROACH TO PLANNING
Public sector	Uses a planning model based on integrated development between different systems and structures. Tends to focus on delivery of public services.
Business	Uses a planning model that is based on markets, targets, production schedules, supply chains and distribution channels. Tends to focus on productivity.
Civil society	Uses a planning model based on consultation and principles of empowerment – often with multiple development objectives. Tends to focus on environmental protection, peace and security and / or human development.

Skilled brokering will help partners to build on the particular strengths of each of these three approaches and encourage a planning process within the partnership that combines the best of each. In other words, planning within a partnership can be managed by an effective broker to ensure that the service focus of the public sector is delivered with the efficiency of the business sector while not compromising on the principles of sustainability and empowerment championed by civil society.

To be effective, partnership brokers – whether internal or external to the partnership and operating as individuals or organisational structures – need:

- **Recognition, status and acceptance** of their role by partners and key others
- **Engagement** in the form of active involvement with, and practical support from, partners
- **Clear tasks and a timetable** for their completion
- **Supervision,** with appropriate management and appraisal procedures pre-agreed.

These issues are addressed in more detail in the following section.

2 Establishing the Broker's Role

"Good binding requires no knots
Yet no one can loosen it.
The sage takes care of all things
And abandons nothing."

Lao Tsu[5]

To be effective, brokers need clarity about their remit and responsibilities. It is therefore very important that the role of broker is allocated wisely and that those with whom the broker will be working understand the extent (and boundaries) of the brokering role. One of the key issues to consider is how the broker relates to the partners and to the partnership.

Any partnership has (or builds over time) an identity that is developed and shared between the separate partner organisations. Evidence of a shared identity within a partnership can be through:

- A **partnering agreement** that commits partners to common objectives and activities
- A joint **Steering Group or Management Board** with decision-making powers
- Use of a **partnership logo**, publication, website or other materials produced in the name of the partnership and available in the public domain
- The development (and, ultimately, registration) of an **independent organisation** that formalises the relationship of the partners as well as the partnership's characteristics, objectives and identity in a new way.

The Broker:Partner Relationship

Clearly defining the relationship of the broker to the partnership is critical. A way of classifying types of brokering is to understand the broker's relationship to the partners and the partnership. As mentioned earlier, brokers could be internal or external to the partner organisations or the partnership. But they can also be expected to operate in either proactive or reactive mode (see Box D below). Different types of relationship provide different types of brokering challenge and opportunity. Those appointing a broker should consider the implications of these different types of potential relationships between the broker and the partnership. Some of these advantages and disadvantages are highlighted in Box E.

5. Lao Tsu, Tao Te Ching, 6th Century BC, Translated by Gia-Fu Feng and Jane English, Wildwood House, London, 1973

BOX D: THE BROKER RELATIONSHIP TO PARTNERS / PARTNERSHIP

EXTERNAL BROKER

ANIMATOR
Typically an independent consultant or external organisation appointed by the partnership to implement decisions on its behalf

Reactive

Mandate

PIONEER
Typically an independent consultant or external organisation who has seeded the idea or may even have initiated the partnership

Proactive

Mandate

COORDINATOR
Typically a member of staff or internal unit working within one of the partner organisations and assigned a partnership coordinating role

INNOVATOR
Typically a member of staff or internal unit working within one of the partner organisations tasked to take initiative in creating and building the partnership

INTERNAL BROKER

BOX E: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF DIFFERENT BROKER:PARTNER RELATIONSHIPS

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	NOTES
Coordinator	• Familiarity with one of the main partner organisations and their established network of contacts • Knowledge of organisation's procedures and systems • Access to organisational resources	• Potential bias in favour of their own organisation • Difficult to challenge colleagues or take risks within existing organisational culture • Insufficient time to devote to their role as broker	May have too little time or authority to do more than provide back-up administration for the partnership.
Innovator	• Expected to be quite entrepreneurial in approach • Encouraged to bring new ideas and approaches into organisation • Opportunity to build capacity and engagement internally	• Some constraints on role from being located within a partner organisation • Comparative freedom of operation causing resentment from internal colleagues • Vulnerability to changes in organisational policy	May be perceived by other partners as having too much power located within one of the partner organisations.
Pioneer	• Considerable (almost total) independence and freedom from any specific organisational allegiance • Ample opportunities for creativity and innovation • Free from constraints that inevitably come with a more subordinate role	• Too much opportunity for unilateral decision making • Potentially unwilling to transfer ownership to partners • Tendency to emphasise innovation over delivery and implementation	May be difficult for partners to control because of tendency to operate more as a director than a broker.

➜

	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES	NOTES
Animator	• Freedom to operate independently of any one partner • Fresh perspective on which to build without preconceptions • Accepted as a specialist bringing new skills to the partnership	• Inadequate knowledge and understanding of the partner organisations • Able to move on too easily if things become difficult • Frustration with holding a reactive mandate without the benefits of being an internal broker	May be used by partners as a way of dumping those tasks they should be taking on themselves.

Appointing a Broker

Those appointing an individual, setting up an internal unit or selecting an external organisation to operate as the partnership's broker will need to ensure that the expectations (of the partners) are well matched to the characteristics of the proposed brokering relationship type (see Boxes D and E above). Careful thought (and, preferably, detailed discussion with partners) is important to decide whether an internal or external appointment is appropriate and whether it is best undertaken by a nominated individual or by an organisational mechanism.

A mismatch between partner expectations and their type or working relationship to the broker may lead to:

- Frustration (for both partners and broker)
- Wasting precious resources
- The broker becoming dysfunctional
- The partnership being undermined or even collapsing

Two examples of a mismatch are where the broker:

- Operates in a highly independent way when what the partners require is low-key, background coordination
- Does little more than provide administrative back-up when the partners are hoping for a broker who will take leadership and initiative on their behalf

For more information see Guidance Note 1: Appointing a Broker

Guidance Note 1: Appointing a Broker



Brokering within a partnership often just happens – for example, where individuals simply adopt a brokering role because they see that it is needed and they have the natural instinct and aptitude for it. In these instances, the broker's 'licence to operate' exists as long as the partners find their brokering behaviour acceptable. All over the world there are individuals (in all sectors and at all levels of authority) who play the part of a broker without necessarily using this term and without any kind of formal accountability system in place.

This situation is most common with those who we are describing here as internal brokers – those who work within one of the partner organisations (usually the one that initiates or drives the partnership) and see their role effectively as the partnership's informal manager.

While this may be a perfectly acceptable and adequate arrangement in some situations, we are assuming that it is preferable that the brokering role is allocated in a more transparent and formal way – particularly since it should (in our view) be increasingly accountable to the partners as a group rather than simply one or other of the partner organisations.

What follows here, therefore, is an outline approach to formalising the role of a broker – whether operating as an individual or working through an institutional mechanism (as described in more detail in Section 2).

ISSUES TO BE CONSIDERED

There are a number of issues to be considered and choices to be made including:

- Is it more appropriate to have an internal or an external broker?
- Might the partners derive more value from working with a brokering mechanism (internal specialist unit or external intermediary organisation) where they can access a range of individuals and services as needed rather than appointing one individual?
- Should the broker be given a reactive or a proactive mandate?
- Over what term should the broker be appointed?
- How will the broker be line managed on a day-to-day basis?
- What systems of accountability will ensure that the broker – however managed – will also be accountable to the partners as a group (since brokers operate on behalf of the partnership)?

Added to the number of questions listed above, is the fact that the role of the broker (and therefore the type of broker needed) may change quite radically during the partnership's life cycle. This means either that the person selected needs to be multi-skilled and very flexible in their approach or (more likely) that different brokers may be identified at different stages or to undertake different types of task.

All these issues and questions will need to be discussed with partners. The tables below are designed as prompts to aid partners in such discussions and to assist all those involved in the appointment process itself.

WHAT TYPE OF BROKER DOES THE PARTNERSHIP NEED?

EXTERNAL BROKER	
ANIMATOR This is most appropriate where the partnership is established and the broker operates as someone who undertakes pre-agreed management tasks and other activities on behalf of the partners. **Reactive**	**PIONEER** This is most appropriate where the idea or energy for the partnership comes largely from the broker themselves and where the partners are willing for an external broker to take a lead on their behalf. **Proactive**
Mandate **COORDINATOR** This is most appropriate where the partnership already has a strong identity and a number of active leaders whose work needs under-pinning with good administration and communication.	**Mandate** **INNOVATOR** This is most appropriate where the partnership needs to be established and where the organisation in which the broker works is itself taking the lead role – at least in the early stages.
INTERNAL BROKER	

Once a decision has been made on what type of partner / broker relationship will suit the partnership best, it is possible to draw up a job description. This should always include:

- Description of the partnership and its goals
- Outline of main activities required of the broker
- Initial timetable for completion of specific tasks
- Clarification of line management and accountability systems
- Terms and conditions of appointment
- Details of assessment procedures
- Conditions under which the contract can be changed or terminated

Given the particular nature of the broker's role – specifically that it will need to be quite fluid and is also likely to be temporary (handing over to partners or project managers in due course) – short to medium-term contracts are probably more suitable than open-ended or long-term contracts.

KEY QUESTIONS TO EXPLORE WHEN CONSIDERING POTENTIAL BROKERS:

	INDIVIDUAL	ORGANISATION
INTERNAL	**INTERNAL BROKER** Is this individual: ➜ Committed to partnering as a sustainable development approach? ➜ Experienced in working cross-sectorally? ➜ Able to inspire trust with other partners? ➜ Willing to work on behalf of the partnership as a whole as well as on behalf of their organisation? ➜ Able to commit enough time to the brokering role? ➜ Willing to develop within the role as the partnering challenges change over time?	**PARTNERSHIP UNIT** • Is the unit well organised / managed? • Does it have internal authority? • Does it have external credibility (especially with potential partners)? • Do its staff understand partnering challenges? • Do its staff understand the values and drivers of other sectors? • Are the following support services available: ➜ Partnering guidelines? ➜ Case studies / information? ➜ Sample documents (eg partnering agreements)? ➜ Networks of appropriate contacts? ➜ Staff with brokering / facilitation skills? ➜ Effective communications systems? ➜ Monitoring and evaluation systems?
EXTERNAL	**EXTERNAL BROKER** Is this individual: ➜ Committed to partnering as a sustainable development approach? ➜ Experienced in working cross-sectorally in comparable circumstances? ➜ Skilled in brokering, facilitation, communication, reviewing and informal coaching? ➜ Able to inspire trust from those with whom he / she works? ➜ Demonstrating professionalism and integrity? ➜ Available to work as and when required by the partnership? ➜ Aware that the role will be temporary?	**INTERMEDIARY ORGANISATION** • Is the organisation well established / managed? • Does it have a good brokering track record? • Will it have an appropriate level of authority (especially with potential partners from different sectors)? • Does the organisation have a reputation for being neutral / an honest broker? • Do its staff have experience of managing complex partnering challenges? • Are the following support services available: ➜ Partnering guidelines? ➜ Case studies / information? ➜ Sample documents (eg partnering agreements)? ➜ Networks of appropriate contacts? ➜ Staff / associates with brokering / facilitation skills? ➜ Effective communications systems? ➜ Monitoring and evaluation systems?

"Brokering is not easy and all brokers need to know what is expected of them – particularly how much or how little initiative they are mandated to take in their brokering role. They also need to know how often they should report back on their activities and to whom. I have seen more than one major international partnership nearly fall apart because some partners felt the broker was taking too independent and directive a role and other partnerships at more local levels where partners were on the verge of leaving the partnership because they felt that the broker was not doing enough!

When it works, it is as if the broker is providing invisible glue to hold the partnership together. And the value of good brokering for partnership effectiveness is such that it makes the struggle to establish a good working relationship worth all the effort it can take to get it right."

External broker working in the UK

CREATING A CONTRACT

Even where the broker is operating as an internal broker and undertaking brokering tasks as 'add-ons' to an existing job, it is still a good idea to clarify in writing their new roles and responsibilities. Of course, for all other types of broker a formal contract is necessary and should have all the elements typical of a contract of employment or a contract for consultancy services.

As a legally binding document, the contract will need to conform to the law of the country in which it is generated and should also be in accord with the employment procedures of the organisation responsible for issuing it. Contracts should clarify all terms and conditions of appointment (including salary / fees and holiday entitlements) as well as details of grievance procedures and, where relevant, legal and insurance issues. In addition, contracts should summarise line management and accountability arrangements.

A broker should be regularly assessed (see: Guidance Note 10: Assessing a Broker) and should be absolutely clear about the conditions under which their contract can be terminated or they can resign from the role.

As outlined above, there are necessary formalities associated with appointing a broker. However, since brokering is a new professional area and partnerships are different to more traditional operating institutions, there should be room for maximum innovation and flexibility even within comparatively formal appointment arrangements.

Supervision and Accountability

From an early stage, partners need to agree how and to whom the partnership broker is accountable. There are two types of accountability. These are:

- ➜ Day-to-day line management – most efficiently conducted on behalf of the partnership by a nominated individual
- ➜ Ultimate accountability – this invariably involves all the partners using some pre-agreed reporting and appraisal system.

Partners will need to understand and distinguish between these. They will also need to create and adhere to appropriate reporting arrangements for brokers. The broker will also need early clarification on:

- ➜ Communications mechanisms that will ensure partners provide them with regular inputs, feedback, support and (where appropriate) critique
- ➜ Responsibilities, authority and accountability requirements for partners (to each other as well as to their individual partner organisations)
- ➜ Circumstances in which the partnership can be terminated (and the implications for the brokering role)
- ➜ Circumstances in which, and procedures whereby, the role of broker can be challenged, changed or terminated.

Even where brokers are initially appointed by one of the partner organisations, over time they will become increasingly answerable to the partnership. From an early stage, therefore, all partners should be involved in reviewing the broker's work – perhaps informally in the first instance and becoming more formal over time.

See Guidance Note 2: Assessing a Broker

Guidance Note 2: Assessing a Broker



Brokers will invariably be accountable to partners as well as to a line manager and / or the employing organisation. This may prove difficult to manage in a way that is streamlined and fair since it can easily become a clumsy and over-laborious process that can actually inhibit the broker / partner working relationship. All involved need to take the assessment process seriously and offer their views in a professional and helpful manner – their partnership needs to be strengthened, not weakened, by reviewing the broker's role.

COLLECTING DATA

The line manager should collect information from the key people involved – offering them an opportunity for considered reflection, identification of tangible examples of good and less good practice as well as proposals for any significant changes to the brokering role.

BROKER'S SELF-ASSESSMENT

If a broker has been developing a reflective approach to their work (see Guidance Note 9: Learning from Experience) they should have a fairly good sense of how well they are fulfilling the role and it should not be difficult to complete a self-assessment prior to a formal review. The self-assessment may not be actually given to the line manager (although it could be a requirement, if that is agreed in advance) but will enable the broker to be better prepared for a review meeting.

SELF-ASSESSMENT QUESTIONS FOR BROKERS TO ASK

Note: There may be others that are more specific or relevant to the partnership – these can simply be added or substituted where appropriate. They should also be suitably adjusted where the questions are aimed at a unit or organisation rather than an individual broker.

Skills

Which are the main skills required for the role?
Where are my skills strengths and weaknesses?
What strategies could I / the partners employ to build a wider skills base?

Key Tasks

What have been my key tasks from the period under review?
Have they been completed in a timely and appropriate manner?
What might I as broker have done differently / better?
What might partners have done differently / better?
What strategies could I / they / we employ to ensure future tasks are completed appropriately?
Do we need to involve others in fulfilling the next phase of work?

Relationships

How is my working relationship to the partners / project staff / key others working?
If there are significant relationship difficulties how do I propose to address these?
Are there better ways of ensuring good communications and engagement?

Management

Are the line management arrangements in place and working well?
Is the balance of relationship between myself and both my line manager and the partners about right?
Do I feel adequately understood and supported in the brokering role?
Are there any changes that could improve the management relationship?

New priorities

Am I clear about new priorities for the partnership in the next phase of the partnering cycle?
Am I clear about the implications for my role?
Are there new strategies I need to develop and / or new people to involve in some of the brokering tasks?
Is my own exit or responsibility transfer strategy in place and understood by partners and key others?
What (if any) changes should be agreed at this point to make my brokering role work as well as possible?

PARTNER'S ASSESSMENT OF THE BROKER

It is, of course, also important to access the views of the partners and partner organisations about how effectively the broker is undertaking their role. This can be done on a formal basis (for example, asking each partner / partner organisation to complete a questionnaire) or an informal basis (for example, having a discussion with the partners as a group at the end of a business meeting – perhaps even with the broker present, though this may inhibit frank discussion).

In any case, the partners views matter and should be taken seriously. In fact, a well-conducted review process can be a useful way for partners to think through more fully the developing nature of the broker's role and their own changing responsibilities in the partnership. The process itself may play a significant part in partners recognising their responsibilities and lessening their reliance on the broker as the partnership moves through the partnering cycle.

The issues that partners should be asked to consider are largely the same as those listed in the table above (skills / key tasks / relationships / management / new priorities). Since partners are likely to be busy people, the process should be kept simple. However, it is important that partners are encouraged to use their assessment of the broker to:

- Review their own activities / behaviour within the partnership and how this has impacted the broker's ability to undertake their role well
- Consider the totality of the broker's role and whether or not their requirements as partners are realistic
- Reflect on how they (or others in their organisation) should / could be taking on more of the brokering activities
- Take stock of the partnership's achievements and how much more could be achieved with appropriate changes / developments
- Present their comments in a creative and constructive manner (even where there are grounds for dissatisfaction)

CONDUCTING AN ASSESSMENT INTERVIEW

Given the complex nature of a broker's role and (possibly) their double accountability – to a single organisational line management structure as well as to the partners as a group – it may be appropriate for the assessment interview to be conducted by both the line manager and one other person nominated by the partners to represent their perspective.

Structuring the assessment interview is important – with those interviewing being well prepared. In addition to a comprehensive review of how the broker has fulfilled their role, it is important to offer an opportunity for the broker to feedback their experiences – particularly to identify any management or contextual issues that may have had unexpected impacts on their ability to achieve pre-agreed goals.

Those conducting the interview may also need to be reminded that the broker will be seeing their role as temporary and therefore that success will need to be measured more by how much they have handed over than how complex and comprehensive their portfolio of activities is.

REVIEW GUIDELINES FOR LINE MANAGER

Having asked for input from partners in advance of the review meeting, the line manager will be in a good position to present a comprehensive picture to the broker on behalf of the partners. The task for the line manager is to conduct the assessment with the broker by:

- Reviewing their activities against the terms of reference in their contract
- Measuring their achievements in the light of pre-agreed goals and delivery timetables
- Considering governance and line management issues
- Exploring the views of partners and broker
- Clarifying any areas for improvement
- Discussing forward planning (including consideration of broker's changing roles; transfer of responsibilities; and planned strategy for handing over responsibilities and / or exiting from the role)

FEEDBACK AND MOVING ON

Once the assessment has been completed, any conclusions and proposals for future work should be given in writing to the broker and communicated appropriately to partners. The written report should include revised and clear targets for the agreed next period. Where it is necessary or desirable for changes to be made in terms of management / behaviour / focus of either the broker or partners, these should also be itemised and discussed with those involved – wherever possible with practical suggestions and a timetable for changes to be implemented.

In other words, the assumption is that the assessment is a two-way process and that changes may be necessary in the partnership and from partners as well as in the brokering process and from the broker.

It may be useful to see the assessment procedure as a way of taking stock and of clarifying what phase the partnership has reached in the partnering cycle (see page 58) in order for all those involved to better understand the changing requirements of the broker as the partnership develops over time. Part of the assessment process should be to enable both broker and partners to move on rather than getting stuck in habitual and over-dependent working relationships. Of course, there may be some circumstances where the broker's work is deemed to have been quite unsatisfactory. If it is agreed that there is no room for improvement, the role should be terminated according to the terms and conditions outlined in the contract. Where the role has been undertaken on an informal basis (for example, an internal broker having simply adopted the role to fill a clear gap), it may be more a case of a frank discussion with the partners as a group about how the role can be more widely shared in the future or handed over to another person whether internal or external to the partnership.

Remember:

Brokering is a relatively new professional area and as such there are few norms or benchmarks in place against which to measure brokering competence. Brokers are there **to support partners** and to **serve the needs** of the partnership rather than to build a permanent position for themselves, so in assessing how well they are fulfilling the role, managers and partners may be looking for subtle rather than obvious qualities. Good brokering should ultimately be measured by how effectively the **partnership** develops and by how systematically **the role of broker becomes unnecessary**.

Risks and Challenges

At any one time, brokers may need to grapple with a range of challenges arising from the partnership paradigm. Asked to identify some of the obstacles their partnership faced, a group of partnership practitioners produced quite a list (see Box F below)… many will be familiar to those working as partnership brokers!

BOX F: COMMON CHALLENGES IN A CROSS-SECTOR PARTNERSHIP

CHALLENGES RELATING TO INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED IN THE PARTNERSHIP	CHALLENGES RESULTING FROM PARTNER DIVERSITY	CHALLENGES ARISING FROM THE PARTNERING PROCESS
• Competitiveness between strong personalities • Partnership's dependence on contacts and 'who you know' • Key people changing jobs and moving away from the partnership • New people coming in with different priorities / personalities / approaches • Lack of appropriate leadership (eg too weak or too dominating a lead figure) • Lack of appropriate skills and competencies (including a lack of awareness of personal limitations)	• Different drivers and motivations for each partner organisation • Making (often inaccurate) assumptions about each other's organisational priorities • Unwillingness to accept each other's priorities (if different) • Over-emphasis on money (as opposed to other types of resource contribution) • Hidden agendas • Absence of a genuinely shared mission • Cross-sectoral or cross-cultural intolerance • Power imbalances (real or perceived)	• Difficulties breaking away from existing hierarchical structures or systems • Overly lengthy (or not lengthy enough) consultation procedures • Loss of focus for the partnership • Failure of individuals or organisations to complete agreed tasks • General sense of low levels of commitment from some partners • Over-reliance on some partner organisations or specific individuals

Response to a survey of practitioners working in Central and Eastern Europe, September 1997

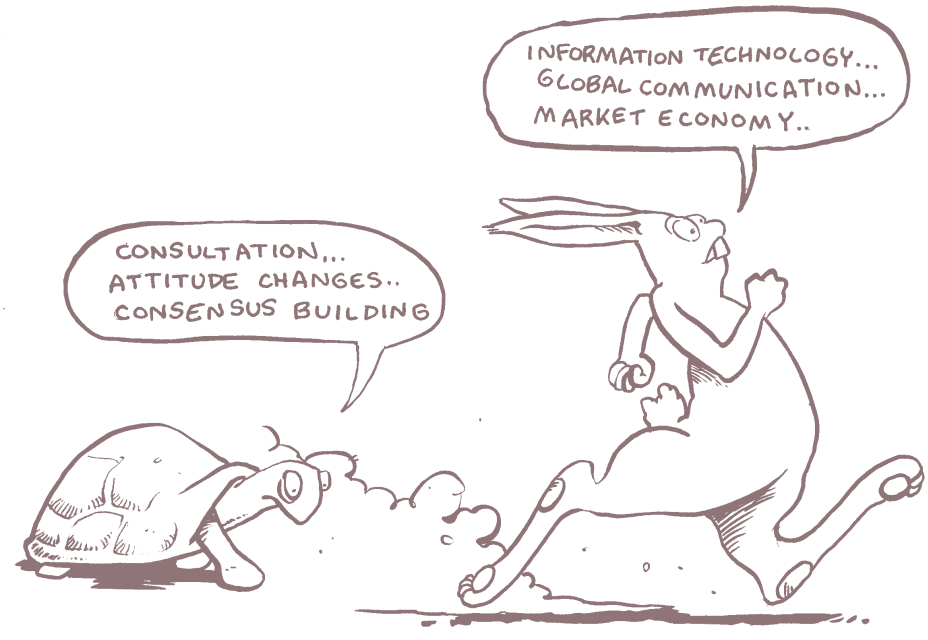
A further consideration for brokers is the fact that all sustainable development partnering activity is highly context-specific. It is important to remember this and not to underestimate the many external forces that will have impacts on the partnership at all stages. The broker may have a particular role in helping partners to understand and accept what is (or, more importantly, what is not) likely to be possible, given the prevailing circumstances.

While all partnership situations are specific, there is one general challenge typical of all partnering that also needs to be navigated. This is the inevitable discrepancy between the urgency of need and the (sometimes painfully slow) pace of partnership building and development. This is made even more challenging by the discrepancy of pace between modern information technology systems and the more painstaking but critically important processes of consultation and consensus building (illustrated below).

The broker has to conduct a balancing act that accelerates decision-making processes where possible but never at the expense of genuine consultation and engagement. The broker also has to find ways of reminding the partners that any challenges either from within or outside the partnership are theirs to understand and manage. The starting point is to understand the category or nature of the challenge and to develop appropriate strategies to help partners address them successfully (see Guidance Note 3: Navigating Obstacles).

It is not the broker's task to take on all responsibility for difficulties faced by the partnership, rather to encourage partners to develop their confidence and skill in dealing with challenges appropriately.

Remember:
The broker always works at the request of – and on behalf of – the partners. Brokers are there to enable the **partners** to be more effective and the **partnership** to maximise its potential. If the broker does too much, the chances are that the partners are doing too little. A good broker aims to work themselves out of a job.



Guidance Note 3: Navigating Obstacles



All partnerships encounter obstacles of one type or another during a typical partnering life cycle. Successful partnerships address the challenges different obstacles present robustly rather than ignoring them and simply hoping they will go away. Partnerships may actually flounder if partners fail to address challenges (particularly internal ones) in the mistaken belief that perpetuating a culture of achievement at all costs is the best way to avoid destabilising the partnership.

Effective brokering strategies can help partners to feel safe in addressing both internal and external obstacles. Indeed, an early and decisive brokering strategy aimed at dealing with obstacles before they get out of hand, may make all the difference between a partnership that achieves and a partnership that falls short of achieving its sustainable development goals.

Obstacles or challenges may come in many different guises and at different levels of seriousness – some of which are directly within the control of the partnership and some of which are to do with the wider context in which the partnership is operating. In the latter situation, the strategy will focus on mitigating impact on the partnership rather than solving the problem, since it is unlikely that the partnership will be in a position to actually change the prevailing external circumstances – at least in the short term, though it may have longer-term impacts and influence.

SAYING 'NO'

Sometimes a challenge is insurmountable – an individual just too difficult or an organisation just too far away from the partnership's priorities – in which case the broker should encourage the partners to be clear but decisive in simply walking away.

TYPE OF OBSTACLE	EXAMPLES	BROKER STRATEGIES
INDIVIDUAL	• No spare capacity (eg time) • Inadequate partnering skills • Restricted authority within the partner organisation they represent	➜ Be open and supportive on a one-to-one basis and suggest strategies to bring about change ➜ Where possible, work on initiatives to help them deal with their capacity or skills limitations ➜ Where necessary, work with their organisation and / or other key players to build their authority
ORGANISATIONAL	• Inadequate understanding of what is required from the organisation in its role as a partner • Lack of buy-in to the partnership from the organisation as a whole or from senior managers in particular • Organisation's unwillingness or inability to be flexible enough to respond to partnership's changing needs / priorities	➜ Work actively with each partner to build strategies to engage their organisations more fully ➜ Suggest a range of imaginative ways to build greater understanding and engagement (see Guidance Note 8) ➜ Present senior managers with opportunities to understand why a more flexible approach will be of value / benefit to them and their goals in the longer term
SECTORAL	• Public sector can be too bureaucratic, slow to take decisions and unwilling to lose control • Business can be too profit-driven, impatient and self-promoting • Civil society can be too chaotic, narrow in focus and keen to criticise	➜ Strategies will need to be tailored for the different sectors – brokers should consider finding allies from each sector who can act as interpreters between their sector and the partnership ➜ Partners may need reminding that one of the benefits of working together is that they can learn from each other's way of doing business (eg by seeing that results can be achieved by adopting new practices) ➜ Brokers are uniquely placed to challenge unhelpful sectoral behaviour and point out in what ways this may be impeding the partnership's progress
NATIONAL	• Political – including unstable government or a poor enabling environment • Economic – including restricted funds available from taxes or from corporate investment • Cultural – including no tradition of collaboration or conflicting values	➜ Ring-fence the partnership's activities where necessary to protect it from being destabilised by prevailing political turbulence or economic downturn ➜ Help partners build a campaigning element into their partnering activities ➜ Agree on areas where it may be possible to influence policy and national strategies and / or strengthen the democratic process ➜ Explore where the partnership's activities can be income generating or attractive to new kinds of investment ➜ Undertake activities and events that showcase the benefits of collaborating across traditional boundaries

continued

TYPE OF OBSTACLE	EXAMPLES	BROKER STRATEGIES
GLOBAL	• Limited availability of external resources from international agencies • Speed of change • Scale of sustainable development challenges	➜ Help the partners to be realistic in their aims for the partnership ➜ Link up with similar partnerships or partnership-based projects in other parts of the world (the internet is a huge asset) and try and build economies of scale and more power to influence at a global level ➜ Use the pressure (the urgent need for results) to constantly energise the partners and revitalise the partnership

"It may transpire that what is initially seen as an obstacle may actually provide the partnership with unexpected new opportunities to: address issues more deeply; radically change direction; or meet the challenge so robustly that the partnership itself is significantly strengthened. A broker can play a key role in helping partners to transform a breakdown into a breakthrough."

Internal broker working for the UNDP

3 Brokering Skills

"The golden rule of conduct is toleration –
Seeing that we will never think alike,
That we shall always see the truth in fragments
And from different angles of vision."

Mahatma Gandhi[6]

A partnership broker undertakes a wide range of tasks, and has to continually adapt their operational style to fit a changing brokering role during the life of the partnership. For the broker there is an almost continuous process of 'turning things around' including:

- ➜ In the early stages, turning loosely connected individuals into an integrated group of partners
- ➜ During the partnership-building process, turning 'mistakes' into 'learning opportunities'
- ➜ Towards the end of their brokering remit, turning from 'process manager' to 'mentor'

All this requires considerable professional skill.

Brokering: Art and Science

Brokering is undoubtedly an 'art' (in that it requires imagination and intuition) but it is equally a 'science' (in that it requires being objective and systematic) – see Box G below. This may be an unfamiliar way of analysing professional skills and competencies but, hopefully, it conveys something of the balancing act a good broker will need to perform.

BOX G: BROKERING AS A BALANCE BETWEEN ART AND SCIENCE

BROKERING AS AN ART INVOLVES:	BROKERING AS A SCIENCE INVOLVES:
Insight, imagination and feeling	Knowledge, analysis and thinking
Vision (of the future)	Understanding (of the past)
People skills	Administrative skills
Active listening	Precise speaking
Personal engagement	Professional detachment

6. Mahatma Gandhi, *All Men are Brothers: Autobiographical Reflections*, The Continuum Publishing Company, 2002

Key Skills

Brokers need a wide range of skills and competencies to do their job well. A "Roles and Skills Self-assessment Tool" is available in *The Partnering Toolbook* [7]. This is designed as a tool for partners to encourage them to assess their own and other's roles in relation to the partnership and to work on developing their own partnering skills, but those acting as brokers may also find it useful.

There are four specific areas where brokers should strive to develop particular expertise:

1. **Facilitation**: To undertake successful convening and relationship-building (particularly in the early stages of a partnership), brokers will often need to manage early encounters between key players whether in the form of one-to-one meetings, small group activities or larger task-oriented workshops. Facilitation is not as daunting as many people think, it is simply a question of understanding the goal of the session and helping those involved to work systematically and successfully towards achieving that goal. (See Guidance Note 4: Facilitation Skills, page 39)

2. **Negotiation**: Brokers will need to help partners to differentiate between hardball negotiation (where everyone's objective is to have their own way no matter what the cost and where there are always winners and losers) and negotiation based on meeting each other's underlying interests (aiming at win-win-win scenarios for all players). To manage the latter type of negotiation, brokers need to create an atmosphere of open exploration and to exercise particular skills in sensitive questioning (to reveal underlying interests) and patient interpretation between partners that have differing imperatives and priorities.

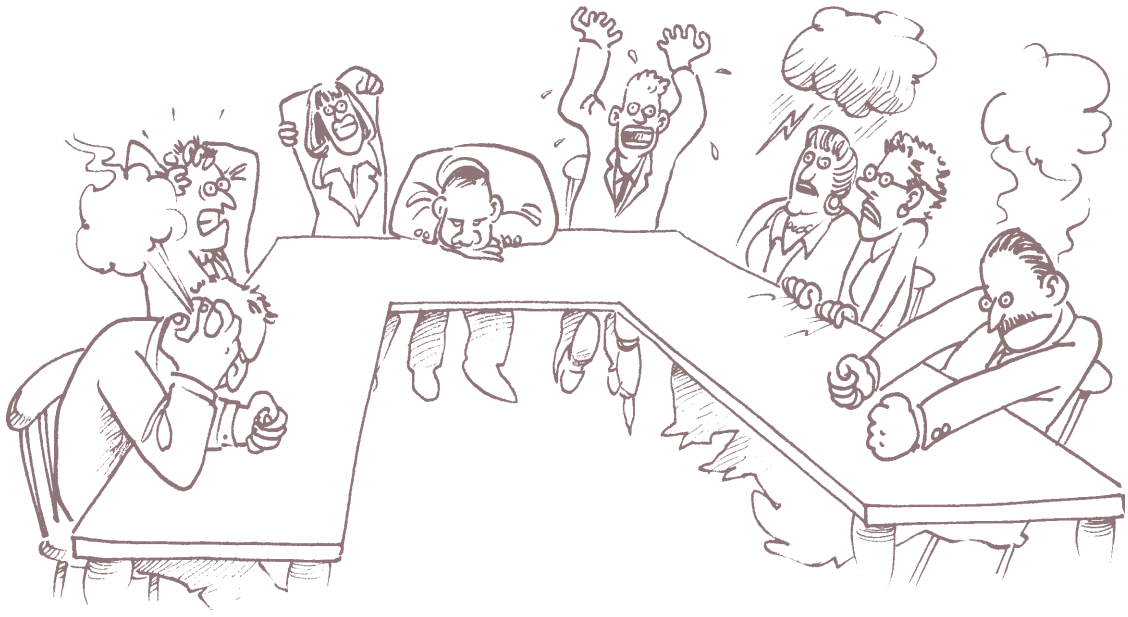
3. **Coaching**: As the partnership progresses, the broker has a new focus – transferring responsibilities to partners (or project staff). This involves stepping back from a front line role and working rather more behind the scenes to support and coach individual partners or staff in new skills. Guidance Note 9: Broker as Coach (page 77) explores some of the actions a broker can take to ensure others are well prepared to take on partnership-brokering responsibilities.

4. **Reviewing**: Even when partnerships are well-established they benefit from regular and creative attention to ensure that they remain animated and do not lose momentum. As someone with close knowledge of the partnership, the broker is uniquely placed to provide partners with opportunities to reflect on how the partnership is going and to support some form of regular review process that may lead to changes either within the partnership's structure / focus or in relation to project activities (see Guidance Note 9: Broker as Coach page 77).

7. Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, Published by GAIN, IBLF and UNDP, 2004

As a key part of the transference of roles and responsibilities, brokers need to become increasingly transparent in explaining what they are doing and why. This enables partners to understand better the brokering process and to learn in what ways their own behaviours and skills may need to be adapted if they are to take over many aspects of what has hitherto been the broker's role.

Guidance Note 4: Facilitation Skills



The facilitator's role is a demanding one – although those who do it well usually manage to make it look easy! Feelings in the group being facilitated may run high and antagonisms may be deep, so the facilitator requires both determination and sensitivity to the situation alongside a clear commitment to listening carefully (and mediating, if necessary). He / she also needs to have a good instinct for when to challenge or push forward the discussion and when to hold back and allow it to take its own course.

It may sometimes be better for the facilitator to give space for the group to work through disagreements, rather than to rescue the situation. Like many other aspects of facilitation, this requires the facilitator to 'read' the mood and capacity of the group accurately and to be prepared to carry the risk involved in a hands-off strategy.

Good facilitation is a balance between being tolerant and being tough. The skills required are very similar to those required of a good broker (See section 3) and it is likely that all brokers will need to feel comfortable with exercising facilitation skills at some time or other – perhaps especially at the exploratory and relationship-building stages of a partnership.

To those who feel that facilitation may not be one of their best brokering skills, we offer the following thoughts as encouragement:

- **There are many different ways to facilitate well**. As a general rule, it is best to build on your own professional competencies (for example, good organising ability, active listening skills or capacity for synthesising information) rather than trying to copy someone else's facilitation approach that may not suit you
- **Everyone can become better at facilitation** with practice and perseverance
- **Co-facilitating can take off some of the pressure** and add a useful further dimension (for example, a combination of internal broker and external facilitator or of external broker and internal nominee with proven facilitation skills from one of the partner organisations)

There may, however, be circumstances where even if you facilitate well you may not be the right person to facilitate that particular event or activity – these can include where you as broker:

- Have become (or are perceived by partners to be) too close to the issue
- Are seen as in some way part of the problem
- Need to be able to participate as one of the participants alongside partners (this may be particularly the case for internal brokers)

Whatever the circumstances are that make you an inappropriate choice as the facilitator for a particular session, it may fall to you in your brokering role to propose the appointment of someone else. If this is agreed, you may also need to be the appropriate person to work with, or on behalf of, the partners to identify and brief the person appointed.

Anyone new coming into the facilitation role will require:

- ➜ **Information** about the partnership (both written and verbal)
- ➜ **Opportunities** for meeting / consulting with key players prior to undertaking the facilitation
- ➜ **Terms of reference** for their role and clarity about objectives and desired outcomes / outputs from the session(s)
- ➜ **Clear lines of accountability** before, during and after the session(s)

GUIDELINES FOR GOOD PRACTICE:

All facilitators (whether brokers or external third parties) need to be able to:

- **Listen well** – including listening to what is not being said
- **Observe** how people are feeling, responding and relating to each other
- **Keep their opinions** to themselves
- **Think clearly** and take new ideas on board rapidly
- **Manage** complex situations without being dictatorial
- **Make decisions** about how to proceed in the light of what happens
- **Provide focus** – specifically to keep the group working to the goals of the session

They will also ideally have: a personal presence that gives those being facilitated full confidence that things are under control; ways of working that show discernment rather than judgement alongside management; and leadership skills that can be dedicated to serving the facilitation process and the goals of the session.

Good facilitation leaves people with a sense of having been:

- Listened to
- Actively / creatively engaged
- Well prepared for undertaking any agreed follow-up actions

Poor facilitation leaves participants in a state of irritation, confusion or dependency. It can have such a negative impact on working relationships that it can seriously undermine rather than strengthen the (potential or actual) partnership.

FIVE PRACTICAL TIPS:

1. **Design the session well in advance and in detail** – taking advice and seeking endorsement for your proposed structure and approach from key players
2. **Draw workshop participants actively into the discussion** – this may involve holding certain people back from dominating the proceedings
3. **Keep time meticulously** since this shows respect for everyone's other, probably equally pressing, commitments
4. **Use specific tools or techniques** to achieve the results that are required – making sure you prepare these well and explain them clearly. These might include:
   - ➜ Creating a series of ground rules with the group to ensure that the workshop proceeds with agreement on appropriate conduct – a particularly important ground rule might be 'showing respect to each other and to different points of view'
   - ➜ Setting up small group discussions or 'buzz groups' as well as plenary sessions to draw out the widest possible range of ideas and opinions
   - ➜ Using cards or post-it notes for people to write and display suggestions / commitments so that all perspectives are acknowledged and others can see them and react to them
   - ➜ Running a 'sky's the limit' brainstorm to stimulate radical new thinking

5. **Ensure appropriate records are kept** during and after the session – and make them available in an appropriate format to those who need to access them

As a broker, when you are not undertaking the role of facilitator, you might encourage the partners themselves to take it in turns to facilitate specific activities or meetings. Facilitation, like other partnering skills, may be something partners can usefully develop as part of their developing role in the partnership.

Decide when it is more appropriate for an external professional facilitator or the partners themselves to facilitate rather than you – and take the appropriate action (See also Guidance Note 8: Broker as Coach).

" The ideal facilitator is like a good navigator. Relatively unobtrusive, definitely hands-off but capable of ensuring the desired destination is reached quickly, by the best route available. They are often more tough than touchy-feely, concerned with ensuring a group meets its objectives rather than trying to keep everyone happy. It's an effective way of getting people to achieve what's wanted without appearing to tell them what to do and requires a combination of listening, questioning and refereeing abilities…"

Irene Krechowieka, artist facilitator[8]

8. Irene Krechowieka, artist facilitator. Quoted in the UK's Guardian newspaper, November 2004

Using partnership-building language

Brokers need to be excellent communicators: knowing what, when and how to translate from one partner to another and effectively managing the exchange of knowledge and experience between partners themselves or between partners and other stakeholders. This requires considerable ability to listen (in order to know what communications may be needed at any particular point) as well as skills in speaking and writing both clearly and concisely.

Sensitivity to language – specifically selecting words and concepts that are likely to draw people together rather than antagonise and alienate – is vital. Consider, for example, the difference between using the term ‘benefit’ as opposed to ‘profit’ (defined as the same thing in the dictionary but now with quite different connotations) or discussing how to ‘resource’ a project rather than simply how to ‘fund’ it or working with partners to find ‘complementary’ in addition to ‘common’ objectives.

Use of language extends also to record keeping – a major responsibility for most brokers. It is essential that records of meetings, activities, outcomes and reviews are kept and, most importantly, that they are kept in a format that is appropriate for different audiences (whether partners, other stakeholders or a wider public).

Guidance Note 5: Record keeping



It is an essential part of any broker's role to ensure that accurate and appropriate records are kept – both general (in terms of the partnership's evolving history) and specific (decisions and commitments made by partners).

There are a number of different types of record in the life of a partnership and these, of course, need to be 'fit for purpose' (see pages 46-48).

Partners have different public relations requirements and brokers may need to help partners understand each others' enthusiasm for – or concern about – publicity.

Brokers can take a lead in ensuring that record keeping becomes a creative and valuable contribution to the health and wellbeing of a partnership instead of simply a chore or (more seriously) a cause of controversy.

"A broker can be invaluable in urging more creativity in record keeping and in identifying those individuals who are discerning, efficient and imaginative in recording and disseminating information. Think of all those associated with the partnership (partners, stakeholders, beneficiaries) as an endless supply of people with memories to share and (sometimes good, sometimes not so good but nevertheless important) stories to tell."

External broker providing partnering skills training in the USA

TYPES OF RECORD THAT MAY BE VALUABLE IN PARTNERSHIPS

TYPE	PURPOSE	BROKER'S NOTES
Letter of intent / MoU	• A document that indicates early intentions to partner and creates a foundation for building a robust partnering relationship	This can be quite informal but should be in a style that all those who sign feel comfortable with. It is useful to agree a common theme or vision statement around which the partners can seek to collaborate. Drawing up this document can be an early exercise in bringing potential partners together to explore their diverse and common interests.
Partnering agreement	• A more formal and binding document where roles, responsibilities and decision-making procedures are agreed	Once a partnership has been agreed in principle, it is important to draw up a more formal document to underpin the longer-term working relationship. Partners are likely to have their own views about the nature of this agreement, but brokers should urge an agreement that still offers opportunity for further innovation, review and – if appropriate – revision so that the partnership remains dynamic over time.
Minutes of meetings	• Essential records setting out all decisions / actions agreed and flagging up any outstanding issues. Intended for those present at the meeting to have a point of reference; for those who were absent to know what transpired; and as essential information that may be shared with key others (by agreement)	Minutes should record all main points and any significant divergent views but they do not need to report everything that was said. The outcomes and decisions from the meeting should be clear for readers (even those who were not present) and should, ideally, attach names and timetables to all action points. A broker can help to ensure that minutes are written up and formally agreed by all those who were present and then circulated to those eligible to receive them as soon after the meeting as possible. Minutes are likely to be the place where some key instructions to the broker are recorded – it is therefore in the broker's own interest to make sure that they are accurate.
Partnership ground rules	• A list of principles and working practices that are agreed by partners as a foundation for the smooth functioning of their working relationship	This is something a broker may suggest at an early stage of the partnering cycle. In fact, exploring what ground rules would be appropriate, can provide a very useful partnership-building exercise since different partners are likely to have different suggestions. Ground rules might include: – Respecting / valuing partner diversity – Being open / transparent – Not 'going public' on issues without pre-agreement Once ground rules are agreed, the broker (and, indeed partners themselves) can use them as reminders in the event of anyone deviating from agreed ways of working. ➜

TYPE	PURPOSE	BROKER'S NOTES
Project description	• A final version of a detailed project proposal that should also include aims, targets, management arrangements and a timetable for delivery • Clarifies partners commitments • May form the basis for raising further resources or securing buy-in from other potential partners	It is likely that this will be drawn up by (or handed over to) a project manager appointed by the partners or by one of the partner organisations on behalf of the partnership. The broker may be in a position to offer advice or to research similar projects that have been developed elsewhere to provide inspiration or confidence. The broker may also play a part in adapting the project description for different purposes.
Resource records	• A record (possibly a 'map') capturing the range of resources needed to deliver the programme of work • A record (possibly in the form of a table) to track specific resource commitments that partners are making	A full project description will include a detailed picture of the nature and quantity of resources required for implementation. Brokers may be central to engaging partners imaginatively in this process as well as helping partners to consider what resources (over and above cash) they are able to bring to the project. It is important for partners to make tangible resource commitments and it is also important that these commitments are a) realistic and b) delivered. Brokers may be able to help on both these fronts.
Newsletter	• A regular update of developments aimed primarily at partners, external donors and other key stakeholders to ensure people are informed of progress and inspired / encouraged to remain actively engaged with the programme of work	Options for regular newsletter-type communications are varied. Increasingly these are in electronic rather than hard copy format since this is cheaper to produce and easier to disseminate. There are however some advantages to hard copy communications since these can feel more substantial and more permanent (if kept, they can provide a valuable record of the programmes over time. There are also advantages to more dynamic formats – visual rather than written and face-to-face rather than through a written or electronic medium. Other options include: presentations; posters; photomontages; exhibitions; site visits; CD rom; video reports; storytelling; and performance.
Case studies	• A record of the partnership and / or the project's history to make information available to external agencies, key stakeholders and others operating in partnerships elsewhere	These are important both internally (for example, for new partners entering the partnership once a project is well established) and externally (for policy makers who may be important in helping sustain the project outcomes beyond the life of the partnership). Brokers can help partners to recognise the value and range of purposes for case studies and to engage partners actively in compiling and disseminating them. ➜

TYPE	PURPOSE	BROKER'S NOTES
Information for the general public / media	• An agreed statement or story developed on behalf of the partnership for a wider audience in order to celebrate achievements, challenge conventional approaches or to persuade others to try this approach.	It is crucial that any public information is accurate and appropriate. It is also essential that all partners (and any other stakeholders likely to be affected) are in agreement with the decision to publicise any aspect of the partnership.

USEFUL RULES IN RECORD KEEPING

1. **Be imaginative** about how you (and others) record events, meetings and project activities. Use flip charts, ad hoc notes, logbooks, audiotapes, videotapes, photographs, cartoons or drawings – anything that will capture and communicate information more vividly
2. **Be selective** – only record information that is useful and relevant. Nobody ever wants to read pages and pages of what everyone said, rather it is more useful to provide information that prompts and reminds readers of key issues discussed and activities agreed or undertaken
3. **Choose good record keepers** – since record keeping is a highly skilled role, always allocate it to an experienced and confident colleague (not the most inexperienced, junior member of the team)
4. **Disseminate information appropriately** to meet the needs of different audiences including: partners; partner organisations; external donors; public officials; project staff and beneficiaries; media; reviewers and project evaluators; and other partnership practitioners
5. **Remember to double-check** that all partners (and other key stakeholders) are comfortable with the communications and record-keeping approaches
6. **Take time to educate** all those involved in the value of good record keeping to enhance the efficiency, effectiveness and impact of the partnership
7. **Build storytelling skills** with all those involved to help materials come alive since every bit of partnering activity – if one thinks of a partnership as a journey where those travelling together may have had to overcome insurmountable odds – is, after all, a story worth telling

Further Communications Challenges

A number of further communications challenges arise from the partnership paradigm itself. The broker needs to be able to use excellent communication skills to address the following **internal** communications challenges:

- **Changing fixed mindsets:** The best way to challenge fixed positions may be by holding a one-day event where a range of key players with different perspectives actually meet and explore each other's point of view in a structured and well-facilitated workshop. Another alternative is to arrange and manage visits or exchanges between organisations / sectors for key players to get genuine insight into each other's values, drivers and priorities.

- **Helping the partners to manage multiple demands on their time:** Most partners undertake their partnering activities as an 'add-on' to their normal organisational responsibilities. The broker needs to be sensitive to the stress that individual partners face and help them to manage the multiple demands on their time and to communicate their role in the partnership to those trying to divert them to other priorities.

- **Synthesising information:** Taking data from many sources, drawing it together and playing it back to partners (or key others) in ways that help to summarise, clarify and take things forward.

Additional **external** communications challenges for the broker can include:

- **Dealing with scepticism:** Listen carefully to what those with a sceptical perspective have to say (their views may be well founded and may provide valuable material that the broker needs to do the job well) and aim to deepen their understanding of what the partnership seeks to achieve by engaging them constructively in work in progress.

- **Handling the pressure to 'go public'**: Sometimes there is pressure (from one or other partner, from external donors or from the media) to present the partnership and its programme of work before it has had time to become properly established or proven. The broker can provide a useful buffer between partner organisations with different external relations aspirations or between partners and other stakeholders. In any event, it is important to encourage partners to be modest in their claims for the partnership and to only 'go public' when there is a story to tell and when all partners agree that the time is right.

- **Avoiding 'spin'**: We live and work in a world that expects virtually everything to be presented as high-profile advertising even when this is quite inappropriate and risks making most public pronouncements meaningless. Brokers can help partners to avoid this trap by encouraging a low-key and more

understated approach to public relations. In the long run, when there is a real story to tell, it will be experienced as genuinely impressive and actually worth listening to.

Further issues to do with the broker's role in communications are covered in the next section (page 69).

Professional Integrity

Whatever skills and competencies a broker may (or may not) possess, there are certain personal / professional qualities that will carry them a long way in their brokering role. These include:

- **Dedication** to core partnering principles
- **Equanimity** in the face of pressure
- **Trustworthiness** by maintaining an independent and fair stance

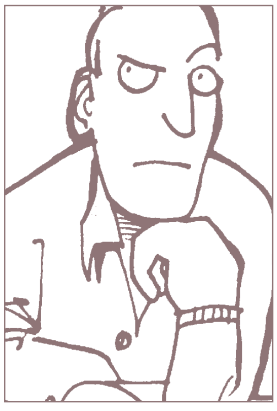
Partnership brokers need to commit to a high level of professional integrity. In the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme, this is considered so important that accreditation is only awarded to successful candidates if they are prepared to sign a set of eight principles that will continue to underpin their professional practice. One of these principles is concerned with making a commitment to continuous learning.

See Guidance Note 6: Learning from Experience, for suggestions about how to create and maintain an action learning approach in the role of broker.

Guidance Note 6: Learning from Experience







It is essential for brokers to learn – both from their own and from others' experiences in the brokering role. This enables them to improve their understanding and their skills as well as to keep up-to-date with new partnering / brokering practices.

This is not just a question of maintaining a high standard of technical competence but also indicative of an ongoing commitment to building professional integrity and standards.

LEARNING ON THE JOB

In every aspect of the broker's role there are multiple learning opportunities – indeed, a good broker never stops listening, observing and reflecting on all aspects of the partnership as it progresses and changes over time. In a sense, a broker is continuously using action learning to inform their professional practice. As the term 'action learning' implies, learning is an active, not passive, process. Experience, therefore, needs to be actively sought, recorded and analysed if it is to be translated into useful lessons.

One way for a broker to capture and transform experience is to keep a form of logbook in which to record impressions, specific events or interesting conversations. The process of selecting what to record and exploring why that data is significant is a review and analysis process that can be translated into more considered responses or actions.

WHAT IS A LOGBOOK?

The term 'log' originates from a 'log line' used on ships to measure the speed at which a ship is going.
A ship's 'logbook' is a book in which details of a voyage are recorded; a traveller's diary; a regularly maintained record of progress.
Source: OXFORD ENGLISH DICTIONARY

Some brokers use logbooks as a way of planning their strategies or activities and then reviewing how well the strategy has worked out and what might have gone better. Others have a standard set of questions they ask themselves retrospectively (perhaps at the end of each week).

Another option is to use the idea of 'mapping' – which is a more visual way to record data and to work out interrelationships between people or events.

A BROKER'S 'MAP' OF A VISIT TO A PARTNERSHIP PROJECT IN EGYPT



SEEKING HELP FROM OTHERS

A broker should never feel that asking for help is a sign of professional weakness or incompetence. It is far more likely to be evidence of appropriate modesty and a realistic appreciation of when someone else may have something valuable to contribute from which the broker can learn and indirectly develop their own skills and competencies. The broker can actively seek out informal teachers or mentors with specialist skills and experience from whom they can set up appropriate learning opportunities.

ACCESSING OTHER LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

Information

All brokers benefit from reading widely about the partnership paradigm or any of a large range of topics that have a bearing on partnering. In addition to the growing number of specialist publications, there is a mass of material now available on websites (including websites that are entirely dedicated to sustainable development partnerships). Several websites feature case studies of partnership initiatives and – slowly – these are becoming more comprehensive, revealing and useful (rather than somewhat superficial public relations exercises). Many websites also offer access to networks where brokers can contact practitioners in different parts of the world who may have inspirational stories to tell or simply sound advice on a specific problem (see the Resource List for some examples).

EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING

Brokers can gain a lot from visiting other examples of partnership projects in action – preferably over a few days to gain more insight than a briefer visit would offer. Another alternative might be to arrange a job swap or a secondment – perhaps with one of the partner organisations – to understand a different way of working from the inside rather than merely from observation.

FORMAL TRAINING

It is clear that brokers need many different skills and competencies (see Section 3). Many of these are not unique to brokering and training may be available in the form of a short course provided locally – they are usually good value and easily accessible. Relevant short courses include:

- Assertiveness
- Facilitation
- Negotiation
- Mediation
- Creative writing
- Management

It is also an option for brokers to apply for one of the increasing number of specialist partnership training courses – make sure to check that the proposed course is relevant (get a view of someone who has taken the course themselves). It may be possible for the partnership budget to cover the cost of the broker's participation or for one of the partners to provide a full or part-bursary.

CREATING CRITICAL FRIENDSHIPS

The concept of critical friendship is becoming more widely known as a way of professionals in different spheres offering each other (usually on a one-to-one basis) an ongoing and mutually beneficial working relationship. Critical friendships can be conducted face-to-face, by phone or by email.

Critical friendship:

- Critical friendship provides an opportunity to support and learn from each other in an informal and strictly confidential arrangement
- Critical friendship can best be characterised as a professional working relationship that is conducted quite separately from day-to-day working relationships in which there is an equal emphasis on talking and listening (it is a two-way dialogue)
- The skills required for successful critical friendship are:
  - Active listening (even in emails)
  - Precise speaking (even when writing)
  - Suspension of assumptions / preconceptions
  - An unhurried, non-judgemental attitude

"My professional background was working in the NGO sector before I came to this work. I was probably fairly typical of my NGO colleagues – quite anti-business and unwilling to accept that the business community had any positive role to play in the things I cared about. I thought long and hard before working with business… what changed my mind was being offered an opportunity to visit and spend some time at a big steel production operation.

I was simply stunned by the steel production process, the numbers of people employed in useful work from very poor communities and, above all, by understanding for the first time the huge benefits the production of steel had brought to my country. That was some 10 years ago and I have been committed to working on partnerships for sustainable development ever since."

External broker working in India

Much of this publication focuses on what it takes to be a good broker. Perhaps (by way of comparison), it makes sense to describe the characteristics of a bad broker (See Box H)!

BOX H: CHARACTERISTICS OF A BAD BROKER

Bad brokers are those who are:

- **Bossy towards partners**
- **Possessive about the partnership**
- **Controlling of the decision-making process**
- **Conceited about good results**
- **Incapable of letting go and handing over to others**

Being 'good enough'

A partnership broker faces multiple demands on their time – often expected to be all things to all people by being endlessly available, flexible and patient (illustrated below).



When – despite the broker's best endeavours – the partnership is going badly, a further hazard may be that the partners use the broker as a scapegoat for their own failings as partners. It may be important in these circumstances for brokers to remind partners:

- ➜ What is and what is not within the agreed brokering remit
- ➜ That they (the partners) are responsible for prioritising their demands and expectations of the broker
- ➜ That brokers are also only human.

We all fall short of our own and others' expectations – sometimes quite often – and brokers are no exception. To help those brokers who strive for excellence and become despondent when they feel they have fallen short of expectations and their own professional standards, we have borrowed a concept from the psychologist Bruno Bettelheim in his book, *A Good Enough Parent* [9], to reassure brokers that sometimes it is OK to be 'good enough'.

All (good enough) brokers have it within their power to contribute creatively to radical change, and they will do so (whether as individual practitioners or through brokering units / intermediary organisations) by:

- **Carrying** the vision of the partnership on behalf of the partners at all times
- **Demonstrating** continuing commitment to the goals of the partnership
- **Exhibiting** warm engagement, enthusiasm and confidence
- **Maintaining** a sense of realism about what is possible
- **Understanding** the boundaries for their role as brokers

Remember:

All individuals have strengths and weaknesses and everyone is better at some tasks than others. Most skills can be improved with practice. If, however, you reach your own personal / professional limit, don't be cautious about asking for help or even appointing someone else to cover a specific role or task. This is ultimately more professional than doing something badly. Good brokers knows their limitations!

9. Bruno Bettelheim, *A Good Enough Parent,* Thames and Hudson, 1987

4 Brokers in Action

"Can we rely on it that a 'turning around' will be accomplished by enough people quickly enough to save the modern world? This question is often asked, but whatever answer is given to it will mislead. The answer 'yes' would lead to complacency; the answer 'no' to despair. It is desirable to leave these perplexities behind us and get down to work…"

EF Schumacher [10]

In this section, we explore the changing nature of the relationship of the broker (or brokers) to the partners (and the partnership) as well as the various roles a broker can play during the life cycle of a partnership. Phase-by-phase we consider objectives, key tasks and considerations as well as address how a broker can take stock before moving (themselves and the partners) onto next steps.

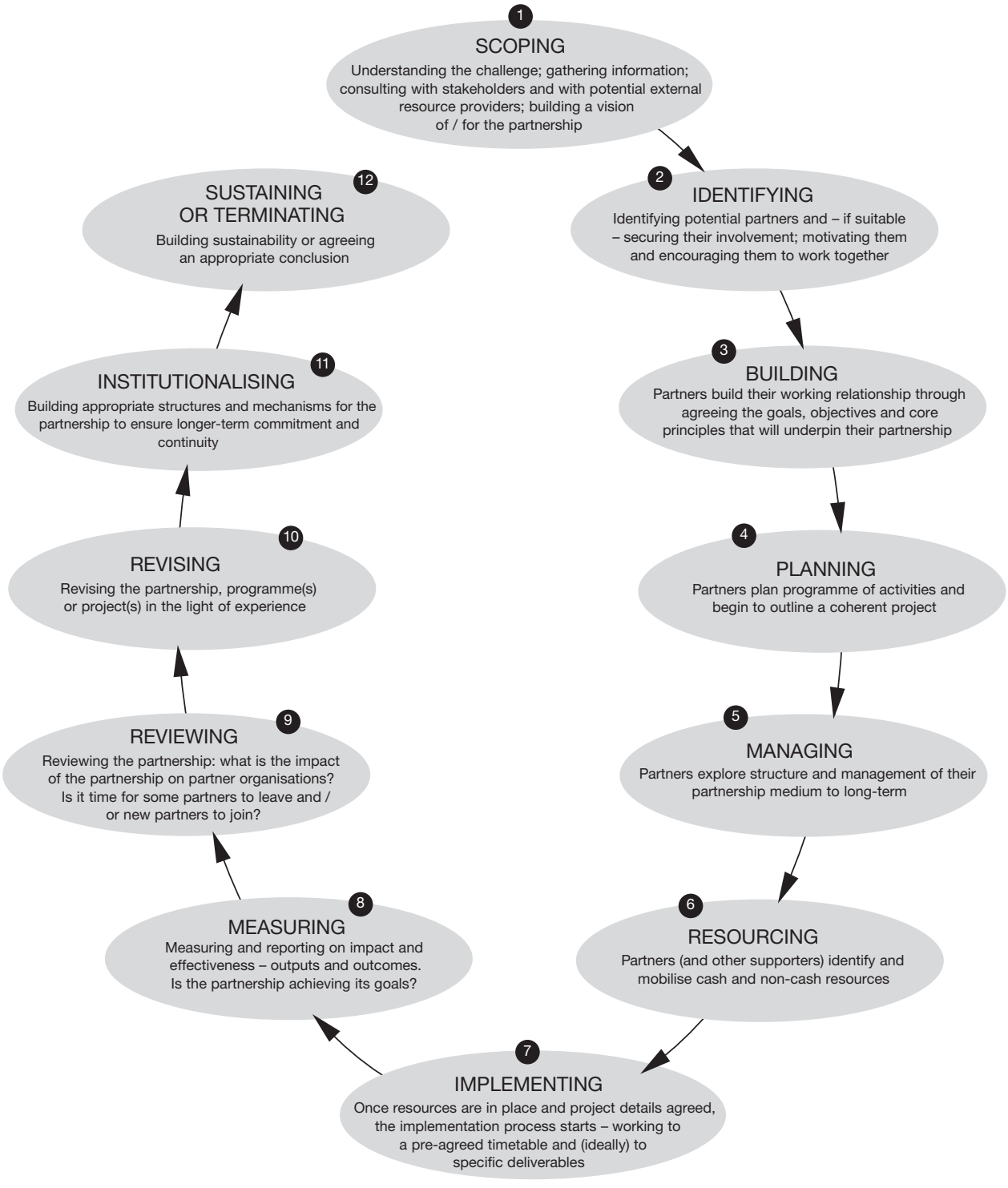
The Broker's Role in the Partnering Cycle

The partnering cycle is a framework designed to highlight the progression and complexity of a partnership over time. It also provides a basis for understanding the changes in management priorities for the partners as their partnership progresses.

This framework is summarised in Box I.

10. EF Schumacher, *A Guide for the Perplexed*, Jonathan Cape, London, 1973

BOX I: THE PARTNERING CYCLE [11]



11. Ros Tennyson, *The Partnering Toolbook*, Published by GAIN, IBLF and UNDP, 2004

Of course, no partnership actually progresses as neatly from one stage to the next as this framework implies. Securing resources, for example, may be an essential precondition before the partners can justify giving detailed attention to planning projects or programmes of work and therefore come somewhat earlier in the partnering cycle. Priorities are inevitably identified differently by every partnership and activities will be undertaken in the order that seems most appropriate to the partners.

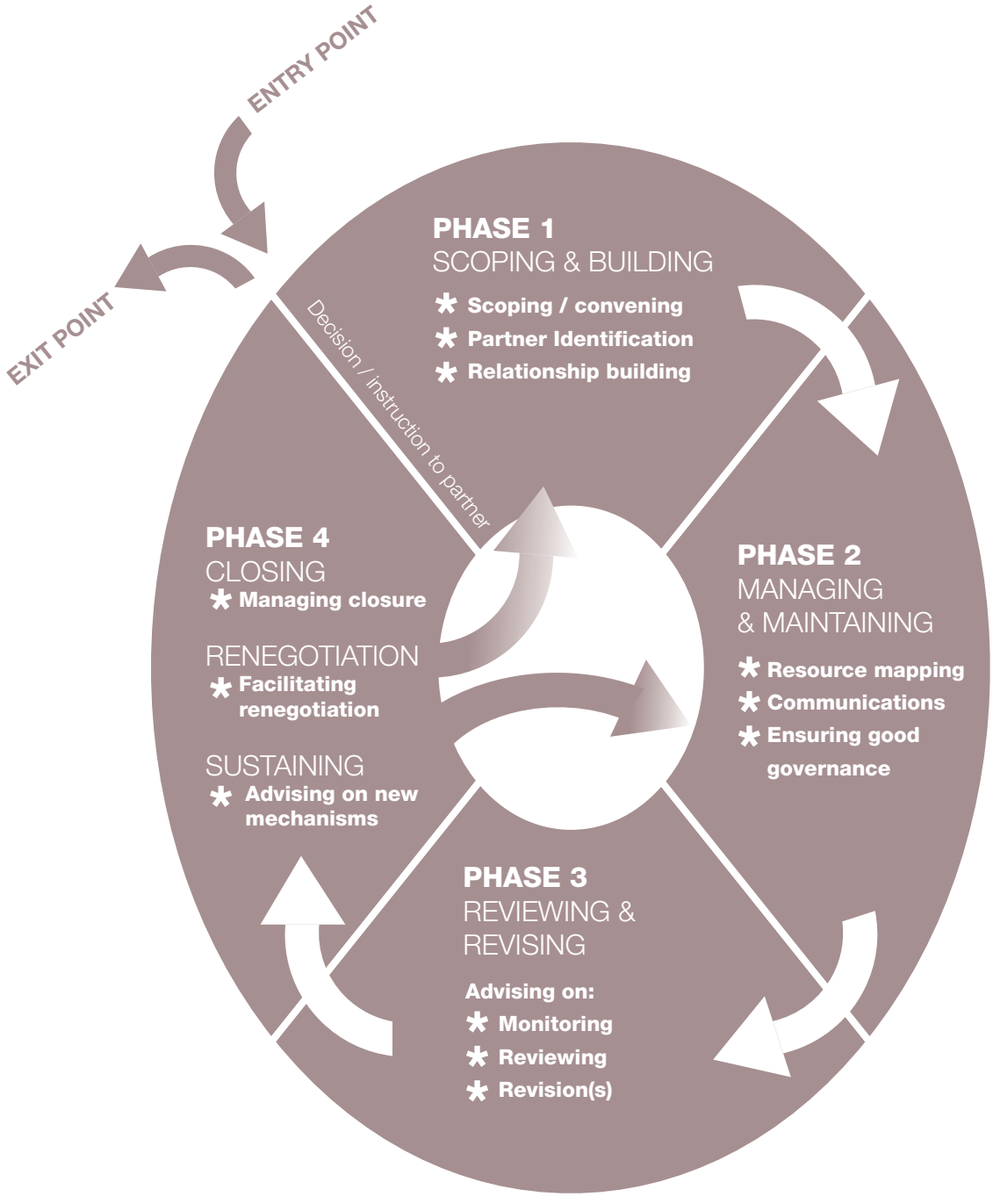
Some stages in the partnering cycle may not, in fact, be necessary – for example, 'scoping' and 'identifying' in situations where the scope of work and / or the partners are predetermined. In any case, some of the stages outlined are not necessarily one-off activities, several are continuous (eg 'managing') while others recur at regular intervals (eg 'reviewing'). Whatever their limitations, such frameworks can be invaluable by giving a complex process some useful structure and clarity.

It is the partners themselves who need to understand and work through the various stages of their particular partnership – and, of course, partners do so (consciously or unconsciously, with or without the benefit of a framework). But those operating as partnership brokers do have a responsibility to be one step ahead in helping partners to:

- **Anticipate** what is required to move the partnership forward effectively
- **Recognise** when they have missed a vital element of the partnering process
- **Understand** when it is a good time for them to take stock of the partner relationship or
- **Know** whether or not it is right to change arrangements or direction

Brokers, therefore, need to be well attuned to the different phases of the partnering cycle and to understand clearly how they, in their brokering role, can support the partnering process in different ways during each phase. These phases are represented below as a schematic, together with an indication of when – and in what ways – brokers can play a range of useful roles (See: Box J).

BOX J: THE PARTNERING CYCLE AND THE BROKER'S CHANGING ROLE



* = broker's potential tasks

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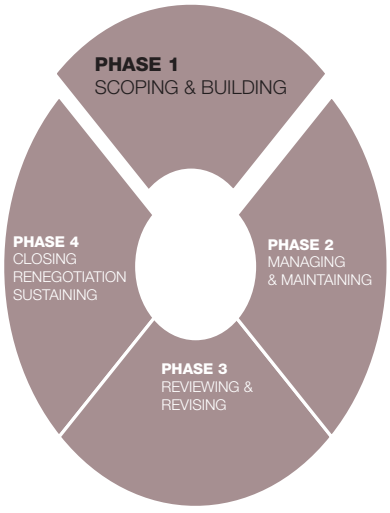
Phase I: SCOPING & BUILDING



THE STORY STARTS…

…with a pre-partnership phase in which a broker may find they have to educate others in the **idea** of partnering. Indeed, it may be quite a challenge for several of the key stakeholders and potential partners to consider collaborating in activities that have, typically, been the sole responsibility of a single sector.

Where a new approach is unfamiliar, there is a risk of scepticism (at best) and outright hostility (at worst) either of which the broker may have to deal with head-on as a precursor to even the first stages of partnership building.

The earliest form of scoping, therefore, is to assess how much time will need to be invested in building both an understanding of the potential of a partnering approach and active enthusiasm for the idea.

BROKER'S OBJECTIVES:

- To understand the scope and nature of the sustainable development challenge and whether a partnership approach is appropriate or possible within the specific context
- To identify partners and help to build a strong working relationship between them, capable of withstanding difficulties and challenges as their partnership commitments grow
- To explore and agree with partners the outline design and development of a project or programme of work

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
SCOPING & CONVENING • Research the development issue (a type of needs analysis) and the key players who are or should be involved • Explore and confirm that a partnering approach is more likely to be successful or appropriate than any possible alternative approach • Arrange / convene meetings with key players including potential partners, other key stakeholders, external donors and policy makers (see Guidance Note 7 on Designing Workshops)	This involves: ➜ Understanding the nature of the challenge ➜ Gathering information ➜ Consulting with stakeholders ➜ Consulting with potential external resource providers ➜ Helping to build a vision of / for the partnership
PARTNER IDENTIFICATION • Identify and confirm which organisations will become partners (and which will be supporters, donors, champions, interested bystanders but not partners) • Explore continuing roles of other (non-partner) key players / stakeholders • Encourage partners to commit resources (particularly their time and authority) to the partnership in its earliest stages	This involves: ➜ Identifying potential partners and – if suitable – securing their involvement ➜ Clarifying other non-partner roles ➜ Motivating partners and key others to become actively engaged and encouraging them to invest time and effort into the partnership

continued

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
RELATIONSHIP BUILDING • Address any concerns and conflicts of interest • Agree some initial ground rules and operational principles for the partnership • Secure the partners' agreement on project objectives, as well as an outline project design and implementation plan	This involves: ➜ Using every opportunity (meetings and events) to help partners to build their working relationship ➜ Encouraging and enabling partners to be transparent and open with each other about any (actual or perceived) difficulties ➜ Pushing partners to making tangible commitments to the project / programme of work

TAKING STOCK

Questions for the broker to consider before partners move into detailed project planning and delivery mode include:

- Are all partners equally committed to the goals and focus of the partnership?
- Which partners are active and which passive in pushing the agenda forward? Does this need adjusting?
- Has a way of working together been achieved that is comfortable and appropriate for all partners?
- Are the partners beginning to operate within the partnership as one body rather than as separate entities?

Not all (obvious or underlying) issues need to be fully resolved by the end of Phase 1, but the broker should feel confident that partners have established a sufficiently robust working relationship to face any future relationship challenges (whether internal or external to the partnership).

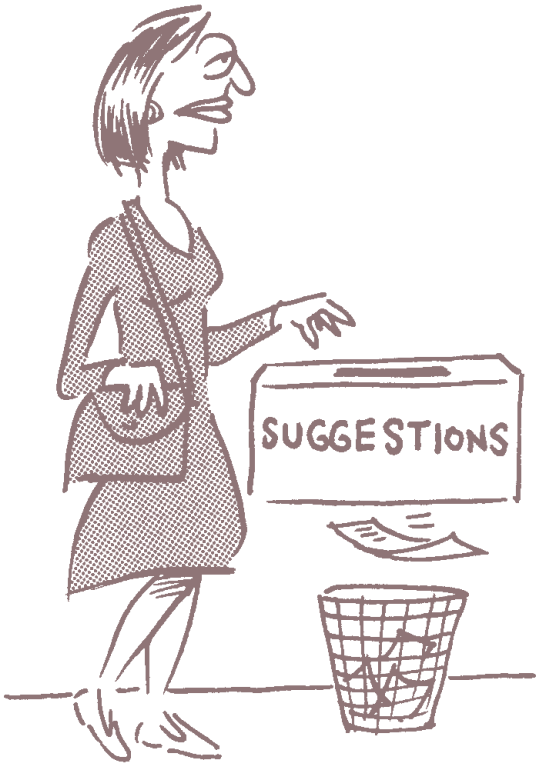
How will a broker know whether the partners have a robust working relationship?
Evidence to look for could include:

- Partners working more proactively on behalf of the partnership
- Reliable follow-up by partners on commitments and agreed actions
- Realistic expectations of the partnership, other partners and the broker

NEXT STEPS:

➜ Ensure an initial agreement to collaborate is in place that outlines:
  – A shared goal
  – Shared and specific (to each partner) objectives
  – Commitments and roles for all partners
➜ Secure buy-in on the project's outline development, management and implementation
➜ Identify and allocate (internal to the partnership) or appoint (external to the partnership) a manager for the proposed project

Guidance Note 7: Designing Workshops



A broker may not always be the best person to take the lead in developing and / or facilitating a workshop but in some circumstances they are. At the very least, the broker will need to be familiar with what a workshop can achieve and have an understanding of how workshops can make a useful contribution to the partnership at different stages in the partnering cycle.

In a workshop with small numbers (for example, a workshop for established partners who are used to working together) a broker who is already associated with the partnership may indeed be the ideal person to develop and facilitate the session. A more open-ended public workshop, however, is likely to require advanced facilitation skills – which the broker may not have. In this case, the broker may take a lead in identifying, appointing and briefing an external facilitator who has the required expertise and experience.

WHAT IS A WORKSHOP?

A workshop is a form of meeting that involves a group of people (more than four and less than 100) in a participatory format. It is generally used where a more formal meeting would be inadequate or inappropriate. Carefully developed and designed, it can bring unusual combinations of people together to explore issues and ideas in an open-ended way. Managed well, a workshop can achieve a great deal in a short space of time. It can also energise and enthuse participants in ways that invite more adventurous thinking, stronger commitment and / or further active engagement.

Workshop approaches are increasingly used in the partnership paradigm to:

- **Promote the idea of partnering** – whether at local, national or international levels – in an exploratory, pre-partnership phase
- **Build partner relationships** – using workshop activities to create better understanding of diverse interests and values
- **Develop project commitment** – for example, by mapping the resources needed for a programme of work and what each partner can contribute
- **Tackle a key issue or a problem** that is impacting the partnership and needs attention for the working relationship to proceed productively
- **Conduct partnership reviews** – where partners review together the effectiveness of their working relationship and how they can use review findings to improve the partnership
- **Share aims and achievements** of the partnership between partners and other stakeholders

WHO?

Anyone involved in the partnering process can propose that a workshop may be useful at any particular point. The person who proposes the idea may, however, not be the right individual (or from the most appropriate organisation) to lead in its design and delivery. In any event, it is a good idea to consult widely to assess what buy-in there is for the idea from those who might be the participants. The broker may be the best person to lead such a consultation process.

Once it is clear that a workshop would be a useful activity, decisions need to be made about who will develop the idea, how participants will be selected and who will send out the invitations and in what format. In addition to participants, there may be some value in inviting selected people as participant observers (for example, external donors or potential new partners).

Once people have agreed to participate, workshop organisers may decide to contact all (or at least some) of them in advance of the workshop to explain its aims in more detail and to solicit their inputs. This is usually a good way to maximise the value of the workshop itself, in the sense that participants come better informed about what to expect, are more engaged in the theme and thus more prepared to get actively involved in the workshop process.

WHEN?

Timing can be critical and it is important to assess whether or not the timing is right for a workshop (as opposed to a more high-profile event or a more conventional formal meeting). Once a workshop is agreed in principle, an appropriate date should be selected and notified to the target participant group well in advance. Consideration should be given to the actual length of the proposed workshop (preferably more than three hours and less than three days). Take ‘soundings’ from key target participants to help arrive at the right decisions with regards to decisions about when and how long.

WHAT?

Any workshop should have an overarching theme and a clear focus aiming at tangible outcomes and outputs. Where possible, the theme and some overarching objectives should be included in the letter of invitation. The workshop should be planned well to ensure there is a clear sense of progression, achievable goals / outputs as well as key roles to be taken by different people (including guest speakers and the participants themselves) who should be well briefed about what they are being asked to do in advance of the workshop.

The workshop design should strive to achieve a balance between:

- Small-group and larger-group activities
- Formal inputs and open-ended discussion
- Structure and flexibility

WHERE?

The venue for any workshop is very important and can have a major influence on a workshop's success. Sometimes the impersonal (for example, a hotel or conference centre) is more appropriate than somewhere strongly associated with a specific partner. Alternatively, the workshop may benefit from taking place in a project setting or in a venue with an added and relevant dimension (for example, a museum or a heritage centre).

Refreshments are important and this may also provide an opportunity for some more interesting ideas – like special food prepared by project beneficiaries or local small-scale entrepreneurs.

HOW?

To be effective, a workshop needs to be well managed. There may be a number of different roles (the actual number depends on the scale and complexity of the workshop) including those of:

- **Host** – the person who welcomes participants and closes the session
- **Facilitators / Moderators** – those who manage the workshop process, plenary sessions or small group discussions
- **Rapporteurs / Record keepers** – those who report back (verbally) from working groups or who are responsible for capturing plenary discussions (on a flip chart) or who keep a written record of the meeting (on a computer)
- **Translators** (if needed) – remember to brief them with any key words (eg 'partnership'!) that are particularly important to be interpreted accurately
- **Support team** – including audio-visual technicians (if necessary) and people available to run errands and provide administrative or organisational back-up

How should the room for the workshop best be set up? The facilitator, in consultation with those organising or hosting the workshop, will need to decide whether:

- **Seating** will be 'theatre-style' (facing forwards towards a platform) or in a semi-circle / circle or whether more will be achieved if participants are seated 'café-style' (around tables)
- **Seating arrangements** will be changed as the workshop progresses and different arrangements become more suitable
- **Small-group sessions** will take place in different areas of the same large room (as 'buzz groups') or separated from each other in different rooms (as 'break out' groups)
- **Refreshments** will be served formally (at tables with seating plans) or informally (stand up buffet)

It also helps if all the rooms are pleasant workspaces (with natural light; fresh air; flowers; good temperature) and that the technical equipment needed is available and in good working order. It may also be a good idea to complement the workshop itself with an exhibition of relevant photographs, posters or case studies that illustrate the theme or give participants further useful points of reference or relevant information that may enhance their understanding or add new material to the discussions.

COSTS

Workshops cost money (of course the actual amount varies according to scale, venue and duration) and how any workshop is to be resourced is a critical early question. Costs can be met by any of the following methods:

- From the partnership's core budget
- By donation (cash) or 'gift in-kind' (eg venue or refreshments) from one or more of the partner organisations
- Funding from local, regional, national government sources (particularly where the workshop is seen as having strategic value for the locality / region / country)
- Raising external funds (particularly for a large-scale workshop that is seen to be of wider national or international value or to tackle a particularly important sustainable development issue)
- Participants being asked to pay a fee for their participation

FOLLOW UP

In addition to agreeing action points for the participants themselves, there may well be follow-up activities for the facilitator. These can range from informal feedback about the venue and the session itself to more formal observations and recommendations for the organisers or partners. Whatever follow-up facilitators are required to undertake, make sure their commitments are completed as speedily as possible to encourage participants themselves to keep up the momentum for action generated by the workshop.

"Early on, the partners agreed that we would adopt a proactive relationship with the communities we were aiming to help. We undertook a number of consultation workshops in and around where they lived and worked. Out of this it was agreed to create a Community Foundation as a mechanism for the partnership, with the trustees being nominated annually by the community. Some years later, it still works really well – although quite differently to any other structure my company is involved with.

As far as I am concerned, the key word is 'consultation'. Consult, consult, consult… there is no such thing as a unilateral partnership!"

Internal broker operating in South Africa

EVALUATION

Most workshop design includes some form of review – often immediate and conducted as a brief, verbal feedback discussion towards the end of the session. Sometimes participants are asked to complete a brief questionnaire before they leave, though this risks being a bit heavy-handed. It is becoming more common to ask for feedback one or two weeks after the session. This can be done by phone, email or letter and it offers a useful opportunity to get back in touch with participants and remind them of any action points they agreed to undertake as well as being more likely to provide a more measured view of the workshop's value.

USEFUL EVALUATION QUESTIONS:

- Please give your views of the workshop's overall structure and content
  – What did you find most useful?
  – What did you find least useful?
- In what ways did the workshop achieve its objectives?
- In what ways did the workshop achieve your objectives?
- How effective were those in key roles? (Facilitator? Guest speaker? Rapporteur?)
- How appropriate was the venue? (With detailed questions, if required)
- What actions will you take / have you taken as a result of this workshop?
- Do you have any further thoughts on follow-up?

SAMPLE DESIGN FOR AN EXPLORATORY CROSS-SECTOR WORKSHOP

Session	Activity	Facilitation notes
1	**GETTING STARTED** • Welcomes and introductions • Outline workshop objectives and structure • Develop and agree some ground rules • Introduction to organisers / broker / facilitator(s)	• Create an appropriate atmosphere (somewhat formal to start with) • Ensure everyone understands the theme, objectives and why they have been invited • Clarify who has arranged / funded the workshop and why
2	**EXPLORATION** Put the representatives from different sectors into separate sector groups (business, public sector, civil society, international agencies, academia, etc) and invite them to explore the: • **Strengths** of the sector? • **Weaknesses** of the sector? • **Views** of other sectors? • **Benefits** that cross-sector partnering could bring?	• Provide an explanation that this opening session is to enable each sector to have its voice at the table • Pre-select and brief an appropriate moderator for each group (someone with knowledge of that sector and skills at drawing out underlying issues) • Encourage people to see this as an opportunity to explore something new and potentially valuable (for them / their sector)
3	**MAPPING** • Feedback from each sector group on each of the questions they have explored (see above) • Observe (by 'clustering') where items complement each other (eg one sector's weaknesses balanced by another's strengths) • End with a facilitated discussion on an open question (eg What has surprised / shocked / encouraged you about what you have just heard?)	• Ensure those acting as rapporteurs have been pre-briefed to be faithful to the spirit of the discussion they are representing • Invite group participants to amplify anything particularly unexpected or controversial as a way of energising the group and getting them fired up for further sessions • For the next break (lunch?), suggest that participants sit next to someone who is not from their sector and that they use the opportunity to explore issues from this session further on a one-to-one informal basis
4	**THE PARTNERING CHALLENGE** Building on the previous session, in a plenary invite participants to: • Comment on the potential benefits of collaboration (individual and collective) • Propose any principles or core values that they believe need to be agreed before collaboration would be possible • Articulate any concerns / challenges they have that may mitigate against their further collaboration	• Much of the material for this discussion will have been revealed by the earlier exercise, the facilitator may use flip chart records to prompt further discussion • Facilitator may need to clarify what a principle is and to help synthesise suggestions so that the most important are identified and it does not become a long shopping list • It is important to register concerns, and if it is not possible to allay them at this point to 'park' them on a flip chart paper easily visible and to be addressed later
5	**VISION AND REALITY** • A facilitated brainstorm in plenary on the workshop theme • A presentation on a relevant case study, focusing on a similar issue as that of the workshop, that illustrates a successful cross-sector approach taken elsewhere • An open discussion on how the partnership idea could be taken further	• The intention is to give an opportunity for creating a common vision of what would be ideal • This is to be followed by a practical example from a comparable situation • Encourage participants to ask any guest presenter many questions (and pre-brief the speaker to be sensitive to the real needs of those present)

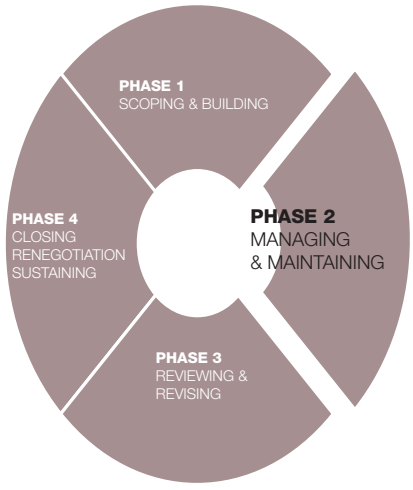
continued

SAMPLE DESIGN FOR AN EXPLORATORY CROSS-SECTOR WORKSHOP continued

Session	Activity	Facilitation notes
6	**ACTION PLANNING** In smaller mixed / cross-sector task groups invite participants to put together proposals and plans for a specific area of work. Tasks could include: • Group 1: Developing a **vision statement** and objectives for future cross-sector collaboration • Group 2: Initial **resource mapping** – outlining what range of resources each sector might be able to bring to any collaborative venture • Group 3: Outline **project ideas** that could be developed collaboratively • Group 4: Options for **management mechanisms** for future cross-sector activities	• Ensure the groups are truly mixed and have representatives of different sectors and different viewpoints in each • Suggest (if possible) a different task for each group so that much more progress will be made and the final plenary session will be more dynamic and interesting • Select a moderator who is well able to keep the group on track and practical in its focus
7	**WHAT NEXT?** In plenary: • Reports from each group followed by discussion that can question / clarify / endorse proposals • Review of whether there is enthusiasm for taking this further • Agree (if appropriate) specific next steps that will happen including who will do what and when	• Give each group time to present its ideas • Invite and record questions and responses • List agreed tasks, timetable for delivery and those who have agreed to undertake them

Note: This timetable can be spread over one to three days. Many have found that 1.5 days can work well (with the overnight break taking place between sessions 5 and 6) since this gives the opportunity for more informal conversations in the evening and for more considered reflection overnight. Another option is to run a one-day session until the end of session 5 and nominate a working group to cover the activities in session 6 with a follow-up event perhaps a week later to agree and launch a proposed action plan.

Phase 2: MANAGING AND MAINTAINING



THE STORY CONTINUES…

Brokers help partners to agree the structure and medium to long-term management of their partnership .

Once resources are in place and project details are finalised, the implementation process starts – working to a pre-agreed timetable and (ideally) to specific deliverables.

Two things are critical to this phase: excellent communications (both within the partnership and to external stakeholders) and workable governance arrangements. In developing both these key areas, the broker can play an invaluable part.

BROKER'S OBJECTIVES:

- To help the partners and project staff to identify resource needs and encourage the partners to commit their own (cash and non-cash) resources to the project
- To help partners to develop (and use) appropriate communications arrangements that will underpin the smooth working of the partnership and ensure it is understood by others
- To ensure that decision-making procedures and governance arrangements are realistic, agreed and adhered to

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
RESOURCE MAPPING • Promote a shared concept of resources that encompasses more than simply cash • Encourage and support partners (and other supporters) to identify and mobilise (cash and non-cash) resources • Help partners and project staff to understand the importance of sustainable resource mobilisation arrangements	➜ Resources can include: people; equipment; venues; knowledge; contacts; and specialist / technical skills. Partners may need help to understand this and to give proper credit and value to those who contribute non-cash resources to the partnership ➜ Building resource commitment from the partners themselves is central to building a strong relationship and greater equity between them ➜ Brokers should also help partners consider from an early stage what is required to build medium to long-term sustainability
COMMUNICATIONS • Work with partners to build an integrated and coherent communications strategy for the partnership • Ensure that partners do not 'go public' too early in the life of the partnership and never make inflated claims of its achievements • Ensure that information is agreed by all partners before it is put in the public domain both in relation to the partnership and the partnership's activities / projects	Some key communications questions to consider and discuss with partners: ➜ Who represents the partnership? ➜ How far does the broker become a spokesperson for the partnership? ➜ How is a communications approach developed, agreed and monitored? ➜ Who are the partnership's stakeholders and / or audiences?

continued

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
ENSURING GOOD GOVERNANCE • Help partners to work within a double accountability system (eg where they are accountable to the individual partner organisations and to each other as a partnership) • Ensure reporting mechanisms and grievance procedures are in place, appropriate and working effectively • Advise on the development of new delivery mechanisms or structures if necessary	➜ It is all too easy for partnerships to slip into lax reporting and governance arrangements. This may work for a while but is likely to cause friction and bad habits if left unchecked ➜ The broker may be the one person ideally placed to insist on procedures being followed to ensure transparency, genuine collaboration in decision-making and that grievances are dealt with correctly ➜ If it becomes necessary to create a new mechanism for the partnership, the form of governance required will be central to the decision about what kind of mechanism is needed

TAKING STOCK

- Partners have made their own resource contributions willingly, responsibly and imaginatively
- Partners are actively engaged in wider resource procurement activities as deemed necessary
- Longer-term (and sustainable) resource strategies agreed and early indications that they are likely to be both realistic and successful
- Communications strategy in place and agreed at a level with which all partners feel comfortable
- Governance and accountability procedures are agreed, in place and working relatively smoothly
- The broker is now largely supporting (not leading) the partners in all aspects of their working relationship

POSSIBLE NEXT STEPS:

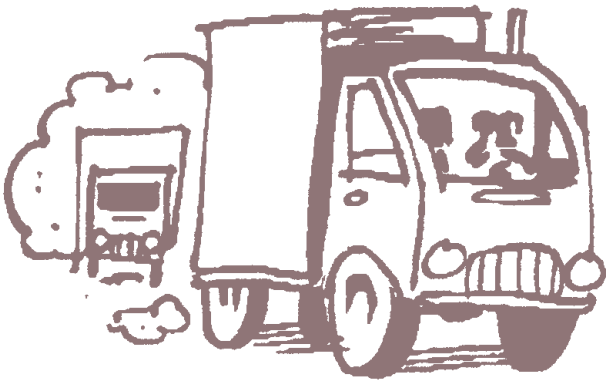
There may be times in this phase when the broker needs to:

➜ Propose to the partners that the partnership approach or the project be abandoned (for example, if the external circumstances have changed radically and a partnership-based initiative is no longer relevant, possible or necessary)

➜ Help the partners to manage exits (eg of key individuals or partner organisations) from the partnership (see Guidance Note 8: Managing Departures and Arrivals)

➜ Introduce and help to deliver elements of Phase 3

Guidance Note 8: Managing Departures and Arrivals



During the life cycle of a partnership there are likely to be many comings and goings and brokers will need to help partners to manage these 'arrivals and departures' – wherever possible turning the process into a creative opportunity for taking stock or making creative changes.

DEPARTURES

There may be a wide range of different reasons why an individual or an organisation withdraws from their association with the partnership. Whether the departure is welcomed or mourned by those remaining, there are always ramifications. Whenever any departure takes place, there is invariably a sense of loss or absence – even in circumstances where the departure is widely welcomed, since there may be residues of guilt or feelings of uneasiness about why things did not work out (whether spoken or unspoken) between those left behind.

Of course, some departures are of far more significance to the partnership than others, and where the significance is negligible, neither partners nor broker should spend more time than absolutely necessary on managing the process. However, it is important for brokers to think through impacts of all departures and to have good strategies in place for helping partners (as well as those leaving) to manage the departure process well.

A departure badly handled can have a long-term negative effect both on internal relationships and (very importantly) on the partnership's image and reputation.

INDIVIDUALS & ORGANISATIONS WHOSE DEPARTURE WILL EFFECT THE PARTNERSHIP:	BROKER STRATEGIES FOR HELPING PARTNERS TO MANAGE DEPARTURES
• Individuals in the partnership moving on to new roles or jobs	➜ Manage them well (whatever the background issue or the trigger for the departure)
• Individuals being replaced because partners (or their own organisations) feel they are not appropriate for their role in the partnership	➜ Be transparent between partners at all times (constantly clarify what is happening)
• Partner organisations opting to leave the partnership (because their role is completed or they find the partnership unsatisfactory in some way)	➜ Celebrate all achievements / contributions (however small)
• Partner organisations being asked to leave the partnership by the other partners (for whatever reason)	➜ Spend time debriefing (with those leaving and with those remaining)
• Significant others (eg external donors, champions, political figures) moving on into new roles	➜ Value and capture knowledge / experience
• Significant others (as above) losing interest in the partnership	➜ Transfer knowledge to others as concisely and vividly as possible
	➜ Agree who will say what, to whom and when
	➜ Agree (in advance and if necessary) an external relations position

ARRIVALS

It is important to pay equal attention to those arriving as those departing. All too often, this is overlooked and newcomers are simply expected to 'fit' even though their approach and their underlying interests may differ markedly from their predecessors (or from others involved). The broker can have a particularly important role in ensuring newcomers find their place within the partnership as quickly and fully as possible.

NEW INDIVIDUALS WHO MIGHT ARRIVE IN THE PARTNERSHIP INCLUDING THOSE:	BROKER STRATEGIES FOR HELPING PARTNERS TO MANAGE ARRIVALS
• Taking over as representative of a partner organisation	➜ Take time to welcome and introduce newcomers
• Representing a partner organisation that is new to the partnership	➜ Ensure that partners are comfortable with newcomers and that they share any operational information early on
• Taking on roles as project / programme staff	➜ Ask newcomers questions about themselves / their organisations and what they want to know / see / hear
• Being invited as external experts to take on specific tasks	➜ Transfer information as concisely and vividly as possible – creating opportunities for learning from direct experience / observation as well as hearsay
• Taking over as champions, external donors, political figures	➜ Invite newcomers to make requests or suggestions as well as to share their experience or bring new ideas
• Taking over aspects of the brokering role (internal)	➜ Use their arrival as an opportunity for the partners to take stock of the partnership

ARRIVAL OF NEW ORGANISATIONS

Many of the strategies for integrating new individuals (outlined above) will apply equally to the integration of new organisations. These can include: new partners; donor agencies; local / regional or national governments; or other agencies that impact on (or are impacted by) the partnership.

Given the need to brief more than just one individual, the strategies may need to be longer-term and somewhat more formal. Additional strategies particularly designed for organisational engagement could include:

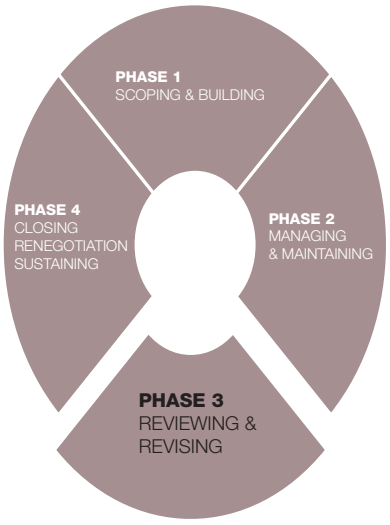
- Making presentations about the partnership to key organisational representatives
- Taking key players on well-managed / interactive site visits to see the work of the partnership in action
- Inviting a number of people from new organisations to attend workshops as participant observers
- Arranging staff exchanges or secondments
- Inviting key players from new organisations to present material about their work and their interest in the partnership to the partner group (perhaps at the end of a regular partners meeting)

"When I took over this role, I did not understand why my predecessor was so keen on partnerships for development.

It was only when I actually saw the partnership in action that I really understood why it was different, why it worked better than other approaches and what my organisation's contribution might be. And I understood much better the critical role of a broker in helping the partnership to be as effective as possible. It certainly helped me to understand why we should fund this post in future.

I also saw the potential for putting new partners in touch with the project which would help the partnership achieve greater impact and scale."

Representative of a US-based foundation visiting a partnership project in Hungary



Phase 3: MONITORING, REVIEWING AND REVISING

THE STORY CONTINUES…

It is time to start measuring and reporting on impact and effectiveness, outputs and outcomes. Is the partnership achieving its goals?

It may also be time to consider reviewing the partnership. What is the impact of the partnership on the partner organisations? Is it operating as efficiently and effectively as it could? Should the way the partnership is managed be modified or changed more radically? Should one or more of the partners move on and / or new partners be invited to join?

It may even be time to make some quite radical changes.

BROKER'S OBJECTIVES:

- To ensure continuing good practice and develop a 'learning culture' within the partnership
- To focus the partners attention on the results and impacts of their collaboration
- To help the partners to navigate any necessary changes

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
ADVISING ON MONITORING • Help partners to put in place arrangements for a comprehensive evaluation process (probably using a participative approach involving partners, project staff, beneficiaries and other stakeholders)	➜ Who needs the information on the partnership's impacts? ➜ How can the evaluation process conform to the requirements of external agencies (eg donors) without reducing things to a formulaic approach that fails to capture the more subtle and qualitative outcomes that have derived from a partnership approach? ➜ How external does an evaluation process have to be in order to be accepted as unbiased and objective?
ADVISING ON REVIEWING • Help partners to review the partnering relationship by assessing and quantifying its value to each of the partner organisations	➜ For partners to remain involved in the medium to longterm, they will need to know whether or not the partnership is meeting their individual organisational goals. Brokers need to be aware of this (even if partners do not state it openly as an important issue underpinning their commitment) ➜ Brokers may even be the ideal person to facilitate or co-facilitate a review process (if they are by this stage somewhat detached from delivering day to day brokering services)

continued

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
IMPLEMENTING REVISIONS • Evaluate impacts and review the partnering relationship to yield important information about the health and wellbeing of the partnership and about changes that may be important in making it more efficient, effective and / or sustainable • Help partners to internalise lessons and to agree appropriate revisions to their working practices and project implementation	➜ Brokers can help the process by demonstrating a willingness to accept critical as well as positive findings from evaluations and reviews themselves ➜ They may be ideally placed to ask the partners challenging follow-up questions as a way of getting them to focus on new priorities and to agree to any changes that are deemed necessary ➜ Brokers see any revisions to the partnership or its project as a useful process for reviewing their own role and also for securing partner agreement to make appropriate changes in brokering practices

TAKING STOCK:

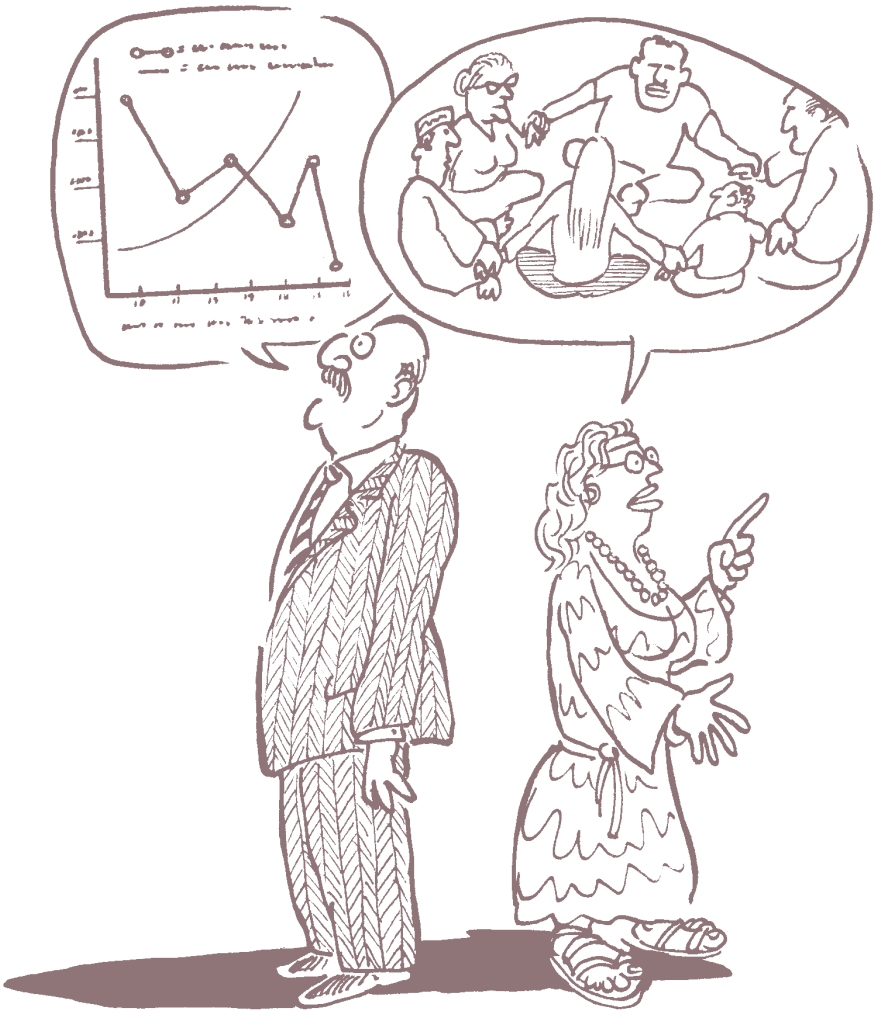
This phase should reveal:

- The relative value of the partnership approach (as opposed to any other) and how successfully the partnership has achieved effective impacts and sustainable outcomes
- Where any adjustments need to be made in order for the partnership and / or the project to be more effective and whether (or not) the partners are flexible enough to make these adjustments willingly
- Evidence that the partners are becoming more independent of the broker – increasingly sharing the broker's tasks between themselves – and that the broker's role has moved to that of coach (see Guidance Note 8: Broker as Coach).

NEXT STEPS:

Time to focus more seriously on the longer-term relationship. At some stage in phases 2 and 3 brokers will consider with partners whether they see their working relationship continuing indefinitely and / or whether it is time to move on – either by moving apart or by taking on new challenges. Information about the impacts and effectiveness of the partnership to date as well as reviews of the value of the relationship will be critical in informing any decision about moving on (in whatever direction).

Guidance Note 9: Broker as Coach



ACTING AS INTERPRETER

From the earliest stages of a partnership (in fact, particularly in the pre-partnership phase) brokers will find that they have a vital role in communicating between players from sometimes radically different organisational cultures. Sometimes this requires considerable interpretation skills (almost as if translating from a foreign language) to build understanding across quite different values, operational styles and sector-specific jargon.

How brokers themselves manage cross-sector working relationships – by paying close attention in order to really understand diverse views and by adapting their behaviour to a range of situations and settings – will provide partners with invaluable tips for their own behaviour within the partnership.

One very important form of coaching for a partnership broker is, therefore, the rather subtle one of role model!

PROMOTING REFLECTIVE PRACTICE

Even in the most successful partnerships, it is important for partners to take time out to reflect on how things are going in general and their own partnering performance in particular. In those partnerships that are less successful, reflecting on how things are (and are not) going is absolutely essential if these partnerships are to be strengthened and improved.

A broker can help partners from an early stage in their relationship appreciate the value of being reflective practitioners. Far from wasting time, this can be a key to deeper understanding and engagement. Some partnerships, for example, end every meeting with five minutes silence for reflection followed by a final 10 minutes for sharing views and picking up on issues that may have surfaced as important for further discussion or action.

CREATING LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

As partnerships progress, brokers are likely to find a number of other coaching roles emerging and they may quickly find themselves creating a range of practical learning opportunities for partners in order to help them expand their horizons and build greater capacity for effective partnering. In fact, a major inducement to individuals to engage in cross-sector partnership approaches to sustainable development is the opportunity they provide for learning how to think and work in new ways.

Individuals do, however, learn differently and it makes sense wherever possible to identify formal and informal learning options and opportunities that suit each partner's different learning styles.

MATCHING INDIVIDUAL LEARNING STYLES TO LEARNING OPTIONS:

LEARNING STYLE	LEARNING OPTIONS	BROKER'S APPROACH
Analysts Those who like intellectual challenge alongside clear structures and procedures	• Written records of the partnership • Acquiring knowledge from a range of other sources (including statistics and historical facts) • Participating in a debate on key issues	*"You might be interested in reading a paper I have come across that explores why this kind of partnership might benefit from a different strategy..."*
Problem solvers Those who enjoy being confronted with challenges and provided with opportunities for brainstorming new ideas	• Participating in scenario-planning activities • Action research • Role playing	*"Would you like to participate in a consultation exercise where we will be meeting with project participants to explore how the activities can be taken to scale?"*
Pragmatists Those who respond to active participation and practical engagement	• Skills enhancement or development • Practice-based mentoring • Job-swaps	*"Do you think you could have a go at running the project for a week while the project manager is away? She/he would be really interested to see how differently you approach the role?"*
Reviewers Those who learn by listening and observing with ample opportunities for quiet reflection	• Study visits • Opportunities for participant observation • Keeping a journal of thoughts and ideas to be shared at a future time	*"Let me know when you would like to visit the project again. In due course, we would be very interested in hearing your views on whether you feel we are maximising the opportunities we have..."*

Adapted from Honey and Mumford (1992)

BUILDING PARTNER SKILLS AND CAPACITIES

Brokers may be in the best possible position to see the potential for individuals in the partnership to demonstrate or develop different skill sets and competencies of benefit to the partnership. It may simply be a question of asking whether they would be interested in facilitating a discussion or compiling a newsletter or representing the partnership in a public forum. Even the most confident and skilled professionals may have blind spots about what other roles they can play or how they might apply their proven skills in new ways.

In any case, it is likely to be part of the broker's strategy to hand over aspects of the brokering role quite systematically to partners and project staff once the partnership has reached a level of stability. In doing this, the broker will need to identify which partners are best situated / equipped to do what. The broker will also need to brief / coach them into the new aspects of the role – handing over as soon as possible but providing support in the background as long as it is needed.

Like brokers, partners can also work to improve their knowledge and skills, and one task for the broker may be to indicate to those interested how to access further information and training. This may take some research, but the opportunities for partnering skills training are growing – as are the number of publications and websites offering practical guidelines (of which this publication is one).

If partners seem reluctant – despite the broker's best coaching endeavours – to take on more of the brokering role, one strategy for the broker might be what could be described as 'creative absence'. In other words, by the broker simply not being there partners who have felt inhibited by the broker's competence or who have simply stuck with the easy option of leaving it to the broker to undertake tasks, are pushed into having to get on with the brokering job in the wider interests of the partnership.

REVIEWING THE PARTNERSHIP

One of the best ways of creating a learning culture within a partnership is to encourage partners to review the way they are working together. In addition to ensuring that the collaboration is achieving the objectives each partner had when they became involved, reviews can also raise questions about how individuals, organisations or the partnership as a whole can improve performance and thereby maximise effectiveness and value.

A broker is well placed to suggest this and may, on behalf of the partners, invite someone else to develop and manage a review process. Alternatively, if the review is timed to take place at a stage in the partnering cycle when the broker has handed over much of the brokering work – they may be seen by the partners as the person most appropriate to help them undertake a review.

Undoubtedly there is much value in the person helping partners to review their working relationship (perhaps appropriately described as a 'review facilitator') having a good working knowledge of the partnership since this saves a great deal of time on briefing and it also provides a relatively safe atmosphere in which partners can be frank with each other without feeling that an outsider is passing judgement based on too little information.

While it is common for partnerships to develop evaluation procedures to assess the impacts of their work against the pre-agreed sustainable development goals, it is far less common for partners to spend time reviewing the impacts and sustainability of their working relationship – even though this may be central and critical to the partnership's future.

In the role of coach, the broker can help embed a reflective approach within the partners' way of working together that will develop quite naturally into a regular review process where partners (if managed well) will quickly see the immediate benefits to the partnership from:

- Assessing in what ways the collaboration has benefited their individual organisations
- Identifying and articulating where significant progress has been made in the working relationship(s)

- Agreeing practical steps that might significantly improve the impact and effectiveness of the collaboration

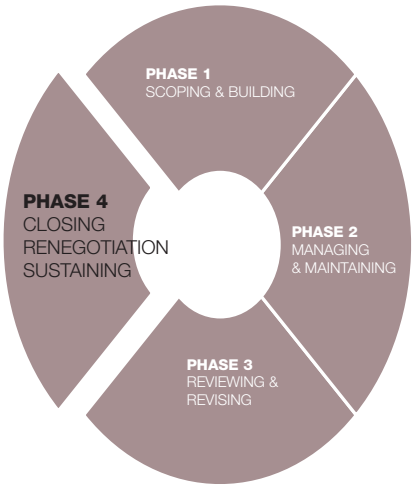
CREATING A LEARNING PARTNERSHIP

It has been argued (by partnership activist and writer, Simon Zadek, for one) that the most successful and influential partnerships are those that are effectively also 'learning partnerships'. The learning aspect of their work enables them to move from 'level 1' partnerships (straight forward project delivery), to 'level 2' partnerships (project delivery alongside systemic change) to 'level 3' partnerships (those that ultimately change the rules of the game).

Most good brokers will understand that their role is continuously that of educator in broad terms and coach in narrower terms so that partners are able to become increasingly innovative in their approaches and more capable of bringing about radical systematic as well as systemic change.

"Successful partnerships always involve building the capacity of the partners to learn from the partnering process and adapt to the changes required. Partnerships that fail to internalise learning will always fall short of reaching their full potential."

External broker operating in the Philippines



Phase 4: SUSTAINING OUTCOMES

THE STORY CONCLUDES…

By this stage, the most important consideration will be the issue of sustaining **outcomes** rather than sustaining the **partnership** for its own sake. It may be that the partners have completed their most important task – creating an innovative, cross-sectoral approach to a critical development issue – and that they can disband the partnership in full confidence that the programme of work will continue.

It may be that the partners do decide to keep the partnership in place but to tackle new challenges.

Or it may be that the partners remain involved but through a renegotiated relationship and a new delivery mechanism.

BROKER'S OBJECTIVES:

- To help the partners consider the long-term options for the partnership and to support the partners in selecting and implementing the most appropriate next steps
- To ensure that resources and delivery mechanisms are in place – either to complete the project or to support and sustain it over the long term
- To implement an exit strategy for themselves as brokers

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
MANAGING CLOSURE A partnership may have always been intended to be temporary – designed essentially to develop and test out a new approach to an old problem. In this case, the transfer of activities to a longer-term delivery system and the termination of the partnership will be a cause for celebration and congratulations. On the other hand, a partnership may be terminated because it has failed – this is likely to involve considerable disappointment and even anger and will need skillful and sensitive management to minimise damage. (See Guidance Note 8: Managing Departures and Arrivals, page 71)	The tendency is to invest significant time, energy and skill into partnership building, but the closure of the partnership (for whatever reason) requires equal attention. This may be a point at which an internal broker is identified from within the partnership or an external broker is brought in specifically to help partners manage the closure process. It is important to ensure that all things are finished and that there are no loose ends. It is also important that all agree to how the closure is presented both internally (to the various partner organisations) and externally (to all other stakeholders, donors or the general public). Wherever possible, underline the partnership's achievements and leave a clear picture of (at least) what has been learned from the experience that can be useful in future.

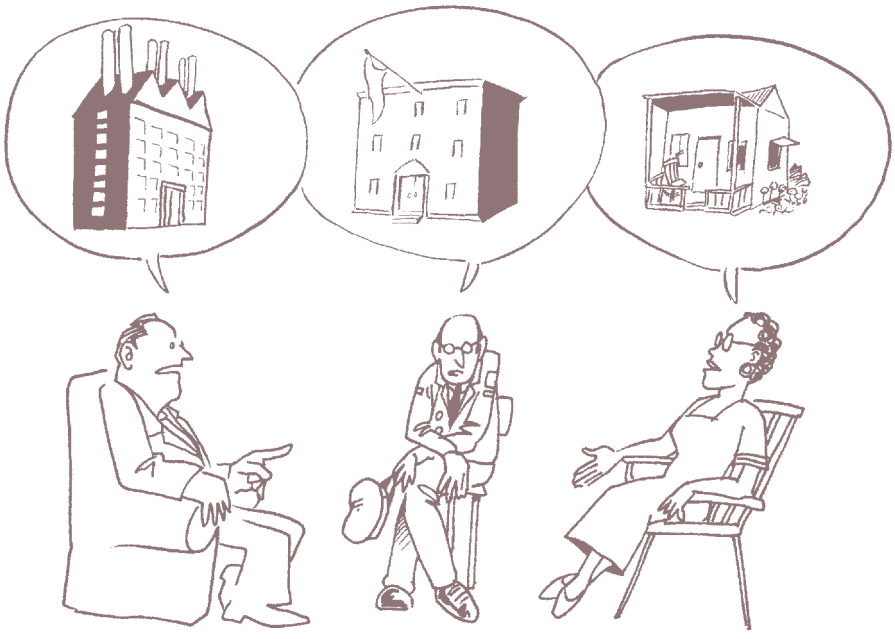
continued

BROKER'S TASKS	NOTES
FACILITATING RENEGOTIATION Another option for the partnership may be to consider doing something different – in which case partners may need to go right back to Phase 1 in the partnering cycle to re-scope various options. Of course, at this point, partners will have the benefit of building on an established working relationship and a deeper awareness of what they each bring to the partnership. It is not uncommon for partners to complete an agreed project but to recognise that there is new potential from their collaboration. A review process will probably have revealed where this is (and where this is not) the case. (See Guidance Note 4: Facilitation Skills page 39.)	Brokers (either already established with the partners or brought in specifically for this purpose) may have a key part to play in: ➜ Ensuring that partners are realistic about the value of reconstructing their partnership to do new things (checking out that they are not simply carrying on out of good will or habit when the partnership has achieved as much as it is likely to) ➜ Facilitating the renegotiation process ➜ Brokering a revised agreement between (all or some of) the partners ➜ Helping partners set a timetable for the development and delivery of a new project
ADVISING ON NEW MECHANISMS Some partnerships will reconstitute their collaboration in the form of a new independent delivery mechanism – with its own identity and formal / legal structure. At this stage, partners may take on a new kind of relationship to the initiative (perhaps as trustees, a Management Board or an Advisory Group). There are a growing number of options that are emerging to deliver more collaborative projects and partners should be encouraged to consider a wide range of options to ensure that the most appropriate mechanism is selected to suit the specific needs. (See Guidance Note 10: Assisting with Institutionalisation, page 83.)	Brokers can help this process by: ➜ Undertaking research on behalf of the partners into possible options for a new partnership-based mechanism – using websites, case studies and visits to other initiatives. ➜ Facilitating discussion on whether or not this is an appropriate route and, if so, which option is likely to be most suitable ➜ Navigating partners through the legal, fiscal and administrative formalities required to register a new organisation (if necessary, since some mechanisms may remain informal) ➜ Ensuring partners make a smooth transition into their new relationship to the initiative.

TAKING STOCK:

- Outcomes from the initiative are capable of being sustained in the medium to long term
- The project has been completed and / or is running independently
- Partners are satisfied with the results to date and the proposals for the future of their partnership
- Clear buy-in from others within each partner organisation to the decisions made
- Recognition of the value and achievements of the partnership by others – government, international agencies, the media and / or the wider community
- A completed final case study / report / review from the broker to the partners (if required)

Guidance Note 10:
Assisting with Institutionalisation



WHAT IS MEANT BY INSTITUTIONALISATION?

Brokers undoubtedly have a key role in working with partners on issues of sustainability. This includes sustaining the partnership itself (if appropriate), programme / project delivery and (most importantly) outcomes. At a certain stage in the partnering cycle, therefore, a partnership is likely to need to become more structured in order to:

- ➜ Move from the scoping and building phases to the maintenance and implementation phases
- ➜ Engage partners' organisations (not just individuals) more deeply and systematically in the partnership
- ➜ Handle resources more responsibly and accountably
- ➜ Transfer day-to-day management to an appropriate delivery mechanism
- ➜ Create a tangible identity for the partnership
- ➜ Ensure long-term, sustainable delivery

Essentially the broker will be helping partners to 'grow' the partnership to greater maturity by institutionalising it. The term 'institutionalisation' is used here to mean **formalising a working relationship**. In partnering this has three different dimensions:

TERM	MEANING	PURPOSE
INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT	Building more active and comprehensive involvement of organisations (partners and key others) in the partnership	To ensure sustainable **involvement**
INSTITUTION-BUILDIING	Creating new mechanisms or organisational structures through which the partnership initiative can operate smoothly	To ensure sustainable **delivery**
INSTITUTIONAL REFORM	Changing rules, systems and organisational behaviour where necessary in any of the three sectors	To ensure sustainable **outcomes**

Some initial ideas for brokers to enable them to assist partners in working through these three areas of institutionalising a partnership are given below.

1. BUILDING INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT

The degree to which organisations genuinely engage may be the make or break of a partnership. Initially any organisation may justifiably be sceptical or cautious about the partnership's ambitions and will only engage tentatively or superficially – sometimes by little more than nominating a representative to be at the partnership table.

But at a certain point in the cycle engagement will need to be deeper than this if the organisation is to remain involved. Engagement of key organisations will:

- Maximise potential and opportunities to satisfy organisational goals and underlying interests
- Build stability for the partnership itself
- Ensure sustainability of the impacts and benefits of the partnership's activities

The broker's role here may simply be to remind partners that wider organisational commitment and engagement is important and that it is in all their interests to develop strategies to achieve these. It may also fall to the broker to query whether an organisation is really as involved as its representative is claiming (especially where there seems to be a lack of evidence to back up their claim and the partnership's development risks being compromised). Partners may turn to the broker for advice about how to tackle their own or each other's institutional engagement challenges.

STRATEGIES FOR GREATER INSTITUTIONAL ENGAGEMENT:

STRATEGY	POSSIBLE ACTIVITIES
Changing organisational culture	• Demonstrate the value of doing things differently • Identify the 'change agents' within the organisation and work with them • Promote a more personal and values-based approach • Adapt experiences and lessons from the partnership for application within the organisation
Human resource development	• Persuade HR managers that working on some aspect of the partnership is a useful professional development opportunity for staff • Engage employees in practical ways – especially where it enhances skills or organisational pride • Involve senior managers in the partnership (for example, as champions or spokespeople)
Public relations	• Provide a convincing case that partnering can have useful PR benefits and constructive impact on other stakeholders and / or the general public • Present the partnership as offering invaluable access to networks of new contacts and useful opportunities
Communications	• Seek media coverage to communicate the value of the partnership and the contribution of the organisation to it (when the time is right and with full partner agreement) • Promote the partnership through the organisation's internal communications channels • Create tailored and regularly updated information sheets and circulate throughout the organisation to keep people informed
Transformational experience	• Give people the opportunity to understand the value of the partnership from a totally different perspective by putting them into new situations or unexpected settings • Set up encounters between key players who do not normally meet but may have much value to share with each other

All these suggestions above are activities that individuals within the partnership other than the broker can undertake. The broker's role here may simply be that of prompting action and giving back-up support if needed.

2. CREATING NEW PARTNERSHIP MECHANISMS

The partners will need to assess whether or not a new kind of institution is required. There are a number of benefits and risks in keeping the partnership informal as well as in deciding to create a more (or completely new) formal structure. These are outlined below:

LESS FORMAL ARRANGEMENTS:

BENEFITS	RISKS
Greater freedom to explore radical ideas	Not being taken seriously enough by external agencies
Cheaper – major resource required is time not cash	Key players not available because other priorities prevail
Flexible and non-bureaucratic	Inefficient and unfocused

MORE FORMAL STRUCTURE:

BENEFITS	RISKS
Increased authority and capacity to influence	Subject to legislative restrictions
Enhanced ability to mobilise and manage large-scale resources	Higher administrative costs
More able to transform ideas into action	Tendency to become over-bureaucratic and impersonal

If the partners decide to build some kind of new mechanism, the broker may play a key part in researching options and in exploring the legislative, financial and governance implications. There are many new kinds of partnering institutions developing in different parts of the world. It is not always necessary to fall back on traditional models – especially where these are seen to have largely failed to deliver sustainable outcomes.

But the broker should urge careful consideration before a decision to go down this route is made. The creation of a new mechanism can be time-consuming, distracting and ultimately disappointing unless time is given to building appropriate systems and competencies.

KEY AREAS TO CONSIDER IN CREATING NEW INSTITUTIONS:	
Governance	Leadership, direction and accountability structures
Management Practices	Mechanisms used to coordinate activities and facilitate processes within the organisation
Human Resources	All those people connected with the work of the organisation, including management, staff, members, partners, volunteers, advisors, constituencies and external resource providers
Other Resources	All other non-human resources eg equipment, accommodation, products, transport and financial
Service Delivery	Appropriate services and activities undertaken efficiently and cost-effectively
External Relations	Organisational relationship to the larger context in which it is operating including social, political, ecological and economic
Sustainability	The capacity of the organisation to sustain its outcomes / outputs and impacts in the long term

3. CONTRIBUTING TO INSTITUTIONAL REFORM

Ultimately, of course, a multiplication of new partnership institutions may not be what society needs. Sustainable development partnerships – even when they are a response to the 'failure' of conventional systems – are never created to undermine or replace the primary roles and functions of the different sectors.

Brokers may need to remind partners of this.

Partnerships are not democratic simply because they are collaborative and inclusive of different sectors in the way they operate. Even when they create internal legitimacy in the way they themselves are governed, this does not mean they are a substitute for a democratic process. Indeed, there is a risk that where a partnership has been established specifically because governments are weak or corrupt, they may take on a form of de facto legitimacy that – even if deemed necessary in the short term – in the long term may detract from the more important task of strengthening or transforming government capacities.

And of course it is not just governments that can benefit from reform.

Partnerships can always contribute in some way or another to strengthening the functioning of each main sector in society – whether public sector, business or civil society – enabling each to fulfil their particular roles in making an equitable, prosperous and sustainable future for all the planet's inhabitants.

"Ultimately, institutional reform may be a more important outcome of a partnership than any other. In other words, if the partnership leads to a government department functioning more creatively and efficiently; or to an international corporation contributing more vigorously and systematically to sustainable development in all aspects of its operations; or to an NGO having a much larger-scale impact, then the outcomes of the partnership will have become significantly more substantial than its outputs.

Most good brokers recognise this and undertake their role with the bigger picture always at the back of their mind." [12]

12. Ros Tennyson, *Institutionalising Partnerships: Lessons from the Front Line*, Published by IBLF with funding from DFID, London, 2003

Broker Exit Strategies

It is time for the broker to move on – either out of the picture (external broker) or into a newly defined role (internal broker). Many of the strategies for managing departures also apply to the management of the broker's own exit from the role (See Guidance Note 8: Managing Departures and Arrivals, page 71).

Additional advice on the broker's own exit strategy includes:

- ➜ Planning the exit carefully and in advance (from Day one?)
- ➜ Making the exit plan clear and transparent to partners
- ➜ Increasing the brokering focus on coaching and mentoring as the partnering cycle progresses
- ➜ Transferring activities and roles to others (especially partners or project managers) in a systematic way
- ➜ Ensuring arrangements are in place for covering any remaining tasks

The final responsibility for all brokers is to negotiate and successfully implement their own exit from the role.

5 In a Perfect World...

"It is...our task, as creative participants in the universe, to re-dream our world. The fact of possessing imagination means that everything can be re-dreamed. Human beings are blessed with the necessity of transformation."

Ben Okri[13]

This publication attempts to explore and explain two things:

- The importance of effective brokering to successful cross-sector partnerships for sustainable development
- What brokers can actually do to make partnerships work as well as possible

Brokering involves a wide range of skills, roles and tasks and this can be bewildering and, perhaps, overwhelming. But it should not be so. A participant on a brokering skills training course said, "*As far as I can see, being a broker is a matter of well-managed common sense,"* and he is probably right.

To endorse this perspective – and to reassure aspiring brokers as well as those who engage or work with them – we suggest that there are a few 'common sense' ground rules for good brokering that should provide a solid foundation for any broker taking on the role in any situation (See Box K).

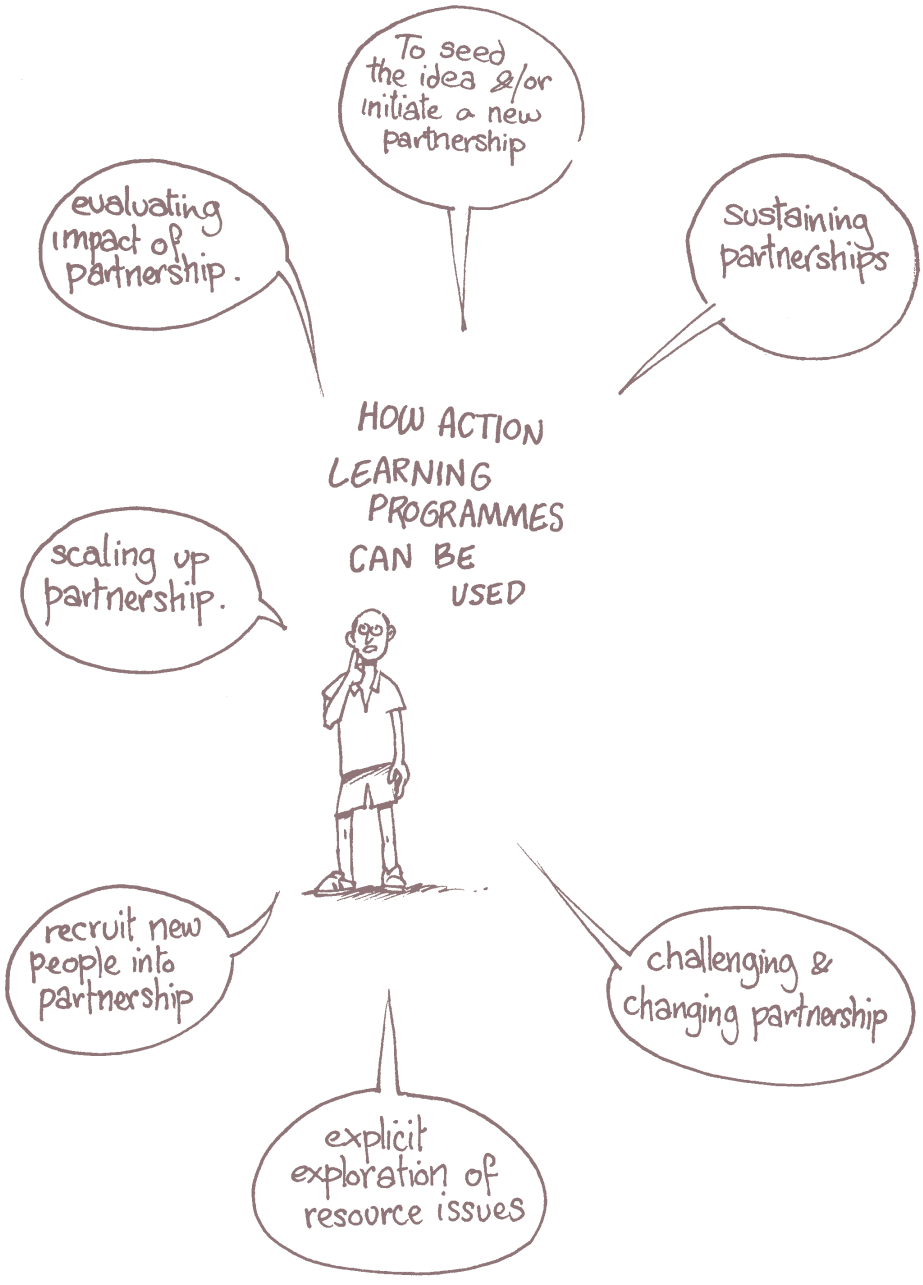
BOX K: GROUND RULES FOR GOOD BROKERING

- ➜ **Get inside different partner perspectives**
- ➜ **Demonstrate clarity of purpose and focus in everything you undertake**
- ➜ **Provide practical, productive and tactful interventions**
- ➜ **Be meticulous in record keeping and communicating**
- ➜ **Support rather than dominate in the way you behave**
- ➜ **Accept that you are a servant to the partnering process**
- ➜ **Be ready and willing to let go when the time is right**

Above all, since brokers need to hand over to others, they need to be educators – in the broadest sense of that word. Handing over only really works when a partnership is achieving its goals. Partnerships that achieve their goals are those that successfully internalise learning (See Guidance Note 9: Broker as Coach) and use their deeper understanding to adapt their working relationship and their project as and when necessary. The broker is uniquely placed

13. Ben Okri, *A Way of Being Free*, Phoenix House, London,1997

to provide continuing opportunities for 'action learning' and this can have innumerable benefits for the partnership – as outlined in the illustration below.



Of course, a partnership is only a means to an end, not an end in itself. Partnerships need to be highly focused and managed in such a way that they achieve real results and sustainable development impacts – otherwise the transaction costs are simply too high.

A child in Africa – as part of the international Paint Pals project – when asked to paint a picture of her view of the future, painted a series of images of emaciated people, a hospital ward, factories belching smoke and armoured tanks rolling down the road. As a frame around the painting she wrote: *In the future I see war, famine, disease, pollution, AIDS and violence.*

It is a grim world view, but as we know (unless, like the proverbial ostrich we keep our heads very firmly in the sand) this is the situation for many, many millions. Such grinding poverty and suffering is a terrible indictment of the world we have created and it ultimately impacts on us all.

If our partnering efforts fail, and the main sectors in society prove to be incapable of collaborating for the sustainable development of the planet, none of us face a very bright future.

Partnerships have the potential to provide realistic alternative approaches to the sustainable development of our planet. They could and should be central to creating a more perfect world.

Without good brokering, partnerships are likely to fail.

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Glossary

Accountability	The principle of individuals and organisations reporting to a recognised authority and being held responsible for their actions.
Action learning	A way of understanding and learning by becoming involved as an active participant in the situation.
Action research	Participatory research that includes stakeholders actively in the research process.
Active listening	Listening with full attention and suspending personal judgement.
Assessment	Ascertaining what has been achieved or the value / appropriateness of a piece of work or an idea.
Brainstorm	An unstructured discussion to solve problems or generate ideas, in which all contributions are considered.
Briefing	The imparting of information to an individual or group in advance of an activity or special event.
Broker	A person or organisation that acts as an intermediary between, or on behalf of, partners.
Buzz group	Small discussion group that brainstorms an issue in the same room as other groups – where noise of voices sounds like buzzing bees.
Case study	In-depth description of a single project or programme – usually for an educational or information-sharing purpose.
Challenge(s)	An event or situation (usually regarded as difficult) that individuals or organisations (or partnerships) face that are unexpected or require particular attention.
Champion	An individual who uses his / her position, profile and / or influence to promote a cause, project or organisation.
Change agent	An individual from any sector of society who brings about significant changes in attitudes, behaviour, values or policy.
Civil society	An umbrella term that includes all not-for-profit and non-governmental organisations including religious, labour and community-based organisations.
Coach / coaching	An individual who provides practical instruction and support to another individual or group.
Communications	The exchange of information between individuals or organisations.
Critical friend	A professional one-to-one relationship based on providing creative critique on a mutual basis.
Cross-sector workshop	A participatory event designed to bring together key players from business, the public sector and civil society in a structured way to explore the potential for collaboration in sustainable development activities.
Cutting-edge	At the forefront of something whether in terms of ideas, methodologies or initiatives.

Donor	A donor in this context refers to any organisation outside the partnership that makes a contribution (usually financial) to the work of the partnership.
Early winner	A successful activity that is undertaken early in the partnership and helps to secure commitment and support of stakeholders, funders and partners.
Encounter	A meeting between individuals or groups who do not normally meet.
Equity	Appreciation of the value of people, groups or sectors understood in terms of their knowledge, skills and reputation, rather than their financial or political power.
Exit / exits / exit strategy	A description widely used by donor agencies, corporations and international agencies to describe a planned phasing-out of their support or involvement.
External broker	Independent third parties contracted by a partner organisation or a partnership to: explore the feasibility of adopting a partnership approach; facilitate negotiations to develop a partnering agreement; maintain or monitor effectiveness of partnerships over time; or build institutional capacity to deliver partnerships.
Facilitator / facilitation	The person managing the process of meetings, workshops or encounters ensuring they are effective and achieve their goals.
Fit for purpose	Being 'fit for purpose' refers to the goals of case study work. There are likely to be three main goals: to reach and influence specific external audiences; to achieve (internal and external) learning outcomes; and to contribute to the theory and practice of partnership as a sustainable development paradigm.
Flip chart	A visual aid in the form of a large pad of paper mounted on an easel, used to capture information and make it visible.
Gatekeeper / gate keeping	An individual or system that controls access to information, people or organisations.
Governance	Process for systematic accountability and oversight within and across organisations to ensure ethical practices.
Ground rules	A set of voluntarily agreed principles that will help to regulate behaviour in the partnership and will underpin all interactions and activities until agreed otherwise.
Institution	Used here to describe any kind of structured mechanism for undertaking or overseeing agreed activities.
Institutionalising	Formalising a working relationship, including a partnership.
Institution building	The process of creating a new mechanism for the efficient and effective delivery of activities.
Intermediary	An individual or an organisation whose role is to act as a neutral agent between diverse players who may not be used to working together.
Internal broker	Individual from within a partner organisation who prepares their organisation for collaborating in a multi-sector partnership; negotiates their organisation's involvement in a partnership; and / or who plays a key role in managing a partnership arrangement.
Jargon	Terminology that is specific to and in common use by one sector or profession that is not understood by others.

Key others	Individuals operating outside of, yet important to, the partnership.
Letter of intent	A document that outlines early intentions to collaborate and creates a foundation for building a partnering relationship.
Licence to operate	The degree to which individuals or organisations have permission (formal or informal) to operate or undertake activities.
Log / logbook	A form of journal for recording activity on a regular basis. Derived from a ship's log, which early navigators and explorers used to chart the course of their journeys.
Management board	The decision-making committee that approves expenditure and development plans (often the final authority).
Mapping	The recording of physical features of the earth's surface by geographers used here to describe a process of recording complex data usually in a scoping exercise or during a brainstorm (see also 'tracking').
Mechanism	A method, process or procedure for reaching agreed outcomes.
Mediation	A process that involves working with all parties to address conflict between them and to reach greater understanding and agreement.
Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)	A document summarising the terms of a relationship and formalising a commitment by all parties to collaboration signed by all parties. This document is likely to be considered as legally binding even if it not an actual contract.
Mentor	An individual appointed to act as an experienced and trusted advisor.
Moderator	An individual assigned to ensure fair play, for example, in a discussion.
Monitoring	The process of ensuring people are complying with their commitments.
Multi-sector	Involvement of more than one of the three main sectors of society: public sector; private sector or civil society.
Mutual benefit	Where involvement or activities are of equal (even if different) value to all those involved.
Needs analysis	A process designed to understand personal or organisational needs.
Negotiation	A process of arriving at an agreement where the different interests of those involved are addressed and satisfied – at least enough to proceed.
NGO	A non-governmental organisation is one that runs on a not-for-profit basis and is independent of governmental control.
Obstacle	A hindrance, impediment or obstruction that gets in the way. Obstacles in this context can be either internal or external to the partnership.
Open questions	Questions that invite a detailed response rather than a one word yes / no answer.
One-stop shop	A single organisation or place (often virtual) that provides a hub for information rather than having to go to many different sources.
Organisation	A mechanism in which individuals work together to achieve specific tasks with a common purpose.
Outcomes	The results (often intangible) of an event or activity.
Outputs	The tangible products of an event or activity.

Participant observer	An external person who joins in an event or activity by agreement of the group to understand the process or issues more fully.
Partner	An organisation from any sector that works in a collaborative arrangement (eg a partnership) with other organisations. Often represented by one individual.
Partnering agreement	A document outlining: the objectives of a partnership; detailing planned activities; resource commitments; as well as roles, responsibilities and decision-making procedures.
Partnership	A cross-sector alliance in which individuals, groups or organisations agree to: work together to fulfil an obligation or undertake a specific task; share the risks as well as the benefits; and review the relationship regularly, revising their agreement as necessary.
Partnership practitioner	Any individual involved in a practical way in a partnership.
Partnership unit	A team or department located within an organisation specifically tasked with building and / or developing partnership relationships on the organisation's behalf.
Plenary	A meeting between all participants at a workshop or training programme (eg smaller working groups meeting to feed back to the whole group).
Private sector	An umbrella term incorporating the business / corporate / for-profit sector.
Public sector	An umbrella term incorporating government (at national, regional and local levels), intergovernmental agencies and public service organisations.
Rapporteur	A person who is chosen to give verbal feedback on behalf of a group.
Resource mobilisation	The process of drawing resources (eg human, technical, knowledge as well as financial) into a partnership to enable it to deliver its programme of work.
Risk assessment	Examination of the potential for pitfalls or negative impact prior to undertaking an activity.
Review	An assessment of how things are going. In this context used to describe the process of reflecting on the effectiveness, efficiency and value of the partnership.
Review facilitator	An individual, usually external to the partnership, whose role is to manage the partnership review process.
Scoping	The early exploration of an idea or project by looking at data from a wide range of sources.
Sector / multi-sector	In this context the word sector refers to one of the three main structures in society: the public sector, business or civil society.
Sky's the limit	A phrase meaning 'anything is possible'.
Stakeholder	The business sector uses this term to refer to all those who are linked to it, including shareholders, employees, customers, suppliers and communities in which business operates. Increasingly adopted by partnership initiatives to mean all who are involved with or affected by the activity.
Steering group	A group made up representatives of the partner organisations that meets regularly to oversee the work in progress and to steer its future direction.

Storytelling	A way of communicating that requires imagination in the listener or reader to understand events or meaning.
Sustainable development	Where activities of today do not compromise the health and wellbeing of people or the environment in future. Also used to mean activities that have a way of being resourced that is not dependent on external funding interventions.
Sustainable outcomes	Where the activities and outcomes are sustained in the long term (eg in this context irrespective of the partnership's own continuation).
Synthesis / synthesising	The process of combining different ideas and information in a way that clarifies and adds value to the material collected.
Tracking	A way of observing partnership activity over time to be able to chart progress or patterns of behaviour or activity that may be useful in the future.
Transaction costs	The real cost (in terms of commitment, reputation and time as well as cash) involved in putting together a partnership or proposal (enabling those involved to assess whether the return is worth the investment).
Workshop	A type of meeting that involves a group of people in a participatory format.

Resource List

Publications

Tennyson, R (re-printed, 2005) *The Partnering Toolbook*, London
Available in 15 languages as well as English from: **www.ThePartneringInitiative.org**

Tennyson, R (2003) *Institutionalising Partnerships: Lessons from the Front Line*, London, International Business Leaders Forum.

Tennyson, R and Bowman, A (2003) *The Learning Curve: Building Effective Corporate Community Engagement*, London, International Business Leaders Forum.

Warner, M (2003) *The New Broker, Brokering Partnerships for Development*, London, Overseas Development Institute.

Warner, M and Sullivan, R (Ed) *Putting Partnerships to Work: Strategic Alliances for Development between Government, the Private Sector and Civil Society*, London, Greenleaf Publishing.

Warner, M (2003) *Partnership for Sustainable Development: Do We Need Partnership Brokers?* London, Overseas Development Institute
www.odi.org.uk/pppg/activities/country_level/odpci/msp/Paper2.pdf

Courses and Professional Development

Business in the Environment Seminar
HRH The Prince of Wales's Business & the Environment Programme, run by Cambridge Programme for Industry, assists senior executives and influential decision makers to integrate sustainability principles into their organisations. This programme is the largest and longest-running executive learning programme on sustainable business. For more information visit:
www3.cpi.cam.ac.uk/index.php/content/view/32/79

Case Study Project
The Case Study project is a one-year programme developed by The Partnering Initiative in collaboration with the Alcan Prize for Sustainability and SEED (Supporting Entrepreneurs for Environment and Development, a partnership between IUCN, UNDP and UNEP). The project aims to provide insights into the process of successful cross-sector partnering and establish a benchmark for good practice in case study work. For more information visit:
www.thepartneringinitiative.org/mainpages/pp/workshops/index.php

Corporate-Community Partnerships: What Makes Them Work, Why They Fail
This programme is run by The Centre for Corporate Citizenship at Boston College. It is designed for managers from corporate and field locations who have initiated or intend to initiate collaborative partnerships for social problem solving with various players.
For more information visit: **www.bcccc.net**

Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (PBAS)
In recognition of the complexity of brokering partnerships, the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) have launched the PBAS Scheme. The Scheme includes skills development during a one-week residential course, three months of mentored professional practice and two pieces of assessed work.
For more information visit: **www.odi.org.uk/pppg/pbas**

Post-graduate Certificate in Cross-sector Partnership (PCCP)
PCCP is a one-year part-time course at Masters level designed for those in full-time employment. The course is jointly run by The University of Cambridge Programme for Industry and the International Business Leaders Forum. It aims to build a cadre of people from all sectors who are at the cutting edge of the cross-sector partnership movement and who can take a lead in their respective organisations, sectors and societies.
For more information visit: **www.cpi.cam.ac.uk/pccp/home.html**

Managing Corporate Community Investment
Managing Corporate Community Investment is run by Ashridge Business School. This course enables you to develop strategies for the benefit of the community and your organisation. Participants have the opportunity to explore issues involved in managing corporate community investment from a wide range of different approaches. For more information visit: **www.ashridge.org.uk**

Websites (including case studies)

Accountability: **www.accountability.org.uk**

Cambridge Programme for Industry: **www3.cpi.cam.ac.uk**

Ethical Trading Initiative: **www.ethicaltrade.org**

Global Knowledge Partnership: **www.globalknowledge.org**

International Business Leaders Forum: **www.iblf.org**

Our Community: **www.ourcommunity.com.au/business/business_main.jsp**

Overseas Development Institute: **www.odi.org.uk**

Partnerships Central: **http://partnershipscentral.org**

Resource Centre for Social Dimensions of Business Practice: **www.resource-centre.org**

SEED: **www.seedinit.org**

The Equator Principles: **www.equator-principles.com**

The Partnering Initiative: **www.thepartneringinitiative.org**

UN Commission for Sustainable Development:
http://webapps01.un.org/dsd/partnerships/public/browse.do

UN Global Compact: **www.unglobalcompact.org/Portal**

WBCSD: **www.wbcsd.ch**

UN Learning Community: **www.unssc.org/web1/services/lm.asp**

People

To find an external broker or someone with specialist skills to undertake a specific partnering role you may like to consult:

PBAS Scheme
This provides information about accredited partnership brokers (located in many different parts of the world) who may be available for brokering work. For more information visit:
www.odi.org.uk/pppg/pbas/accredited.html

The Partnering Initiative Resource Bank
The Resource Bank hosts a 'People Pool' and provides a service designed to match specific needs of partnerships or organisations involved in partnering to the skills of consultants available for brokering work. Partnership practitioners / brokers can also apply to join the People Pool themselves by visiting:
http://ThePartneringInitiative.org/mainpages/rb/people



Acknowledgements

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Updated material from another publication, *Managing Partnerships: Tools for Mobilising the Public Sector, Business and Civil Society as Partners in Development*, written Ros Tennyson in 1998, has also been incorporated here – including many of the fine (and apparently timeless) cartoons of Guy Venables.

I am very grateful to Michael Warner for his permission to include some of the brokering definitions and concepts that he and I have developed for use in the Partnership Brokers Accreditation Scheme (PBAS). PBAS is the first accredited training programme for professional partnership brokers and is run by the UK's Overseas Development Institute and the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF). When Michael, Sasha and I created this scheme, we had no idea whether or not it would 'fly'… but check out the website and you will see that it did (Resource List, page 105).

It has been of great value to me to have the continuing support and enthusiasm of the other partner organisations involved in this publication. Thanks are due particularly to three individuals – John Hall (Rio Tinto), Sean Southey (UNDP) and David Murphy (UNSSC) – all of whom are partnership pioneers in their different ways in their respective organisations.

Last, but not least, I would like to take this opportunity to give heartfelt thanks to my mega-industrious colleagues in the Partnership and Learning Team at the IBLF – Amanda, Eva, Sasha and Sehr – whose professional inputs and personal support while I have been writing this book have been unwavering and invaluable.

Ros Tennyson
July, 2005

the Brokering guidebook

Produced by:

The Prince of Wales International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) is a not-for-profit organisation established in 1990 to promote responsible business practices that benefit business and society and contribute to sustainable development. The IBLF believes that business has a significant role to play in addressing the downsides of globalisation: poverty, social inequality and environmental degradation. With a membership of over 80 companies from around the world, the IBLF works at strategic levels as well as in developing / transitional countries. The IBLF has established an international reputation in its cutting-edge cross-sector partnership-building work. For more information visit: www.iblf.org

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UNDP

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) is the UN's global development network, advocating for change and connecting countries to knowledge, experience and resources to help people build better lives. UNDP is active in 166 countries, working with them on developing and implementing their own solutions to global and national development challenges. World leaders have pledged to achieve the Millennium Development Goals, including the overarching goal of cutting poverty in half by 2015. UNDP's network links and coordinates global and national efforts to reach these goals. For more information visit: www.undp.org

UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM STAFF COLLEGE

The UN System Staff College (UNSSC) serves as a distinct, system-wide knowledge-management and learning institution. UNSSC focuses on economic and social development, peace and security, and the internal management of the UN system. Its 'Partnerships and the Global Compact' programme encompasses learning and capacity-building projects that support the development of cross-sector partnerships between UN organisations and their key stakeholders including government agencies, private sector companies, civil society organisations and academic institutions. Its clients are primarily the organisations that make up the UN system. UNSSC is based in Turin, Italy. For more information visit: www.unssc.org

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Established in January 2004, The Partnering Initiative is a collaboration between the International Business Leaders Forum and the University of Cambridge Programme for Industry. The Partnering Initiative offers practical support, expertise, resources and information on partnering through a portfolio of activities including research, evaluation, project development, practice-based case studies and the provision of skills-based training.

the partnering initiative

Developing the art and science of cross sector partnership