

Learning
Training
Transforming

An introduction to Partnership Brokering



What is Partnership Brokering?

Multi-stakeholder collaboration (aka 'partnerships') is a development approach that aims to bring greater innovation, reach, integration, cost-effectiveness, influence and / or sustainability. All too often, however, partnerships fall far short of expectation and potential because the partnering process is not well understood or effectively managed.

Partnership brokering involves individuals or organisations working with partners to strengthen the partnering process and ensure that multi-stakeholder collaboration, whether at local, national or international levels, achieves its ambitious and important development goals. Professional and skilled partnership brokering can, and increasingly does, make all the difference.

Key skills and attributes involved

Effective partnership brokering requires a range of skills including:

- Oral & written communication
- Interest-based negotiation
- Facilitation of complex processes
- Innovative & strategic thinking

Successful partnership brokers tend to have the following attributes:

- Ability to be observant & reflective
- Willingness to carry a level of risk, challenge & uncertainty
- Persistence and determination
- A sense of humour

Sustaining Outcomes: Brokering roles can include supporting partners in their:

- Discussions on 'moving on' choices
- Recognition and celebration of the partnership's achievements
- Reaching agreement on type of information for the public domain
- Identification of further champions and spheres of influence
- Work to ensure outcomes are sustained
- Management of closure / moving on procedures

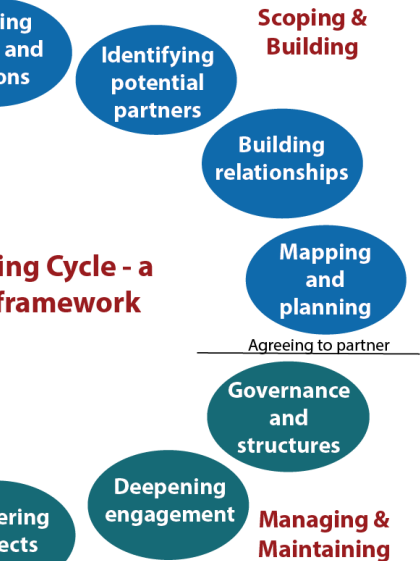


Reviewing & Revising: Brokering roles can include helping partners to:

- Agree evaluation procedures
- Assess the impact of the partnership
- Draw out & apply lessons
- Review efficiency of the partnership
- Review the added value to partners
- Brainstorm new ideas / developments
- Make any necessary changes to project or partnering arrangements

Scoping & Building: Brokering roles in this phase can include:

- Initiating the idea of partnering
- Making the case to potential partners/donors/ decision makers
- Energising and enthusing
- Scoping the possibilities
- Early relationship building
- Managing expectations
- Initial / outline planning
- Helping partners to reach agreement



Managing & Maintaining: Brokering roles can include working with partners to:

- Secure resource commitments
- Build governance arrangements
- Deepen organisational engagement
- Develop a communications plan
- Build partnering capacity
- Problem solve constructively
- Agree benchmarks for later evaluation

What do partnership brokers require?

To do the job well, those operating in this role require:

- Recognition and endorsement for the important behind-the-scenes work they do
- Clarity with regard to their tasks, responsibilities and deliverables
- Mechanisms for engaging with partners individually and collectively
- Opportunities to reflect on what the partners and the partnership require next
- Time to review their role as things change and as they increasingly hand over to others

Further references

- *What do Partnership Brokers Do? An Enquiry in Practice*
- *Appointing a Partnership Broker*
- *Partnership Brokering Roles & Skills*
- *Betwixt & Between: The Journal for Partnership Brokering*

Training courses, professional accreditation and partnership brokering support services

All available via:
www.partnershipbrokers.org

Principles of Partnership Brokering Good Practice

1. Keep in touch with **new developments** in theory and practices of brokering partnerships
2. Apply the **most appropriate tools** at each stage of the partnering process and innovate where necessary
3. Take every opportunity to **build partnering capacity** in others
4. Refrain from promoting a partnering process when **aware of a realistic alternative** that would deliver better outcomes
5. Avoid taking actions as part of a brokering process that might involve risk without **prior endorsement** of these actions from all parties likely to be impacted
6. Demonstrate a **responsible attitude** by raising concerns of an ethical or legal nature with partners when necessary
7. Know ones own **competence limitations** and the circumstances in which it is appropriate to request assistance from, or hand over brokering responsibility to, others.

This leaflet is produced by the Partnership Brokers Association which is the foremost international organisation dedicated to setting standards and promoting professional partnership brokering for a more equitable and sustainable world.

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