

Working in partnership: A sourcebook



New Opportunities Fund
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Working in partnership:

A sourcebook

Acknowledgements

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- Mersey Valley Partnership
- Boarded Barns & Melbourne Community Garden Project, Chelmsford
- Hartcliffe Community Campus, Bristol
- The ARC Healthy Living Centre, Irvinestown
- St. Mellons Healthy Living Centre, Cardiff
- Help the Aged / Macmillan SeniorLink Project
- Community Advocacy Partnership Across Birmingham City (CAPACITY)
- Stirling Health & Wellbeing Alliance, Stirling
- North East Institute of FE & HE and partners, Antrim
- Peterborough Early Years Development & Childcare Partnership
- Hamilton Oxford Schools Partnership, Oxford
- Wigan Early Years & Childcare Team and partners, Wigan

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The power-interest matrix on page 12 is an amended version of one in 'Exploring Corporate Strategy' (1993), Johnson G. and Scholes K., Prentice-Hall, London.

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The New Opportunities Fund provides Lottery funding for health, education and environment projects which will help create lasting improvements to quality of life, particularly in disadvantaged communities.

We believe that effective partnership working is an essential factor in securing successful projects and outcomes. Partnership working between different organisations in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors creates new opportunities, better services and helps to develop sustainability for the projects we fund. We also acknowledge that partnership working brings many challenges. We are committed to supporting projects based on partnership and to working with organisations to overcome the challenges and realise the benefits that such working brings.

The New Opportunities Fund has developed this Sourcebook to encourage organisations and groups to work in partnership and to help them to do so effectively. It is intended as a practical source of ideas and suggestions for both new and existing partnerships.

The Sourcebook does not contain ready-made answers, but is designed to help you think through issues. It also points you to other organisations, websites and publications that you may find helpful. As such, this guide is intended to be a starting point. We hope you find it useful.

It is also available on the New Opportunities Fund website at www.nof.org.uk

Who should use this Sourcebook?

Partnerships come in all shapes and sizes, but the issues that affect them are often the same or very similar. This Sourcebook is intended to be of relevance to a wide range of partnerships, including those that are:

- Formal or informal
- Local, regional or national
- Multi-sector or single sector
- Small or large
- Single-issue or broadly based
- That involve communities and areas of disadvantage

The Sourcebook is intended to be of use for people and organisations from all sectors. Whilst primarily aimed at those organisations currently funded by, or seeking, New Opportunities Fund resources, it may also have a wider interest for other partnerships.

Partnership working can be a very difficult process. Most partnerships make mistakes. Most must also contend with new challenges and changing circumstances on a regular basis. Every partnership that wants to develop should therefore be continuously looking at how it can improve. This Sourcebook is designed to help you do this, at whatever stage your partnership may happen to be.

About this Sourcebook

This Sourcebook has been prepared for the New Opportunities Fund and it draws on established good practice, academic research and new research.

The new research undertaken for this Sourcebook consists of 12 case studies of current partnerships from around the UK, that provide illustrations and experiences of real partnerships in action. The case studies have provided examples of good practice and also lessons that have been learnt from problems they have experienced. Both types of experience, positive and negative, have been drawn on and used to inform the development of this Sourcebook. A summary of the 12 partnerships is provided on pages 4 to 6.

We have sought to identify the key stages that most partnerships go through – the 'lifecycle' of a partnership – and, within these, to identify the most important issues that partnerships must often address. For each issue we seek to present:

- The realities of partnership working – it can often be difficult and 'messy'
- The opportunities that arise through partnership
- The things that can go wrong
- What works in practice

There are several important things to note about this Sourcebook. Firstly, it is not intended to be prescriptive.

There are often several ways of achieving the same objective. The aim of the Sourcebook is to provide you with a range of suggestions, advice and options to help you.

Secondly, the Sourcebook alone cannot provide specific answers to problems or challenges that individual partnerships may have. It provides ideas and advice which you can use to think through different situations and suggestions on how to proceed. Each section also provides advice about other publications and sources of advice that may be of help to you.

Thirdly, this is not an academic report or study – it is a guide intended for practitioners. Many good studies of partnerships and partnership working exist and if you are interested in following up some issues in greater depth, we have highlighted a selection of 'further reading' in Section 6.

How to use the Sourcebook

The Sourcebook is designed so that you can dip in and out of it easily – you may only be interested in some sections of it.

The main part of the Sourcebook is divided into five sections. Each section broadly represents a stage in a partnership's development or 'life' where there are different sets of decisions to be made.

Each of the five sections in the Sourcebook is structured in the same way as follows:

Key Challenges

For each stage of partnership development, a series of Key Challenges have been identified. These are not exhaustive and not all partnerships will experience them in the same way, but they represent the most common challenges faced by many partnerships, often relating to important decisions that must be made. Under each heading, we describe:

- Some of the **key issues** which we think partners or partnerships will want to address together with advice on what some partnerships have found useful
- **Case study examples** relevant to the education, health and environment sectors, to illustrate key points

Self-Evaluation Checklist

At the end of each section, we have provided a checklist of questions to assist you in reviewing your own situation – You may wish to use this as an individual organisation or complete it as a partnership exercise.

At various points through the Sourcebook we also highlight additional **Further Information** that may be useful (from other guides or organisations). Much has already been written on partnership working, and so we have not sought to duplicate it here. We also **signpost** readers to other sections in this Sourcebook that may be of further relevance.

Structure of the Sourcebook

Sections and Key Challenges

I Choosing to work in partnership

- 1:1 Should we work in partnership?
- 1:2 Who should our partners be?
- 1:3 How do we establish working relationships?
- 1:4 Involving the community and voluntary sectors

2 Setting up – the early stages

- 2:1 Defining roles and responsibilities
- 2:2 Establishing an appropriate structure
- 2:3 Establishing common goals
- 2:4 Building the capacity of partners
- 2:5 How to involve communities in the partnership

3 Planning and Delivery

- 3:1 Effective action planning
- 3:2 Effective monitoring and management
- 3:3 Maintaining the involvement of partners
- 3:4 Improving communication

4 Evaluating progress

- 4:1 Developing an evaluation strategy
- 4:2 Evaluating partnership working


5 Moving on

- 5:1 Do we need to change?
- 5:2 Preparing a forward strategy

The final section (Section 6) suggests further sources of information and other publications that you may be interested in.

The 12 Case Studies



Where a case study example sheds light on a particular point, a full description is given alongside the relevant Challenge, and indicated by the case study sign:  These examples show how others have used the possibilities and met the challenges of working in partnership.

HEALTH

Community Advocacy Partnership Across Birmingham City (CAPACITY)

This partnership was put together by the Queen Elizabeth University Hospital in Birmingham to research and develop ways of plugging service gaps in the provision of palliative care for sufferers of cancer, particularly those from ethnic minorities. There are 18 partners including the Hospital, NHS Primary Care Groups, hospices, community representatives and a Housing Association. The partnership was awarded funding for three years under the New Opportunities Fund's living with cancer programme.

Living with Cancer SeniorLink Project

Help the Aged and Macmillan Cancer Relief have formed an informal partnership at a national level to help introduce and develop the use of SeniorLink units with cancer patients. The units can be easily installed in a patient's house and provide an emergency call service, allowing patients who are very ill to return to live at home but still able to access help if required. Help the Aged provide the units and the service, and Macmillan Nurses will provide one of the ways that patients can be made aware of the service. The project has been funded through the New Opportunities Fund living with cancer programme.

St. Mellons Healthy Living Centre Project, Cardiff, Wales

The St. Mellons Forum is a large community-based organisation that has been working for nearly 10 years in a disadvantaged area of Cardiff. The Forum established a sub-group to steer the development of a healthy living centre. The partners include Cardiff County Council, Bro Taf Health Authority, the local Health Board, the Save the Children Fund, and residents groups. The project has been awarded New Opportunities Fund support and is in the early stages of implementation, with the Health Authority as lead partner.

The ARC Healthy Living Centre, Co. Fermanagh, Northern Ireland

The Irvinestown Community Partnership, a broad association of local groups in Irvinestown, has joined together with a range of local partners to establish a healthy living centre. A new company called ARC Ltd. (Activating Rural Communities), has been set up to manage the centre, which is being supported by the New Opportunities Fund. Partners include the local housing executive, the district council, and the Irvinestown Trustee Enterprise Company. The centre is situated in a refurbished row of terraced houses in a deprived residential area, providing a wide range of services.

Health Hub, Stirling Health & Wellbeing Alliance

The Stirling Health and Wellbeing Alliance was set up in 1997 as a company limited by guarantee, with charitable status, to promote a more holistic approach to health and wellbeing in the Stirling district. It is led by the voluntary and community sectors, with support from key partners in the public sector, including the Health Board, the NHS Primary Care Trust and Stirling Council. It has also been supported by the Stirling Partnership for Urban Regeneration. The Alliance has been awarded a grant from the New Opportunities Fund to set up a healthy living centre. This will be known as the Health Hub and will provide an innovative range of services, including diet and nutrition advice, health education, complementary therapy, reminiscence work and signposting to other health services. Its services will primarily be targeted on seven deprived areas in Stirling.

ENVIRONMENT

Hartcliffe Community Campus, Bristol

Hartcliffe Community Campus is a charitable organisation based in a deprived area of Bristol, led by a multi-sector Board. Its aim is to develop and improve a 57-acre site, which includes two schools and a college, into a campus that serves the local community more effectively through better educational facilities, improved sports and recreational opportunities and an enhanced environment. The project began in 1996 and the charity was established in 1998. (This project has not been funded by the New Opportunities Fund to date.)

Mersey Valley Partnership

The Mersey Valley Partnership is based in the central part of the Mersey Valley, covering the Runcorn, Warrington and Widnes area. It is primarily concerned with the environment and its aims include conserving and enhancing the countryside, improving access to it, developing community involvement and action and promoting sustainable development. The Partnership is currently led by a steering group of nine organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors, with much support provided by two of the partners, the local councils in Warrington and Halton. The Partnership has been working, in various forms, for over 20 years. (This project has not been funded by the New Opportunities Fund to date).

Boarded Barns & Melbourne Community Garden Project, Chelmsford

The Busy Bees Residents Association, William Sutton Trust and Chelmsford Borough Council have developed an informal partnership to provide a 'community garden' in the Boarded Barns area of Chelmsford. The project is located in a deprived area and is seeking to transform an area of open space into an attractive and accessible garden for local people to enjoy. Other aims of the project include community empowerment, the strengthening of community identity, good publicity for the area and a decrease in vandalism. The partnership is also receiving funding, or other support, from Essex County Council, Writtle College, Chelmsford College, Essex Police, Chelmsford Primary Care Group, the Youth Offending Team, Chelmsford Community Safety Group and Chelmsford Youth Nuisance Group. The Partnership is applying for funding from other sources, including the Countryside Agency's "Doorstep Greens" programme, which is part of the New Opportunities Fund's green spaces and sustainable communities programme.

EDUCATION

Community Access to Lifelong Learning, Co. Antrim, Northern Ireland

The North East Institute of FE and HE and its four partners (the Family Caring Centre, Randalstown Arches Association, Magherafell Women's Group and Workspace Draperstown) in Antrim have been awarded funding by the New Opportunities Fund to develop a network of four lifelong learning centres to benefit their communities. The partnership is only recently established and is in the process of beginning its delivery programme.

Peterborough Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership

The Peterborough Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership (EYDCP) has been operating in its current form since 1998, although it is based on an existing partnership of longer standing. It has been led by the City Council and has received New Opportunities Fund support to create a large number of new childcare places with a consortium of providers. Partners include the Council and representatives of the private, voluntary and public sector providers of childcare services.

Hamilton Oxford Schools Partnership, Oxford

The Hamilton Oxford Schools Partnership was established to deliver an 'Out of School Hours Learning Programme' in 10 schools in Oxford, largely funded by the New Opportunities Fund. Partners include the schools, a community arts group and a community education group. The Partnership is built on, and draws extensively on, an existing Education Action Zone Partnership in Oxford. Activities being delivered include homework clubs, music and dance opportunities and breakfast clubs, to engage and motivate schoolchildren.

Out of School Hours Childcare, Wigan

The Early Years & Childcare Team from Wigan MBC have led the development of a growing programme of childcare activities in Wigan, partly funded by the New Opportunities Fund, and in partnership with a large number of public, private and voluntary sector providers. The programme forms part of the work of Wigan's wider Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership. Wigan MBC, as lead partner, provides a lot of assistance to small groups wishing to participate in delivering childcare services, including voluntary groups.

And finally...

We want to present a grounded picture of partnership working, and to offer practical and tested advice. We cannot promise that everything will run smoothly if you follow this advice but we hope you find this thought-provoking and, above all, useful.

Choosing to work in partnership

This Section is for organisations considering the option of working more closely with others or even setting up a formal partnership. You may be considering applying to the New Opportunities Fund for the first time. Why should you get involved in partnership working? Is it appropriate for your situation? What are the benefits of doing so?

This section will help you think through the issues and provides advice and suggestions on how to proceed. The Key Challenges covered by this section include the following:

Challenge 1:1 Should we work in partnership?	9
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What do we mean by 'partnership'?

Firstly, what do we mean by partnership? A partnership brings together organisations, often from across the public, private, voluntary or community sectors, to pursue a common vision and to work together to achieve more than any of them could on their own. It can be informal or formal. It can involve a handful of organisations or a wide range. It may be a local partnership focused on a small area such as a neighbourhood, or it could be a city-wide, region-wide or even a national partnership.

For the purposes of this Sourcebook, and in view of the wide range of activities funded by the New Opportunities Fund, we have taken a broad view of partnership. We have defined a partnership simply as:

“a process in which two or more organisations or groups work together to achieve a common goal, and do so in such a way that they achieve more effective outcomes than by working separately.”

This guide has been developed in conjunction with 12 such partnerships many of whom have accessed New Opportunities Fund support. Partnerships can vary in many ways:

- Sector – they may involve organisations from all sectors – public, private, voluntary and community – or just from a single sector
- Vision – they may focus on a single issue (or even project) or be long term and broadly based
- Structure – they could be relatively informal arrangements (e.g. a 'voluntary association') or formalised in a legal company
- Focus – they could have a local, regional or national focus
- Size – they could have only a handful of partners or a large number
- Scale – they could have significant resources or be operating on a 'shoestring'
- Community participation – they could actively involve local communities in areas of disadvantage

Why do partnerships form?

Your partnership may be forming or may have developed for a number of different reasons. Typical explanations people give are:

- Our partnership evolved naturally from long standing working relationships
- We were motivated by a recognition of particular common problems which all of our organisations believed it important to tackle
- We wanted to get funding for a project which is of great importance to us
- We wanted to be able to draw on the skills and expertise of another organisation
- We wanted to motivate and enable other organisations to change
- We were required by government policy to develop a partnership
- We were motivated to draw together with others in order to access a new funding opportunity

Many partnerships may of course be a result of several of the above factors. Most usually change over time too. Indeed, no two partnerships are the same.

The rest of this section goes on to highlight some of the key challenges and decisions for those thinking of establishing partnership arrangements. It offers suggestions about how you might do this.



Further information

Theory of Partnerships

Much has been written about different types of partnerships, why they form, how they differ and models of development. If you are interested to learn more about this, some suggested reading can be found in Section 6.

Challenge 1:1 Should we work in partnership?

In practice, organisations and groups get involved in partnerships in a variety of ways. You could find that:

- You are the driving force in encouraging partners to come together to deal with a particular issue or opportunity
- You hear of discussions which are going on and lobby to get involved
- You get a call asking you to co-write a funding application
- You get asked to put your name to a funding application as it reaches its final stages
- Your name is used on a bid or expression of interest and you get to hear about it later
- You get asked to help with the delivery of one part of a programme, designed by a partnership which has accessed funding
- A small partnership in which you are a partner gets involved in a relationship with a larger umbrella group

The process may be planned or more opportunistic. Whatever the circumstances, you may find yourself contemplating whether to establish a closer working relationship with other organisations or groups. It is important to think through the risks and benefits of this at the earliest opportunity, so that you make the right decision.

Is partnership working appropriate for your organisation?

There are three sets of issues that you might consider when thinking about partnership:

Benefits – what will your organisation (or project) get out of the relationship? What can you offer that will provide benefits to others? Will the arrangement provide some 'added value' that is not otherwise available?

Costs – what are the 'transaction costs' of the process of working with others? What is the time commitment that will be required? Are there any financial costs?

Risks – will working with others present new risks? Will it reduce existing risks?

A more detailed set of questions is provided in the checklist at the end of this section, to help you consider this. These issues need to be weighed against each other in relation to the particular opportunity that you are faced with. Partnership working is not always appropriate in every situation. Even where it is appropriate, there are different ways that organisations can be involved (see Challenge 1:3).

So, with these issues in mind:

- Your organisation's involvement in any partnership should be carefully considered by your management team...is there a case for it?
- You need to weigh the opportunities of involvement against the costs and risks
- Appropriate resources should be identified (whether cash or time), allocated to partnership working and ring fenced – if you are going to do it, do it right!

You should also remember that organisations can work together at different levels – perhaps on a project or perhaps at a strategic level. One partnership may in fact consist of partnership working at several levels and between different organisations.

Should you as an individual be involved?

You personally may be asked – or expected – to represent your organisation within a partnership. For some people this is an intrinsic part of their role, for others it is an exciting new opportunity, and for some an additional and unwanted burden. The personal circumstances and motivations of partners have an impact upon the nature of partnership working and what can be achieved.

Therefore, you need to consider:

Do you have the time?

Meetings can be frequent (particularly in the early stages) and may be held out of normal working hours

Do you have the commitment to attend meetings?

If you don't then by not saying so you could be preventing someone from contributing who does

Do you have the necessary skills and the confidence?

If you feel you don't, other partners may face the same dilemma, partnership training sessions could then be valuable for a range of reasons

These practical considerations aside, it is worth spending some time thinking what you personally want out of your involvement. Career advancement, developing a wider network, developing new skills or re-invigorating your working life are all common personal reasons.

If you can articulate what you want from the experience, then you will know whether or not you are getting there and, if not, you are better placed to do something about it.



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 1:2

Who should our partners be?

HEALTH

The Stirling Health and Wellbeing Alliance which manages the new Health Hub in Stirling has drawn on the experience and support of a range of partners. The key public sector partners are the local Council in Stirling, which provides a direct link to the wider Stirling Partnership for Urban Regeneration and the Forth Valley Health Board and Forth Valley NHS Primary Care Trust. These organisations provide both funding as well as knowledge of, and influence over, other local health provision. There is also a private sector representative and five local residents, some representing local community groups. These people offer local knowledge and experience, as well as a way of 'grounding' the development of the Hub in the local community.

EDUCATION

The Peterborough Early Years Development and Child Care Partnership (EYDCP) has been operating in its current form since 1998. It has been led by the City Council and has received NOF funding to create a large number of new childcare places. Partners include several departments of the Council (education, social services and early years/child care team) and representatives of the private, voluntary and public sector providers of child care services, including nurseries, play groups and day centres. Cont. p.12

Challenge 1:2

Who should our partners be?

Partners often get involved in a range of planned, and unplanned ways:

- Partners are invited to join a core group
- Those who turn up to initial meetings become core members
- Partners may demand to be involved
- Partners may be courted by influential figures to gain their involvement

However, at some point in their development, partnerships need to formally review their composition to ensure that the right partners are involved, and involved in an appropriate way. For example, if key organisations are missing from around the table, achieving your objectives may be much harder, or even impossible.

Which organisations and groups should be involved?

There are no hard and fast rules on who should be involved in different types of initiatives or projects.

However, it is useful to consider why organisations should be involved.

There are broadly three different roles that organisations can play in a partnership:

- Key decision-makers – these are the organisations that are centrally involved in decision making about strategies and spending
- Consultees – these are the organisations who need consulting for their advice or views but who do not need to be centrally involved in all decision-making
- Informed parties – these are other observers or interested organisations who should be kept informed but who are unlikely to have strong views about the decisions being made

Organisations may change roles over time as the partnership and its projects evolve. The challenge is to decide which organisations should be encouraged/invited to play which roles. Some organisations may be happier as consultees rather than core decision-makers. Similarly, some traditional consultees may perhaps be ready to be considered as decision makers. How do you decide?

The following ideas should help.

1. Make a **long list** of the stakeholders in your proposed initiative...this comprises all those organisations with some interest or involvement in the initiative. Most may be obvious to you, some may not. Consider:

- Funders or potential funders
- Statutory providers
- Other providers
- Community and voluntary groups
- Expert groups and advisory organisations
- Groups or organisations likely to be affected by the outcomes of the proposed initiative

2. Consider where each of the above organisations belongs in the **Power – Interest** matrix below. **Power** relates to how much influence an organisation can bring to the partnership to help it achieve its objectives. Influence could be effected through funding, statutory regulation or other forms of more informal lobbying or persuasion. **Interest** relates to how much of a stake or concern an organisation or group may have in the outcomes being worked towards.

		INTEREST	
		LOW	HIGH
POWER	LOW	A. Non-partners	B. Those to keep informed
	HIGH	C. Consultees	D. Key decision makers

There may also be other factors to take into account in agreeing who the key partners should be. Some organisations may have particular skills, knowledge and expertise relevant to the work which the partnership is seeking to pursue which may be valuable. Other organisations may feel as though they ought to be involved because of who they are, or what they have done in the past. These possibilities should be considered carefully.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 1:2

Cont. from p.11

ENVIRONMENT

The Mersey Valley Partnership is currently led by a Steering Committee comprising nine organisations. There are three public sector organisations (the Countryside Agency and the two local authorities), three voluntary sector organisations (the Woodland Trust, the Country Landowners Association and the Mersey Basin Campaign) and three local private sector organisations, two companies and an institute. All organisations have one member on the Steering Committee, except the local authorities, who are each represented by three local councillors. The Committee also works with a range of other organisations on a project by project basis.



What about existing partnerships?

The Hamilton Oxford Schools Partnership was set up largely to devise and deliver a range of out of school hours learning programmes across 10 schools. Its members are actually largely drawn from an existing educational partnership leading the city's Education Action Zone. The new partnership is effectively an extension and development of the existing partnership, and many of their activities are integrated. Such an arrangement makes good use of an existing partnership and prevents unnecessary duplication. However, it is also important to ensure that each partner is clear about its role and responsibilities in each partnership.



Further information

Choosing partners

See Section 4 for further information on the evaluation of partnerships, including reviewing partners. Other tools and methods also exist to help you think about who to work with; some of the publications listed in Section 6 include these. If you are applying to the New Opportunities Fund for a grant, the application guidance may also suggest some organisations that you may want to contact.

If you are setting up a new partnership, it can often be helpful to talk to a similar existing partnership in your area about what they have done.

Ultimately, the process of agreeing who should be partners is one of discussion and negotiation. The end result needs to be sustainable and workable in practice.

The important point is that not everyone who is interested needs to be involved as a key player. Also, not everyone who is powerful or influential necessarily needs to be encouraged to become a key player.

The word 'partner' is often used interchangeably in many situations to imply many different types of roles.

The terminology that you use, however, should not obscure the fact that each organisation that is involved should have its own clearly differentiated role. These may differ between organisations.

What about existing partnerships?

Since the early 1990s, the number of partnerships has proliferated significantly in all parts of the UK. They are now seen as a key tool, at all levels, from national to regional to local. Many organisations may be part of several partnerships. However, an increasingly heard complaint is that of 'partnership fatigue', as more demands for partnership working are placed on organisations. In some areas, there can be what seems like a bewildering network of partnerships covering overlapping areas and working towards different (or overlapping) objectives.

In considering partnership, you may wish to ascertain whether there is already an appropriate partnership in existence which you should make contact with, or even join. At the very least, you should be aware of any partnerships covering your area that may have a bearing on your proposed initiative. Many produce strategies that may be of relevance to your activities. It is in everyone's interests for new initiatives to dovetail with established ones where practical. It can also help to improve the effectiveness of new investments in an area, where it works with the grain of other investments already programmed there.

To help you think about who you might need to approach and discuss your initiative with, we have described some of the existing networks of partnerships funded by Government on pages 14 to 16. The list is not exhaustive and will change over time. There will also be many partnerships in your area not funded by Government that may be unique to your area or region. The list is intended simply as a starting point to help you identify any relevant partnerships. Most partnerships will be happy to explain their activities to you and signpost you on to other organisations that may be more relevant. Community and voluntary sector groups may be able to get advice from a local CVS or similar organisation (see Section 2:2 for a list of contacts).

A summary of some Government funded partnerships in the UK

Type of Partnership	Description	Government sponsor
ENGLAND		
Local Strategic Partnerships	Every local authority in England has been invited to establish a broadly based partnership to cover each local authority area, including all sectors. Their tasks will include preparing a Community Plan and, for some, a Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy.	DTLR
Single Regeneration Budget Partnerships	Multi-sector regeneration partnerships, often focused on small areas of deprivation, delivering time-limited programmes.	DTLR
New Deal for Community Partnerships	39 community-led regeneration partnerships focused on some of England's most deprived neighbourhoods. Delivering 10 year programmes of comprehensive renewal.	DTLR
Sure Start Partnerships	A network of local partnerships seeking to promote the well-being of families and pre-school children.	DWP
Health Action Zones	Strategic partnerships covering relatively large areas, tackling health inequalities, led by Health Authorities.	DoH
Education Action Zones	Strategic partnerships covering a number of schools, providing additional funding and support to those schools, to raise attainment	DFES
Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships	Partnerships covering local authority areas, involving a wide range of organisations involved in providing childcare and pre-school development opportunities.	DFES
Connexions	Local authority-led partnerships seeking to promote information, advice and guidance services for young people.	DFES
Sport Action Zones	Local partnerships, funded through Sport England, to enhance sporting opportunities, particularly in deprived areas	DCMS
Crime & Disorder Partnerships	Partnerships at local authority level, including the Police and the Probation Service, to tackle crime and promote community safety.	DTLR/Home Office

A summary of some Government funded partnerships in the UK. (cont.)

Type of Partnership	Description	Government sponsor
SCOTLAND		
Social Inclusion Partnerships	Multi-sector regeneration partnerships, often focused on small areas of deprivation, delivering time-limited programmes. Also includes a small number of thematic partnerships.	Scottish Executive
Community Planning Partnerships	Local Authority led strategic planning mechanisms, often with a focus on excluded client groups and areas.	Scottish Executive
Adult Guidance Networks	Local partnerships to promote guidance services and raise quality of provision.	Scottish Executive
Pathfinder Initiatives	Short-term Executive funded posts to explore decentralised and customer focused service delivery in excluded areas.	Scottish Executive
Childcare Partnerships	Voluntary sector led initiatives to raise the volume and quality of childcare.	Scottish Executive
Initiative at the Edge	Supports remote and fragile communities by influencing service delivery – a time-limited initiative.	Scottish Executive

A summary of some Government funded partnerships in the UK. (cont.)

Type of Partnership	Description	Government sponsor
WALES		
Education Action Zones, Health Action Zones, Sure Start, Connexions, EU Objective 1 & 2 Partnerships, Early Years Development and Childcare Partnerships	These broadly work as they do in England, but operated through the Welsh Assembly.	National Assembly for Wales
People in Community Programme	A programme that seeks to involve local people, working in partnership with public agencies, to tackle social disadvantage in local deprived areas.	National Assembly for Wales
Communities First	A new regeneration programme to address the challenges in Wales' 100 most deprived communities.	National Assembly for Wales
Regeneration partnerships	Usually set up if WDA is carrying out regeneration activity and involving local authorities and other public, private and voluntary sector partners.	Welsh Development Agency
NORTHERN IRELAND		
Local Strategic Partnerships & neighbourhood renewal structures	At the local authority level, Local Strategic Partnerships are evolving, with broad responsibilities for promoting social, economic and environmental improvements. Structures at neighbourhood level in some deprived areas will be developed.	Northern Ireland Executive



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 1:3

Establishing constructive working relationships

Help the Aged, a national charity, have operated a SeniorLink service for some years, providing emergency call assistance for elderly people at home. This provides them with greater independence in being able to live at home, and also provides peace of mind. They became interested in expanding the use of such a service to benefit people suffering a terminal illness and who wished to spend their final days at home but were concerned about being able to access help quickly should they need it.

Help the Aged believed that the use of SeniorLink had an important role to play in such palliative care and began by developing a business plan to explore how such a service could be developed. Various options were explored but it quickly became clear that they would need help in making contact with the individual patients who might benefit from such a service. Help the Aged knew that they did not have the necessary regional and local networks to be able to do this alone. Hence, the charity began to look for a partner who could provide the access and links to cancer patients.

After a number of contacts and discussions Macmillan Cancer Care agreed to be the national partner for this project. They are able to provide access to a national network of Macmillan Nurses and hospices dealing with terminally ill cancer patients. This provides a mechanism through which the SeniorLink service can be made known and used. The project is now being driven by a project co-ordinator employed by Help the Aged. Cont. p.18

Challenge 1:3

How do we establish working relationships?

Some partnerships consist of organisations and people who have worked together for years. Others consist of organisations perhaps making meaningful contact for the first time. For the latter group, first impressions do count, and the way that you approach others will be important, especially if they are not yet committed to working with you. This section offers some suggestions on how you might go about this.

Establishing constructive working relationships

In approaching other groups and organisations to establish working relationships, there are three helpful tips that are especially important in the early stages:

Be clear about what you want

Most people are busy. It helps to have a clear idea of what it is that you want from the other organisation. Make sure that you communicate this to them as succinctly as possible.

Speak to the right people

Finding the right person to speak to and to involve is crucial. They should be someone whose remit or job covers the area or issue that you are interested in, and who has some influence or seniority in the organisation. It may take several calls or even meetings to find the right person. Face to face meetings can help to emphasise your seriousness and build relationships and trust. An informal approach is better at first, before making formal proposals.

Try to understand what they want

It helps to have an understanding of the constraints and priorities of the other organisation. If you are not familiar with them, you may want to do some informal research into what their aims and priorities are. Are you able to offer them some benefits or opportunities? Partnerships should be 'win-win' situations.

In developing a longer term relationship with other organisations there are three further factors to bear in mind. These are consistently cited by existing partnerships as 'lessons learnt'...

... **partnerships are about people**, first and foremost. The most effective partnerships are often those that consist of committed, hard working people who communicate and work well with each other. The quality of relationships between individuals is crucial.

Nowhere is this more important than in the first stages of partnership development when organisations seek to establish new or different arrangements. Always make sure that newcomers and new colleagues are properly introduced and briefed about the partnership and who they will be working with. First impressions count.

...**trust and respect** are central to effective partnerships. If the core partners do not regard each other as 'equals' or as reliable partners, it may be very difficult to work together. This can often be a problem for community and voluntary groups trying to work with statutory or private organisations. Organisations that are seeking to work across sectors or with new organisations may find that they have unhelpful 'stereotypical' views of each other. These obstacles will need to be addressed, if trust is to be established and built up.

...building relationships **takes time**. Many of today's most successful partnerships have taken years to evolve and develop. Sometimes, organisations can have completely different working cultures and so initial contact can sometimes produce a 'bumpy ride' for both sides. Some friction is almost inevitable. However, people and organisations can, and do, change; this is one of the main rewards of partnership working. If your organisation encounters problems working with others, try to be patient and give it time.

Section 2 offers some ideas about how you might go on to actively develop a new set of relationships and **build the capacity** of partners, especially those for whom this kind of partnership working perhaps represents something of a **culture change**. For some partnerships, it may be appropriate to undertake such activities at an earlier stage.

Who should represent an organisation?

Consider carefully which individuals are involved in the partnership. You need to get someone with sufficient authority to be able to take decisions on the behalf of their organisation, and whose responsibilities overlap those of the aims of the partnership. The chief executive of an organisation is not necessarily the most appropriate person; there may well be others.

More junior members of an organisation may be well intentioned but may just not have enough influence to 'get things done'. If they are involved, arrangements should be in place to ensure that the senior decision-makers from their organisation are properly engaged.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 1:3

Establishing constructive working relationships. Cont. from p.17

The partnership between Help the Aged and Macmillan is project-specific and only informal, but it has provided benefits to both partners and to the people each of them is trying to serve. The process of finding and working with a partner was built upon several principles:

1. Help the Aged had clearly defined their requirements for this project...they knew what role they were looking for a partner to fulfil.
2. They had decided to look for a partner with similar values and outlook.
3. Help the Aged had also made efforts to put themselves 'in their partner's shoes' and understand what Macmillan would want and perhaps be concerned about in such an arrangement. This appreciation of the costs and benefits as seen from the 'other side' was an important factor in helping persuade Macmillan to participate and also ensure that the project would meet their needs also – a 'win-win' project.
4. The partners met several times to discuss the proposed project and to ensure that the appropriate people from each organisation were involved.



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 1:4

Involving voluntary groups

EXAMPLE 1 - PETERBOROUGH

The development of childcare provision across Peterborough has involved significant partnership working between the City Council and a host of small providers, many from the voluntary sector, but also from the private and public sectors. In fact, the needs of many small groups is often the same, regardless of their sector, particularly if they are new. The Partnership has developed a comprehensive approach to identifying, supporting and working with new providers of childcare places. The approach has four key features:

- A dedicated and responsive team – childcare co-ordinators are open to approaches from any organisation or individual wanting to discuss the possibility of providing new services. They meet prospective providers and discuss what the provider may be able to offer and what would be expected of them in return. Face to face advice and support is available to individuals and groups
- A rigorous process – if prospective providers wish to pursue an opportunity, they are required to undertake a rigorous assessment of the childcare needs they are seeking to fulfil and their approach to doing so. This involves assessing the nature and scale of the local need, working up a business plan, and meeting stakeholders (e.g. a school, social services, parents, etc.) in the area to consider the business plan and any issues that arise in it. Only then are prospective providers encouraged and assisted to make an application for funding
- A manual - the Partnership has also developed a guidance manual for new childcare providers, called "The Success Pack". This contains guidance on the design of activities, advice on procedures, legal requirements and financial management, marketing, managing premises and recruitment. With respect to

Challenge 1:4 Involving the voluntary and community sectors

The voluntary and community sectors include a large, diverse and rich array of groups and organisations throughout the UK. They have a lot to offer in terms of skills, expertise and experience. However, many groups may be small and not well resourced, and may find it difficult to get involved in partnerships or projects. The New Opportunities Fund is committed to promoting the involvement of such people and groups in appropriate ways.

This section offers some suggestions about how this might be achieved in the early stages of a partnership's development. It should be of interest both to voluntary and community groups themselves, as well as organisations in other sectors whose approach can affect the ability of smaller groups to be active partners. The effective involvement of voluntary and community groups requires commitment and willingness from both the groups themselves and also the other public and private partners.

Involving the voluntary sector

The voluntary sector consists of a diverse range of organisations from large well established national organisations to small groups of volunteers working at a neighbourhood level.

Voluntary organisations often provide valuable services, are 'not for profit', and are often an important source of innovation.

Emerging partnerships should recognise the opportunities that relevant voluntary organisations may play; indeed, some partnerships may be led by the voluntary sector. Whilst large organisations need no special support, the challenge for partnerships with respect to the voluntary sector is in finding ways to work with the smaller, less well resourced groups.

The next part of this section – 'involving local communities' – may well be relevant to some voluntary groups also. It considers how individuals and groups can be involved in partnerships. For small groups, the challenges of community and voluntary sectors are often very similar.

Nevertheless, voluntary groups may also have more specialist needs – legal, financial, etc. Much information and advice already exists for voluntary groups on this, and there is not space to reproduce it here. The Further Information box in Challenge 2:2 therefore gives details of some of the organisations from which further advice can be sought if wished.

The case study examples in this section also describe the way that two partnerships have sought to involve local voluntary groups (and others) as providers.

Involving local communities – does it matter?

The process of involving local communities is an important one. It means involving those people who live in your area, and who are likely to be the main beneficiaries of your partnership and its activities. You may be trying to target particular sections of the community (for example, young people) or particular neighbourhoods or even users of a particular service or facility.

The process of getting community (or 'user' or 'client') involvement, and generating consensual agreement is not straightforward for a number of reasons:

- The community often does not speak with one voice, within any community or client group there will be differences of opinion – sometimes saying conflicting things
- Partnerships are tackling difficult issues – if there was a straightforward way to address problems it would probably have been done already
- Individuals and groups may not be used to being involved in formal partnerships and may not feel that they have the confidence or skills to do so effectively
- There is a danger of actual or perceived 'token' involvement if representation on a Board or management group is not backed up in any way

- Time constraints often mean that projects start, and money gets spent before communities have been involved in any meaningful way

However, despite the difficulties, it is important and worthwhile to involve the community. There are numerous advantages:

- Community groups often know local problems best – and an accurate diagnosis of the problem provides a sound basis for planning remedies
- Creative thinking can often come from groups whose minds are not constrained by thoughts of funding regimes, organisational structures and policy directives
- Solutions which are accepted and supported by community / client groups are more likely to be sustainable
- Local people and client groups represent an immense resource of time, energy, know how and commitment

Many studies of regeneration initiatives in particular have regularly highlighted the importance of local communities being actively involved in developing strategies and projects that affect them.

Issues of community or client group involvement in partnerships are extremely complex and vary from one interest group to another. The New Opportunities Fund is keen to ensure that partnerships do involve those they are seeking to support. This can best be ensured if the partnership develops a clear strategy for community involvement at an early stage.

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 1:4

Involving voluntary groups

Cont. from p.19

the latter, the Pack provides model job descriptions, example job adverts, etc. The Pack has proved very popular with users and is very practical

- A network – the existence of the wider EYDC partnership provides a local network through which advice, experience and support is usually available. Good practice can be identified and disseminated and difficult questions fed through to those who can help.

EXAMPLE 2 - WIGAN

A slightly different approach to involving voluntary (and private sector) groups has been developed by the Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership in Wigan. When developing a new bid for childcare funding, the Wigan MBC Early Years & Child Care (EYCC) Team use an open process to find service providers. Their consortium bids to date have included up to five providers at a time. In order to secure the involvement of childcare providers, and also stimulate the creation and growth of such providers, Wigan EYCC Team hold periodic 'open workshops' to which potential providers are invited. The purpose of the workshops are:

- To inform providers about funding opportunities
- To provide advice about developing project proposals
- To put providers in touch with each other
- To highlight the support and advice available from the Team and also others

Workshops are limited in size, to prevent them from being too intimidating. Invitees include representatives from the private, voluntary and public sectors. They are about two hours long. They also serve as an opportunity to introduce groups to support and advice available, including from the EYCC Team, the Social Services regulation and inspection team and the local Council for Voluntary Services. Cont. p.21

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 1:4

Involving voluntary groups

Cont. from p.20

For those groups that are still interested in following the workshop, support is given in developing a business plan and cashflow. The development worker discusses the requirements with the group and provides half a day of time (one working session) for each of the business plan and cash flow.

Once funding is approved, the Team also provides ongoing advice to providers during delivery. At the start of the process, a development worker visits the provider to explain the management and monitoring requirements and to give them the 'monitoring and evaluation pack'.

Small community and voluntary groups also often need funds in advance of expenditure, as they do not have the cash reserves to undertake significant expenditure, with repayments in arrears. Wigan Council have agreed to provide advance payments to some groups as their solution to this problem. This approach does require careful monitoring by the organisation providing the funding, to ensure that expenditure is appropriate.

The key points of Wigan's approach are:

- Holding an open workshop where information can be provided and face to face discussions held with individuals and groups
- Providing hands-on support in developing a business plan and cash flow
- Providing face to face advice and a 'start up' pack when funding is approved
- Providing funding 'in advance of need', rather than in arrears

Degrees of involvement

Community or client involvement in partnership can take a range of forms. Often this range is referred to as "the ladder of participation". The further along the ladder you progress, the more involved the community becomes in the partnership's decision-making. What level is appropriate for your partnership?

The ladder below will help you decide.

You should also consider whether the nature of community involvement should change over time as the partnership and its tasks develop. Should the community have the same role in each stage?

Involving communities is a complex task. The solutions will vary between partnerships, but effective involvement is possible.

	What it means	How its done
Information	Passing on information about what the partnership plans to do to those whom it will affect.	Newsletters, press releases, open meetings, displays.
Consultation	Seeking views which can be considered by the partnership when planning strategy or service delivery.	Questionnaire survey, consultation document.
Involvement	Occasional involvement in partnership's decision making process.	Sub groups or special "task forces", Planning for Real events, citizens panels.
Participation	Full involvement in the strategy, planning and delivery aspects of the partnership's work.	Membership with appropriate voting rights of the partnership's decision making forum/group.

Community Involvement Strategies

At an early stage in your partnership's development, it may be helpful to establish a simple strategy for what you are trying to achieve. The strategy could involve the following considerations:

Who should be involved?

The term 'community' can mean different things. Which geographical area does it cover? Do you wish to involve residents of an area? These are the individuals and households that are the ultimate beneficiaries of your activities. They may offer a wide range of views. Are there perhaps particular sections of the community that you wish to communicate with (e.g. young people, minority ethnic communities, the unemployed)? Or are there organised community (and voluntary) groups who are active? These groups may have a lot to offer but may not be representative of the whole community.

What are the aims of involving the community?

Be clear about why the community should be involved. What are they being expected to bring to the partnership?

How much involvement is appropriate?

Following directly on from the previous question, is the issue of what role the community should play. Are they being consulted on specific issues on a one-off basis, or are they to be partners over the longer term? Both are legitimate roles, but which ones are appropriate for your partnership?

Remember that roles can change over time. Involvement may take time to build up.

At what stages should they be involved?

With respect to your partnership and project – what tasks should the community be involved in? All or only some? Is there a timetable for this? If you are developing a project to be submitted for funding, can the community be involved in its development?

How will the involvement be achieved?

Define what approaches and methods you can use to communicate with, and involve, local people and/or groups. How will you make first contact with people? What information should they be given? Will translations into other languages apart from English be necessary? Is any training or capacity building necessary? Many examples of techniques and good practice exist, and some are described in Section 2 of this guide.

Taking communities for granted or ignoring them can lead to cynicism and distrust. If local communities are to be involved in partnerships, they must be given time and support to do so. Be realistic. Community involvement takes time. If you are developing a project and have not involved the community to date, you might think about whether it is better to delay the funding application until a community involvement strategy is in place. Some further suggestions (and sources of further information) on how to involve communities in partnerships is offered in Section 2



Further information

Support for voluntary groups

Some of the organisations that can provide advice and support to groups are listed in the Further Information box in Challenge 2:2.

Section I Choosing to work in partnership

The purpose of this checklist is to help you consider whether partnership working is appropriate.

You may wish to photocopy this page and use it with your partners. You can of course also adapt the form if you wish to suit your own circumstances. An electronic version of the form is available to download on the New Opportunities Fund website at www.nof.org.uk

It may be helpful at an early stage to consider the factors below when contemplating a new venture or new working relationships. Try to be specific about the project, opportunity or goals for which such working is being considered. Use the form, and discuss the issues, with your potential partners.

Possible benefits include:	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comment on significance
Securing additional resources for your organisation or a project	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Improving your ability to identify needs and plan for the future	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Developing your organisation's skills and capability	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Expanding the scale of your capacity to deliver	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Improving the co-ordination and quality of services 'on the ground' – making them more joined up	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Creating new ideas and services through collaborative thinking and doing	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Making strategies and services more responsive to community/user experiences and views	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Improving long term sustainability of services	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Possible costs include both time and cash costs:		
Administration of meetings and decision-making processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Your organisation's input/investment into research, strategy development or projects	<input type="checkbox"/>	
More extensive consultation processes	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Possible risks include:		
The level of commitment to the partnership may not be clear at the outset	<input type="checkbox"/>	
You may lose some autonomy	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Some of the partners may not deliver their contribution	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Your new alliance may mean that you are viewed differently by some organisations	<input type="checkbox"/>	
It may pull your organisation in new policy directions	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Setting up- the early stages

This Section is for organisations who are setting up new partnerships or new working arrangements with others. You may be looking to the New Opportunities Fund for support for a particular project. What is the best way to structure your partnership? How should you work together?

This section will help you think through the issues and provides advice and suggestions on how to proceed. The Key Challenges covered by this section include the following:

Challenge 2:1 Defining roles and responsibilities	25
Challenge 2:2 Establishing an appropriate structure	29
Challenge 2:3 Establishing common goals	31
Challenge 2:4 Building the capacity of partners	32
Challenge 2:5 How to involve communities in the partnership	33
Self-Evaluation Checklist	42

The previous section noted that partnerships may come together as a strategically planned response to a particular issue, or they may emerge from a rather more haphazard and opportunistic process. Either way, the early phases of development will set both a pattern of behaviour and the direction of activities for subsequent months and years.

This section focuses on the structure and ways of working adopted by the partnership – issues more relevant to the 'setting up' stage of a partnership. The next section looks at issues of particular relevance to how partnerships deliver. In practice of course, the development of a partnership may be such that you are working out internal systems and structures at the same time as actually delivering projects. Thus, Sections 2 and 3 may not necessarily follow each other in chronological order!

A period of opportunity and risk

Early phases of partnership development can be very interesting, even exciting, times for those involved. Involvement in the early phases throws up a number of opportunities. You can:

- Build new working relationships
- Contribute to decisions regarding the purpose of the partnership and possibly, how to spend significant "unallocated" resources

- Reinvigorate local governance
- Change the way key stakeholders think, take decisions or do business

But there are also risks. For example:

- Enthusiasm at new relations and opportunities can disguise intrinsic and fundamental differences
- Over-reliance on bi-partisan relationships with the lead partner can underplay differences between other partners
- Partners may be reluctant to raise misgivings or problems early on for fear of damaging potential relationships

Therefore, in the early stages it is important for your partnership to set a number of priorities associated with developing relationships and mutual understanding, as well as planning actions. These challenges include:

- Defining roles and responsibilities
- Establishing a workable structure
- Establishing a clear focus
- Building the capacity of key partners to get involved

Each of these is addressed in this section. A comprehensive checklist of issues to consider at this stage in your partnership's development is included at the end of this section.

How to proceed

Partnerships should make time in their early stages to think about the issues identified in this section.

Suggestions for how to proceed include:

Plan

It is often helpful to establish a 'timeplan' to define what tasks need to be done, and when. The checklist at the end of this section may help to do this.

Meet and discuss

Allocate time for partners to meet together. This may require several meetings, perhaps including an 'away day' event. An external facilitator may help you think through issues. Partners may need to get to know each other, as well as discuss issues and make decisions. Being sociable is an important part of partnership building.

Build capacity

Partner organisations and individual representatives may need some support or training. This should be 'designed in' to the setting up process.

The process of deciding on roles, responsibilities and structures needs to include all the key partners. The decisions made will have an important impact on how decisions are made in future and who has power and influence in the partnership.



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 2:1

Partnership arrangements

STIRLING HEALTH & WELLBEING ALLIANCE

The new Health Hub in Stirling will be owned, managed and operated by the Stirling Health and Wellbeing Alliance, which is a company limited by guarantee. The Alliance is working in partnership with Stirling Council, Forth Valley Primary Care NHS Trust and Forth Valley Health Board, together with local residents in seven regeneration areas in Stirling where the services of the new Health Hub are being targeted. The Alliance is led by a Management Committee on which all partners are represented. It is currently chaired by a local resident, and has half of its membership drawn from the local community. The Alliance employs a full time Director and will be employing further staff to manage and operate the Hub.

The offices of Chair, Treasurer and Secretary for the Alliance are held by representatives of the community or voluntary sectors, which helps to emphasise the local 'ownership' of the Health Hub. The other partners on the Management Committee have provided advice and support to residents to assist them in their roles, where necessary.

The Alliance is developing plans to involve local residents further in decision-making through the development of local community committees. These will allow residents to feed into how the Alliance and the Health Hub operates. Cont.p.26

Challenge 2:1 Defining roles and responsibilities

Partnership arrangements vary considerably. A publication of this size cannot cover every possible variation. However, within most partnerships it is possible to identify similar types of roles that organisations can play. The challenge is to agree which partners should play which roles and to agree a workable division of responsibilities. The next Challenge (2:2) looks in more detail at the legal and more formal dimensions of partnerships, but in this section we take a look at roles and responsibilities.

At the outset, it is important to acknowledge that not all partners will have, or feel that they have, equal weight or power in decision-making processes. When deciding upon roles and responsibilities therefore, it will help for all partners to be honest about this issue and take it into account. The final decision on what role each organisation has should be agreed by all partners and should seek to provide for a reasonable balance of power between partners.

A typical partnership arrangement might have three levels or components:

(1) A decision-making component

This could be a Board or Management Committee for example, and is the executive decision-making part of the partnership. It makes the final decisions, but is unlikely to be involved in the day to day management of projects or activities;

(2) A management component

This could be a single person or organisation or a team of people or organisations who are responsible for implementing and managing the partnership's activities from day to day; and

(3) A consultation/advisory component

This could be committees, sub-committees, fora and/or a citizen's panel, whose role is to think, advise and offer feedback to the partnership. They may or may not be a formal part of the partnership. If they are, they may have some delegated responsibilities.

Some examples of different partnership arrangements are shown in the case studies. Each of the above three components are discussed in more detail below.

(1) The Decision-Making Component

Although decisions are taken at all levels of partnerships, this is the group or body whose role is take ultimate responsibility for the partnership and its activities. The tasks of this body – often called the Board or Management Committee – could include:

- Agreeing the vision, aims and objectives of the partnership
- Agreeing the constitution / memorandum of association or similar
- Formulating policies and strategies
- Giving final approval for expenditure on activities
- Providing oversight and steering for the day to day management function
- Ensuring that management, monitoring and financial systems are in place and are adequate to meet audit and accountability requirements
- Reviewing progress at regular intervals

Particular issues to consider include the size of the group, who should be represented upon it and defining a clear role for the group, and clear responsibilities for individual members.

Some tips gleaned from experience include the following:

- The inclusion of more than around 12 partners on a partnership Board generally can create an unwieldy structure with the potential for difficult or possibly counter-productive meetings
- The chair of the partnership Board does not necessarily have to come from the lead partner; if the role is highly sensitive a system of "rolling chairs" can be introduced. You may want to review the Chair each year as a matter of course
- Check whether Board representatives need to have their decisions ratified by their own organisations before they can be considered 'binding'
- Partners on the board should keep their long term objectives firmly in mind and concentrate on strategic issues
- Most boards/committees proceed on a consensual basis... only the most controversial decisions should require votes
- Avoid making 'corridor decisions' – decisions by a small group of people 'in the corridor' before meetings. Important decisions should be made collectively and inclusively in Board meetings
- The role of a Board member is primarily to further the interests of the partnership as a whole, pursuing its collective vision, not just the interest of that person's partner organisation

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 2:1

Partnership arrangements

Cont. from p.25

CAPACITY, BIRMINGHAM

The CAPACITY Partnership in Birmingham is focused on developing new palliative care services that will benefit people suffering from cancer. The Partnership is run by a steering group that meets quarterly and makes the key decisions, and a working group that meets monthly and ensures that activities are being managed effectively. There are 18 partners including the University Hospital Palliative Care Service, a Housing Association, voluntary sector-run hospices, a Chinese community centre, five NHS Primary Care Groups, several Acute Trusts, Birmingham City Council and an NHS GP practice.

They also set up time-limited task focused sub-groups from time to time to explore and address particular issues that the main decision-making groups do not have time to consider fully. Other 'experts' from outside the Partnership are often co-opted onto these groups as well to add to their experience and skills.

The Partnership is not formally and legally constituted, and financial and contractual issues are either dealt with by the lead partner (the Hospital) or whichever partner is most relevant. The roles and expectations of some partners have been defined through the use of service level agreements (SLAs) with the lead partner.

The Partnership recently appointed a full time Project Manager. This appointment was deliberately delayed for several months until the Partnership had been set up and its aims and objectives had been clearly defined. This ensured that an appropriate job profile was agreed before the appointment was made.

Cont.p.27

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 2: I Partnership arrangements

Cont. from p.26

COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT, CHELMSFORD

The Busy Bees Residents Association, William Sutton Trust, Chelmsford Borough Council and a landscape artist have formed an informal partnership to provide a community garden in the Boarded Barns area of Chelmsford. The project was initiated by a local resident who contacted Chelmsford Borough Council expressing her concerns about the lack of recreational activities available in the area. She enquired whether the open space in the Boarded Barns area could be developed into a Community Garden.

The partners originally came together through informal links. The informal nature of the partnership has continued in the setting up and development of the project. The lead partners, Busy Bees Residents Association, William Sutton Trust and Chelmsford Borough Council, meet regularly to discuss the project and the wider partnership group – other supporters and advisors – meet approximately every two months. The landscape artist reports project progress and issues to both meetings. The informal nature of the partnership's structure and its working is an arrangement that works for this project. The partnership has formed to promote and secure a single project, and is therefore very task-focused, and indeed, time-limited. An informal structure has worked in capturing the interest and help of the community in developing the project. When the project is complete, the maintenance and management of the garden will rest with the Borough Council and the community.

(2) The Management Component

The management team or secretariat also works in partnership but at an operational level. Its role is to implement the decisions of the Board / decision-making body. Typical tasks include:

- Day to day management or co-ordination of projects and activities
- Contracting with delivery organisations and providers
- Operating financial systems and maintaining records
- Monitoring activities
- Line management of any partnership staff
- Undertaking research and compiling reports to the Board / decision-making group

Key points to consider include:

The management function should be independent

Its role is to implement the wishes of the Board / decision-making group, not to pursue its own agenda. This is particularly important where the management function consists of people employed by one of the partners, or is perhaps located within the offices of a partner. Problems can sometimes arise if there is even a perception of bias, and should be addressed as early as possible. These issues are unlikely to arise where the partnership has established itself as a limited company or other legal body.

Lines of reporting should be very clear

Are the management team accountable to the lead partner or to the partnership?

Delegated powers should be clearly defined

Ensures that the partnership is happy that the management team are implementing their wishes, but going no further.

The importance of location

A management team that is physically located in the premises of one of the partners will inevitably be associated with that partner's agenda, in perception if not actually. You may wish to consider the implications of this.

(3) The Consultation / Advisory Component

The role of any such committee or group or forum should be clearly set out and understood. It can have many different purposes and is often a useful way of exploring key issues in greater depth or involving stakeholders from outside of the partnership. There are a number of issues you might consider:

1. What status does it have? Is there an agreement that the partnership will accept the views of any sub-committees? If they don't are they obliged to give clear reasons?
2. Will the group report to the management team or directly to the Board/decision-making body?
3. Where is the committee/group to secure its information and facts from? What reports, minutes, etc from the partnership will it receive?
4. Who is responsible for administering/co-ordinating the group?

The Lead Partner

As part of the thinking and decision-making about roles and responsibilities, there is a particular set of issues about the 'lead partner'. Many partnerships identify a lead partner. In many cases funding organisations, including the New Opportunities Fund, expect a lead partner to be nominated for financial accountability.

For some partners the notion of having a lead partner can appear contradictory to their desire to be "equal" partners. Equality of status, or of responsibility, or voting rights, are all issues which your partnership will need to address – but they are not by themselves automatically impossible if a lead partner is nominated. It is possible to reconcile democratic decision-making with having a lead partner/project driver, as long as partners have clear roles and responsibilities.

The lead partner can assume a number of different roles, including:

- Convenor of meetings
- Home of the partnership secretariat
- External liaison with policy makers, funders, press and community and client groups
- Accountable body (in terms of financial accountability)
- Champion of the partnership

Lead partners often represent the public face of the partnership. Their role is to drive forward the partnership's agenda. It is not to dominate the partnership's agenda. The partnership should clearly identify the role and remit of the lead partner, as part of its discussions and deliberations at this stage. Lead partners themselves will need to demonstrate that they can be trusted not to 'dominate' the partnership and exclude others from discussions.

The organisation that takes the role of lead partner does not have to come from the public sector, although it often does. The organisation taking the role could also change during the lifetime of the partnership. The role should be reviewed from time to time by the partnership. Any changes in lead partner should always be notified to your funders in advance.



Further information

Structure and constitutions

Organisations that can provide advice include:

NACVS (www.nacvs.org.uk or 0114 278 6636)
The National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service can signpost you to your local CVS.

NCVO (www.ncvo-vol.org.uk or 020 7713 6161)
The National Council for Voluntary Organisations provides information and support and can put you in touch with local support services.

SCVO (www.scvo.org.uk or 0131 556 3882) The Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations provides similar services in Scotland and can put you in touch with your local CVS.

NICVA (www.nicva.org.uk or 028 9087 7777)
The Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action provides the same services for Northern Ireland.

WCVA (www.wcva.org.uk or 029 20431700) The Wales Council for Voluntary Action provides a similar range of services for groups in Wales.

Development Trusts Association

(www.dta.org.uk) is a membership-based network of Trusts from around the UK (except Scotland) which supports those interested in setting up Trusts.

Community Development

Foundation (www.cdf.org.uk) promotes and studies community development. It regularly publishes research findings.

Charity Commission (www.charity-commission.gov.uk or 0870 333 0123) The Commission regulates and supports charities in England and Wales and provides information on applying for charitable status. In Scotland or Northern Ireland, application for charitable status is made to the Inland Revenue. SCVO or NICVA can advise.

Challenge 2:2

Establishing an appropriate structure

Having decided upon roles and responsibilities, you will need to consider what structures, particularly what legal structures, are appropriate for the partnership. This is often called a constitution. There is no ideal type of arrangement and, indeed, it is often the case that several different options may work equally well. You should consider the pros and cons of each option and decide which offers the best 'package' of benefits.

The table opposite summarises some of the main alternatives and some of the pros and cons. All are common vehicles used by partnerships.

Please note that law varies between the different parts of the UK and that you should always seek professional legal advice on these matters. Further advice and guidance can be sought from various sources including those identified under 'Further Information'.

Option	Description	Pros and Cons
Company Limited by Guarantee	Establishes a legal company which is 'not for profit' and which is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. Requires annual accounts to be submitted to Companies House.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Offers flexibility ● Legal status allows the Company to employ staff, enter into contracts and make payments ● Creates an 'independent' organisation which is separate from any particular partner ● Offers some protection to individuals against personal liability ● Costs of annual auditing are incurred
Partnership Agreement	A legally binding agreement between two or more organisations. Can be for any purpose and can take numerous forms (e.g. joint venture).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● More appropriate for project specific or other clearly delineated activities ● Legally binding agreement
Voluntary Association	Organisations agree to co-operate and may define their mutual commitment in a memorandum. The partnership has no legal status or recognition.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Easy and cheap to establish ● Flexible and informal ● Cannot employ staff or enter into contracts, so must rely on a partner organisation to do this on its behalf
<p>In addition to the above options, there are also two further variations that can be combined with some of the above:</p>		
Development Trust	A local independent 'not-for-profit', community-based organisation pursuing regeneration objectives. It often has a physical development focus.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Does not confer additional legal powers or tax benefits ● There is a growing network of such Trusts in the UK
Charitable Status	This is a legally recognised status that can only be awarded to an organisation that is exclusively charitable in its objectives. It can apply to companies or other types of organisation. You should seek advice from the appropriate authority on the criteria (see information box opposite).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Charitable status provides credibility and status ● Activities are largely tax exempt



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 2:3

Establishing common goals

AN ENVISIONING PROCESS

The partnership setting up the ARC Healthy Living Centre in Irvinestown, Northern Ireland established a common vision fairly early in the process. Their vision statement is:

“the provision of a centre within which to base a range of holistic health improvement programmes and initiatives co-ordinated, owned and managed by a strong community partnership and a range of strategic agencies and organisations. The project will design rural solutions to rural problems and address local health needs over a broad catchment area in a practical, efficient, relevant, equitable and socially acceptable manner.”

Partners believe that the actual process of agreeing the vision was as important as the final statement itself. They created an opportunity for partners to discuss the project proposal at an early stage and brainstorm ideas. An external and independent facilitator was brought in to help them think through the different issues.

Other ways that have helped to build consensus and mutual support between partners included team building residential weekends and a study visit to an existing healthy living centre in London. The visit proved inspirational to partners and boosted confidence that their own project could work.

Challenge 2:3

Establishing common goals

The purpose of a partnership should be clear to all of you who are involved and also to people from outside who come into contact with it. In some cases this is relatively straightforward – those which are set up to bring pre-existing services together may be quite simple to define and to understand. Others, set up to tackle issues of poverty or deprivation for example, can be complex and could quite quickly lose focus.

It is therefore important that a partnership defines its own boundaries and its own purpose. Generally this is done through the development of a shared **vision** or **mission**. Many partnerships develop vision or mission statements. The two are different but are often used interchangeably:

- **A vision** describes why the partnership exists, and presents a statement of what the partnership would like to see happen. It should be inspirational
- **A mission statement** is about how the partnership will go about achieving the vision, and may comprise a series of aims and objectives

It is important to have a written vision as a statement of the partnership's purpose – it can be referred to, to frame decisions, and to provide the basis for evaluation. The way that the vision is developed and agreed is also important; all partners should be involved so that they feel equal 'ownership' of it. It should also relate clearly to the issues and challenges being tackled, and be as specific as possible.

It is even more important that the partners actually share the vision and also the ways of working - what the partnership seeks to do and how it seeks to do it. If partners are pulling in different directions, it will be difficult to deliver a successful project.

Challenge 2:4

Building the capacity of partners

Working in partnership may be a new experience for some organisations. Even for those used to it, getting involved in a new initiative or partnership often means meeting new agencies, groups and people. Not all partners may have had the same experience of this type of working; not all may have the same skills or confidence. For some it may involve a change of working culture.

So, it may be appropriate to review partners' skills and feelings towards joint working and assess whether any training, relationship building or other work may be helpful. A failure to address such issues may lead to problems arising, with some partners becoming frustrated or others becoming too dominant.

There are different types of skills and knowledge required:

- **Interpersonal skills**, such as good communication, presentation, negotiation and time management skills
- **Technical skills**, such as knowledge and understanding of financial data, statistical analysis and use of ICT
- **Content knowledge**, including knowledge of the subject / local area, of the policy environment and local organisations

It should not be assumed that all partners possess these skills, or indeed that community or voluntary sector partners are the most likely to require additional support. Training the whole partnership team in these skills and knowledge can help develop better mutual understanding. Ways of building capacity include partnership development meetings / away days, formal training and even informal discussions between partners.



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 2:4

Building the capacity of partners

TEAM BUILDING EVENTS

The Hartcliffe Community Campus have used a variety of team building events to strengthen relationships between partners. They held an Away Day shortly after a number of new members had joined to introduce people to each other, and to allow people to raise issues that are not always easy to raise in every day meetings, or which require a longer discussion than is often possible. The Campus have also organised 'study visits' for small groups. A group of local headteachers and the college principal together visited a 'lifelong learning centre' in Southampton to learn from the experience of an existing project, and understand what might be possible in their own area. Such visits can sometimes be valuable in inspiring people and strengthening the partnership's vision of what can be achieved.



Further information

Community involvement

Many publications and guides exist offering advice on how to involve communities and what lessons have been learnt in recent years, particularly by regeneration partnerships. Benchmarking toolkits also exist, which can be used to assess the extent of community involvement in a partnership in more detail. Advice also exists on how to promote race equality. Some key guides are listed in Section 6

Challenge 2:5

How to involve communities in the partnership

Section 1 explored some of the reasons about why involving communities is important, and how the nature of that involvement may differ. In this section, we suggest some of the various methods and tools that have been used by partnerships to achieve involvement.

Involving communities takes time. Start early in the process, leave plenty of time, have a clear strategy but be flexible. Be aware that different methods will suit different purposes. Questions to ask are:

- Who are we trying to reach?
- What do we want to get out of this process?
- Are there some approaches more likely to work with these target groups?

Examples of different possible approaches are described on pages 34 to 37. The list is by no means exhaustive and what may work in one area may not work in another, but it is hopefully a source of ideas. Many of the suggestions could also be combined with one another also. These are followed by examples from our case studies.

It is always worth checking with your funders, including the New Opportunities Fund, whether their funds can be used for the activities that you are proposing.

Other suggestions on how to involve communities include:

- Having a local office in the community or where the partnership can be found
- Using appropriate language in all communications, whether it is just local phrases or ethnic minority languages
- Using professional outreach workers
- Using local or otherwise appropriate venues for meetings
- Addressing practical obstacles to involvement such as problems with transport, caring responsibilities or hours of work – perhaps experiment with the timing of meetings (different days, mornings/evenings, etc)
- Making information which is sent out directly relevant to the target audience
- Using small meetings, rather than large open meetings where possible, as small ones are more inclusive and allow people to contribute more

Where individuals or groups are involved in a partnership on a longer-term basis (that is, not just consultees), thought should be given to the need for capacity building. This simply means any training or support that will enable the community or their representatives to participate more easily and more confidently. The needs of minority ethnic communities should be carefully considered in particular. Cultural and language differences should not prevent inclusion; indeed, such groups have much to offer. Time and resources for capacity building should be built in from the start of the process.

Whatever approach is used to involve the community, it should be reviewed from time to time. Involving the community should build their confidence and abilities and perhaps allow greater responsibilities and power to be given to community representatives. Capacity building and involvement can, over time, lead to community empowerment.

Tools to involve communities

TASK
INFORMING THE
COMMUNITY

	<p>APPROACH Exhibitions and open public meetings Using visual displays is often the most effective approach. Information about planned activities or opportunities can be explained.</p> <p>ISSUES Can be useful in reaching a broader cross-section of people, and cheap to run. But turn-outs are often low and unrepresentative of local views. Little opportunity for constructive debate or decision making.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Using leaflets, publications, newsletters</p> <p>ISSUES Good to convey brief information to large numbers of people, but securing feedback is difficult. The timing of distribution needs to be considered (e.g. avoiding holiday periods).</p>
	<p>APPROACH Using emails and websites Growing in importance and a useful way of disseminating documents.</p> <p>ISSUES Not everyone has access to a computer but useful as an additional way of communicating.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Attending 'target group' meetings 'Targeted' consultation and information can be achieved by attending meetings of the target groups you are trying to reach. This could be a one-off or you may have a regular slot in their meetings.</p> <p>ISSUES This can be time consuming and may involve visiting a number of groups. A good way of engaging focused groups in discussion. May miss sections of the community not represented by these groups.</p>
	<p>APPROACH 'Piggybacking' on events, etc This involves using fun-days or fairs or other community events to present information or have a 'stand' where you can meet people and talk with them.</p> <p>ISSUES Can reach people who would not otherwise come to public meetings. Limit to the amount and complexity of information that can be conveyed.</p>

Tools to involve communities

TASK

SEEKING LOCAL VIEWS,
CHOOSING PRIORITIES
AND MAKING DECISIONS

	<p>APPROACH Surveys and audits Using questionnaires and formal research methods to interview a sample of local people, to get more structured information about the area, its problems and people's views. Could be done by professional researchers, or a local community group may be able to assist.</p> <p>ISSUES Requires a lot of organisation and some knowledge of research, but can be a useful way of generating new information about an area and people's views. Care must be taken in phrasing questions, so as not to be misleading.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Workshops Representatives of the various interest groups and views are invited to participate in an event to discuss issues in a structured way. Could be half a day or a day. Requires independent facilitation to be effective, so that all participants are 'equal'.</p> <p>ISSUES A very interactive and useful way of exploring issues, debating more complex problems and making decisions. Commonly used. Need to give people time to think about the issues and prepare for it, if possible.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Planning for Real events Like a workshop but often based on the use of real models or plans of an area. This very visual and interactive approach has been used particularly to explore new physical development opportunities. can sometimes take a day or even a weekend.</p> <p>ISSUES More complex events to organise, and may require outside assistance. Also time consuming for local people, but often fun and constructive. Allows local people to explore issues in more depth and with the 'experts'.</p>

Tools to involve communities

	<p>APPROACH Scenario planning workshops A structured approach to defining different possible future scenarios, choosing between them and planning ahead.</p> <p>ISSUES A more complex but rewarding tool to use with communities. Would require careful planning. A number of consultancies specialise in undertaking this and similar exercises.</p>
<p>TASK BUILDING A COMMON VISION</p>	<p>APPROACH Brainstorm workshops These are more flexible opportunities to take on board a wide range of views and seek consensus on what the key issues in an area or project might be.</p> <p>ISSUES This is a flexible tool. It relies on using representatives rather than just members of the public, but could still access a wide range of views. Workshops can be a good place to 'float' new ideas.</p>
<p>TASK CONFLICT RESOLUTION</p>	<p>APPROACH Mediation / external advisors Using external advisors or negotiators can help to bring opposing sides together.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Dialogue Bringing different sides together regularly to discuss issues, can be an important 'safety valve' for some communities.</p> <p>ISSUES Some conflict situations are very serious and require expert advice. There are often organisations that can assist. Maintaining ongoing dialogue with groups can also be very important. An independent 'chair' for such discussions can help build trust.</p>

Tools to involve communities

TASK	LONG TERM ENGAGEMENT
	<p>APPROACH Community Forum Can be open or membership based, but provides an opportunity for a broad network of community groups and individuals to come together several times a year to discuss issues of concern and feed views to the partnership. Could be used to elect representatives to a partnership Board.</p> <p>ISSUES This method can be used with other approaches and is very inclusive. Membership can be large, but often informally organised. Not always representative of local opinion, depending on membership and 'who turns up' to meetings. Can be hard to manage and define a clear mission in practice. There should be a clearly understood relationship with the partnership as a whole. What is the role of the forum? Could be one for an area, or one for each neighbourhood, or even different groups for different issues.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Direct community elections Direct one person one vote elections in an area, formally organised (e.g. by the Electoral Reform Commission). Could be used to elect local people to a partnership Board.</p> <p>ISSUES Relatively expensive to operate, but could offer greater legitimacy to community representatives elected. Defining the area and the target constituency (who can vote) requires careful thought. Ways of holding those elected to account needs to be considered.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Sub-committees/consultative groups These are specific groups set up as part of a partnership to fulfil particular requirements. The local community could be represented on each committee or have its 'own' committee or group as an accountability mechanism.</p> <p>ISSUES There are many different ways of using committees. They usually have clear roles and defined memberships, may be time-limited and are quite commonly used.</p>
	<p>APPROACH Community chests and projects Another important way to involve communities is as part of the delivery of a programme or project. This depends on the nature of the partnership and its mission. Some partnerships have small budgets to give modest grants to groups to undertake small projects to complement the main initiative.</p> <p>ISSUES Larger partnerships may consider using this approach. It can be a good way to deliver tangible benefits to communities and build trust. Grants are often small (e.g. £100 - £1,000) and could be linked to other partnership activities. A good way of raising the profile of a partnership or a project. (Please note that funds from the New Opportunities Fund may not be used for this purpose).</p>



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 2:5

How to involve communities

Examples include the following:

INCLUSIVE DESIGN

The Busy Bees Resident Association is one of the key partners developing a new community garden in Chelmsford. The involvement of the community and the skills which they will develop are essential for the overall success of the gardens. When the project has been completed it will be the local community, with the help of a part time Community Warden who will use and maintain the gardens. The area currently suffers from continual vandalism and it is hoped community involvement in the development of the project will result in the local residents taking ownership and ensuring the gardens are looked after and maintained.

Phase I of the project will also allow the community to become involved in the planning and design of the gardens through workshops, meetings and informal conversations. Input will be sought through meetings of groups such as the Busy Bees Residents Association, the Mother and Toddlers Group, the Youth Club, the Luncheon Club and others. Feedback and inputs are also sought through informal conversations, which happen as those involved meet people on the streets, in shops and pubs. Workshops will take place for the groups already mentioned and in the schools in the area. The workshops will be enhanced by visits to other gardens including a visit to nearby Writtle College.

PLANNING FOR REAL

Hartcliffe Community Campus organised a Planning for Real open day in a local church hall, as part of their community consultation for the development of a new 'educational campus'. A model of the proposed development was used, and local planners, architects and artists participated in explaining the possibilities and encouraging local people to offer their own ideas and views. It proved to be a very 'hands on' event and there were even activities for children, to keep them (and their parents) interested.

MARKETING NEW SERVICES TO COMMUNITIES

The North East Institute in Antrim in Northern Ireland, with its partners, has been establishing a network of four lifelong learning centres, one in each of four communities. A major challenge is to advertise the existence of these centres and the opportunities available within them, to encourage local people to use them. They have found that tailoring written materials (newsletters, leaflets, etc) to each community area has been helpful. They also recognised that using 'word of mouth' was one of the most effective marketing tools, and have sought the assistance of each area's community groups to help promote this.

RAISING AWARENESS, BUILDING CONFIDENCE

The ARC Healthy Living Centre in Irvinestown, Northern Ireland, has emphasised the importance of face to face contact with their local community to raise awareness of the new Centre and to encourage local people to feel confident in using it. Local residents were invited to the official opening of the Centre, along with VIPs. Project workers also participated in the local 'Lady of the Lake' community festival, as an opportunity to meet local people and talk about the Centre.

MANAGING 'STOP-START' FUNDING PROCESSES

One of the features of bidding for funds and preparing delivery plans is that the process tends to have several stages and lulls; there may be an initial bid, and then a full bid, and each time the partnership must wait for the result of the funding application. Sometimes delays or complications occur. When communities are involved in a partnership, they must be kept up to date on what is happening; residents are often not familiar with how funding processes work. The St. Mellons Healthy Living Centre project in Cardiff was aware of this problem and worked to keep its local community up to date. The Partnership has noted the importance of not raising residents' expectations too high, before funding has been approved and also recommends meeting with community representatives to explain key stages of the process. Community engagement must be maintained over time.

INTEGRATING NEW MEMBERS

Hartcliffe Community Campus in Bristol are concerned to improve the representation within their partnership from the local community and are learning how to do this by borrowing good practice from a local primary school's Board of Governors. The school, having identified community representatives, considered it important to provide practical support to the new individuals as they became involved in decision-making. Support included:

- Arranging for new members to meet the Chairperson before and after the first few meetings, to allow them to be briefed on the context and to review what had happened
- Providing them with a glossary of jargon
- Appointing an existing member as a 'buddie' for new members for the first few meetings, to provide the extra explanations and introductions necessary to bring them up to speed

It was also decided to avoid giving new members direct or significant responsibilities for the first 6-12 months to allow them to grow in confidence, rather than being overwhelmed with too much too soon.

Self-Evaluation Checklist

Section 2 Setting up – the early stages

The purpose of this checklist is to help you consider whether you have considered all the types of issues that affect many partnerships setting up. It summarises and addresses many of the challenges and key points identified in this section. It could also be considered a checklist of 'things to do'.

Setting up a partnership fully could take a year. Building the trust and confidence of a local community could take a lot longer. Partnership building is a difficult process and often involves making mistakes; the important thing is to be honest, learn from the mistakes and move on. Be realistic when planning the process of partnership building. Prepare a 'timeline' of activities with key dates and discuss it with your partners. Use the checklist to identify actions that you need to begin or improve on. Use the suggestions and advice given in this section to help you work through any difficult areas that you identify.

You may wish to photocopy this page and use it with your partners. You can of course also adapt the form if you wish to suit your own circumstances. An electronic version of the form is available to download on the New Opportunities Fund website at www.nof.org.uk

Section 2 Setting up – the early stages

Establishing clear roles	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comment on significance
Are the roles and responsibilities of all partners clearly defined and agreed?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a lead partner? Is their role clearly defined?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Establishing an appropriate structure		
Has the partnership agreed an appropriate constitution and structure? Does it define: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Who employs any staff ● Who administers the day to day activities ● Who contracts with delivery bodies ● Which body makes the final decisions ● Who is responsible for financial control & auditing 	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the membership of committees, groups, etc all defined?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are the meetings for the first six months scheduled?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a clear strategy to involve the community in the partnership?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Are there clear written procedures to prevent conflicts of interest?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Establishing common goals		
Has the partnership agreed a vision and aims?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is the vision supported by the local community?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do they know what the partnership exists for?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Building the capacity of partners		
Do any partners require training in technical skills to participate fully in decision-making?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do partners know each other? Would a 'get to know you' event be helpful?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Do partners share a good understanding of the issues being tackled? Is any briefing required?	<input type="checkbox"/>	
Is there a budget/time set aside for training/capacity building for partners?	<input type="checkbox"/>	

Planning and delivery

This Section is for partnerships beginning work together on a new project or programme, or half-way through delivering it. It deals with a range of issues that arise whilst planning and delivering activities or which affect delivery in some way. It may also be helpful to think about these challenges when developing a project, particularly when planning timetables, etc.

This section will help you think through the issues and provides advice and suggestions on how to proceed. The Key Challenges covered by this section include the following:

Challenge 3:1 Effective action planning	44
Challenge 3:2 Effective monitoring and management	47
Challenge 3:3 Maintaining the involvement of partners	49
Challenge 3:4 Improving communication	50
Self-Evaluation Checklist	52

Developing project proposals and winning new funding can be time consuming and challenging. Most partnerships would probably agree that actually delivering a programme is even harder! Translating proposals into an effective and deliverable programme, and keeping it on track requires careful planning and management.

The process can be complicated by lots of circumstances:

- Tight deadlines for completion of the action planning
- Insufficient resources/staff to complete the Action Plan
- Unexpected funding conditions being attached to any grant approvals
- Grant being approved but at a lower level than requested, requiring re-negotiation of budgets, etc

For partnerships setting themselves up, the issues covered in this section do not necessarily follow on chronologically from those in Section 2 (e.g. monitoring systems) and so it may be helpful to consider Sections 2 and 3 together. Section 2 focused more on the decision-making processes in a partnership...this section focuses on the operational side of delivering a partnership's activities.

Challenge 3:1

Effective action planning

Any project, programme or initiative should have a clear action plan to guide its implementation. It may cover one year or several. It may alternatively be called a delivery plan or a business plan. Your New Opportunities Fund programme may have specific requirements about the structure and contents of the action plan / business plan. You should pay careful attention to any guidance. There are, however, various suggestions that may assist you in preparing your plan.

What should the action plan contain?

The purpose of an action plan is to define who is going to do what, when, where and how. It is a practical document and one that all partners will need to sign up to. It may also have a role in communicating the purpose of your project to the community or to potential funders. It is a very important document.

Most action plans contain the following information:

- ▼ Aims and objectives of the project
- ▼ Who the intended beneficiaries are
- ▼ Description of the project and strategy
- ▼ Who will manage the project
- ▼ Timeline and milestones/key events
- ▼ Project costs and the sources of funding
- ▼ Defined outputs and benefits of the project
- ▼ Forward strategy
- ▼ Evaluation framework

Particular concerns often include:

Cashflow

Especially for smaller organisations, understanding what funding is coming in and what costs are going out each month will be very important. You may need to arrange 'bridging finance' if costs exceed funds, particularly if any funds are paid in arrears and your organisation does not have cash reserves.

Agreeing the action plan

The plan should not be drawn up in isolation by one partner. All partners should be involved at some stage in agreeing the timescales, the details of delivery and the arrangements. Circulate a draft and try to allow at least a couple of weeks for people to comment.



CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 3:1

Action Planning

CAPACITY, BIRMINGHAM – BEING FLEXIBLE

Circumstances, information and opportunities sometimes change between submission of a funding bid and the development of a delivery plan. The CAPACITY Partnership in Birmingham found this when planning for their first year of their project funded through the Fund's 'living with cancer' programme. Being able to discuss possible changes with funders was also important. As one partner put it

“...After we started we found that some needs were different from those anticipated in the bid and required a different approach - so we had to change our approach: we needed to train the patient advocates more fully... our thinking moved on since initial bid development and the need to ensure accreditation for quality assurance and the personal development of these volunteers became more critical... The world we work in is changing all the time and some of what was relevant, important or anticipated at the time we applied has altered - so we talk to and we write to our funders if we feel that we need to make adjustments. It is very helpful.”

Cont. p. 46

Have contingency plans

Even the best prepared projects go awry from time to time. Assume unexpected events will happen, be realistic in your timescales and ensure that you have good monitoring systems to give you 'early warning' of any problems, and contingency plans for any key risks (see later for advice on risk assessment)

Lead-in time

Projects generally take some time to get off the ground – people need to be recruited to new posts, premises found, volunteers trained, materials written and printed. Lead-in (and indeed wind down) periods should be allowed within the plan. Its better to set timescales too long and be early, than be too optimistic and be late.

Multiple Plans

Larger organisations may be delivering several related projects or programmes. Consider integrating action plans, so that managers only have one set of targets/documents to refer to.

Sums!

Always get someone to check the costs and funding
...mistakes are easy to make.

Action Planning for Individuals

The St. Mellons Healthy Living Centre in Cardiff has developed a process to help manage its staff and project workers.

An individual work programme is drawn up for each staff member each year; to help define their aims, tasks and how these link to the work of the Centre. Progress is monitored against the milestones. Part of one person's programme is reproduced opposite:

Objective 1

Provides basic training in the concept of healthy eating to HLC members.

► **Action** Three tutorial sessions, handouts, Evaluation and resource packs.

► Link to health and well being

Ensure consistent messages regarding Healthy Eating can effectively be used by HLC staff when working with community members.

► **Target date** Complete initial training June 2001.

Objective 2

Offer basic food hygiene qualification to a range of community members on an ongoing basis.

► **Action** Complete necessary training in order to teach basic certificate. (1) Intermediate Supervising Course (2) Advanced Course.

► Link to health and well being

Boost participants' confidence and employability; boost good hygiene knowledge and practice; incorporate cooking skills/good housekeeping.

► **Target date** Training complete November 2001

Using Risk Assessment

When action planning your programme/project you may find it useful to undertake a risk assessment, to identify those events or circumstances that are most likely to hinder successful delivery and to help you plan ahead for them. Unexpected or unwanted events are a fact of life; they happen to the best projects. It is very unrealistic to say 'there are no risks to my project'. Some partnerships also undertake risk assessments of their organisations and structures, not just their projects, etc.

Things that can go wrong include:

- Staffing problems – problems with recruiting staff into post, managing staff transition, turnover etc
- Funding problems – levered resources are not available when they are needed, funds come with unanticipated "strings attached", costs may escalate etc
- Partnership problems – partner relations may deteriorate, organisations change policy, key individuals leave etc

The following matrix may be the sort of tool that you could use to assess risks. No specialist knowledge is required.

Risk Assessment Matrix			
Risks	Significance (Low, Medium, High)	Steps Taken to Reduce Risk	Contingency Plans
Failure to secure all funding required			
Refusal of any necessary permissions			
Lack of demand /take- up of service			
Any other potential risks (specify)			

An important way of anticipating problems is through careful monitoring of activities. This is covered in the next Challenge (3:2).

CASE STUDY EXAMPLES 3: I

Action Planning

Cont. from p. 45

CHILDCARE PROVIDER,
PETERBOROUGH –
AN INTRODUCTION TO
BUSINESS PLANNING

Another view, on the importance of business planning, comes from a small childcare provider in Peterborough who said:

“... We had to set out all our costs and income, show where we were going to dip in the first year and plan for raising revenue, charge out rates, etc beyond the period of initial seed funding. I now know where we are cash-flow wise, and why. I could see the prospects from the beginning so I knew what I was getting involved in and that there would never be an assured income unless I secured it.”

Challenge 3:2

Effective monitoring and management

A crucial factor in the success of a project is the effectiveness of the management and monitoring arrangements operated. These require:

- A clearly identified manager
- Clear lines of accountability for that manager
- Good monitoring systems
- Reliable implementation of those monitoring systems

Management and monitoring go together; how can you manage a project unless you know what is happening to it? Monitoring could include a range of activities from an informal telephone call to check on the latest progress to a formal written report or monitoring return. The benefits of monitoring include:

- Evidence of benefits and outputs delivered
- Public accountability
- Identification of problems
- Evidence for which approaches work and which do not

Every project funded by the New Opportunities Fund will require monitoring. Requirements vary between programmes and you should pay careful attention to the detailed guidance from your programme. This section offers some suggestions in how to implement good systems. Factors that you need to consider include the following:

Defining what to monitor... **i** What aspects of the project do you want to measure? What do you need to know? Your funders will often have their own requirements. Is there anything else that you wish to monitor... e.g. where your beneficiaries live?

ii Monitoring the ethnic origin of beneficiaries is important and allows any issues of equal access to be identified.

iii How frequently do you need to monitor the project? At first, more frequent reporting may be helpful until the project is properly underway.

Collating the monitoring data ... **i** Who is responsible for collating the monitoring data? Do they know this? Will they need prompting?

ii Are the meanings and definitions of any outputs that you are monitoring clear? Shared written definitions are important.

iii What documentary evidence do you require to support monitoring claims? Do your funders require any? Do your auditors?

iv Make sure that you are not reporting the same outputs to more than one public sector funder (this is known as double counting).

v Record the responsibilities and procedures of your monitoring system in writing and ensure people are aware of it.

Using the data ... **i** How will you feed the monitoring data into your partnership's decision-making? Are there 'headline' indicators that are more important than others?

ii Does monitoring reveal issues of strategic importance? Can lessons be learnt?

Pitfalls and issues you may need to look for include:

Issue	Explanation
There is some cultural resistance to monitoring in some organisations or with some individuals.	Partners must stress the importance of having adequate monitoring data which they can use to support project delivery and not to squeeze organisations.
Multi-funded projects have a plethora of monitoring requirements.	As early as possible gather all detailed information requirements into one master list, identify overlap between funding regimes and particular requirements. Set up or modify existing systems accordingly.
Different partners use different definitions of outputs.	A handbook or crib sheet of exactly what is meant by each output and how and when it should be recorded can be developed. It cannot be too simple!
Different partners use different computer systems – which don't talk to each other.	A tricky one. Consider the costs and relative benefits of getting additional software written and installed, against re-inputting data into a master system.
Some monitoring data is sensitive, for example individuals' records or commercial data.	Special arrangements will be required to ensure that some data is anonymous. But monitoring information is still needed nonetheless.

The Nightmare Meeting

Partnerships usually involve plenty of meetings. From time to time you should consider how these are run. Unproductive or unfriendly meetings can put off individuals from participating in partnerships. The example below offers some thoughts on how to avoid the pitfalls. . .

Ever been to a nightmare meeting? Most people have. The best way to organise these is as follows:

- Arrange it at short notice
- Send the agendas out late
- Arrange to meet in a small room with no open windows at a location that's hard to get to by public transport
- Timetable it for the school holidays, in the middle of August
- Don't appoint a chairperson
- Forget to introduce everyone and make sure that the newcomer in the corner is ignored
- Table lots of papers and reports at the meeting that no-one's had time to read and then ask them to make decisions on the basis of the contents
- Ensure that the agenda is so long that it is not possible to cover all items
- Try to discuss the most important items last
- Make sure the meeting overruns by at least an hour but stop people from taking a break for air half way through
- Don't provide refreshments
- Don't discuss action items agreed at a previous meeting
- Ensure that no childcare is provided
- Forget to bring the flipcharts. . .
- When it's over, forget to arrange the date for the next meeting

Recognise this? **Do not do it!**

Challenge 3:3 Maintaining the involvement of partners

The initial stages of partnership development tend to involve a lot of meetings and frenetic activity. As the relationships develop and as projects get bedded in, there is a period of settling down. Consequently partners:

- Meet to discuss key issues less and less frequently
- Get on with the business of delivery and pay little/no attention to partnership processes and relationships
- Develop routines

In this phase of partnership development there are risks:

- A greater focus on project delivery and less on strategic development
- Laziness or ambivalence about partnership processes and relationships
- Staff turnover and loss of experience and links
- Lack of partnership nurturing leading to lost opportunities and minimal impact
- Higher risk of implementation problems

There are various ways that you could address these risks:

Keep communicating

The key to keeping things going is to keep communicating – keep it regular but not routine, and keep it informative but without information overload. You may consider varying your usual approaches to meetings.

Preserving continuity

Whilst this can be difficult, maintaining continuity of people is usually beneficial. Where individuals leave, try to ensure that some briefing and handover occurs to their replacements. Some partnerships even 'rotate roles' from time to time to ensure that individual people or organisations do not have all of a particular kind of experience.

Celebrating success

It can be easy to forget what the hard work is for. Don't be afraid to celebrate the success of your partnership and its activities. This can help to remind partners why they are involved.

Reviewing the relationship

From time to time partnerships often review themselves and consider whether the list of partners and their roles are still relevant and appropriate. This is a healthy thing to do and can lead to problems being spotted sooner rather than later. Consider doing this as part of an Away Day or some similar event away from partners' usual surroundings.

Relaunch?

occasionally, partnerships encounter serious difficulties ...confrontations, partners leaving, deepening politics or mistrust between organisations or individuals. It happens. One way that some partnerships have dealt with this in the past is to relaunch themselves – making a 'fresh start'. This is not an admission of failure, but usually a pragmatic way of getting through problems.

Partnerships usually involve plenty of meetings. From time to time you should consider how these are run. Unproductive or unfriendly meetings can go a long way to putting individuals off from participating in partnerships or projects. The description of the nightmare meeting offers some thoughts on how to avoid some of the pitfalls...

Challenge 3:4 Improving communication

Good communication can provide many benefits to a partnership. It can advertise services and projects to those for whom they are being provided, celebrate successes and raise the profile of the partnership. Do not underestimate the power of a good media story. Communication is also useful for keeping partners up to date and in touch. Many problems can be avoided by ensuring that everyone is 'on board' ...it is when people and organisations get left 'out of the loop' that suspicions and ill feelings can arise.

The New Opportunities Fund provides specific guidelines for publicity arrangements on the projects it funds. Please use these. They can also sometimes provide assistance. Things you can do include:

Invite people to visit

a high profile visitor to a project can raise the profile and bring recognition, especially if it is someone the local community can identify with.

E-mail

now a very common form of communication, some partnerships now rely almost exclusively on this for circulating agendas, minutes and reports quickly. Smaller organisations may not have access to e-mail however, so this will need to be considered.

Press release

a common but effective way of raising awareness, and free! Remember to credit all the partners with their contributions and consider carefully what image you are trying to put across. See p.51 for more advice.

Remember, the best publicity is a successful project. Also, good news spread by word of mouth can be the most effective form of advertising by far!

Some of your partner organisations may also be able to provide advice on communications and publicity for the partnership.

When publicising your partnership, make sure all relevant partners are mentioned. Your partnership may wish to develop and agree a communications strategy to ensure that opportunities are maximised and that individual partners have clear roles and responsibilities if necessary.

HOW TO PREPARE A PRESS RELEASE

Pick a newsworthy event (an opening, an important visit, some milestone, etc). The release should:

- Be typed/word processed on A4, preferably double spaced
- Have a punchy heading
- Be only a page long if possible
- Try to summarise the key facts in the first sentence or two as an introduction
- Clearly describe the 5 W's...what is happening, when, where, who and why...
- Avoid jargon or abbreviations and use short sentences
- Have a clear date on it
- Say whether there is a photo opportunity
- Include a contact name and phone number

Send it to the newspaper/TV/radio station before the event...getting personal contact with reporters is more effective than just sending written material.

Section 3 – Planning and delivery

The purpose of this checklist is to help you consider whether you have considered all the types of issues that affect delivery of your project(s). It summarises and addresses many of the challenges and key points identified in this section.

Use this checklist with your partners. Where you identify actions that have not been undertaken or where further work is required, agree who should carry the work forward. Where problems are identified, use the suggestions and advice provided in this section to help you think through possible options and solutions.

You may wish to photocopy this page and use it with your partners. You can of course also adapt the form if you wish to suit your own circumstances. An electronic version of the form is available to download on the New Opportunities Fund website at www.nof.org.uk

Does the partnership have an action plan which identifies the aims, costs, timescale, funding and targets of its projects?	Yes	Mostly	No
---	-----	--------	----

Comment

Have success measures for each project been identified?	Yes	Mostly	No
--	-----	--------	----

Comment

Have those whose job it is to implement the programme been involved in negotiating the action plan?	Yes	Mostly	No
--	-----	--------	----

Comment

Does the partnership have an agreed set of guidelines regarding what outputs are to be monitored and their definition? Are they being implemented?	Yes	Mostly	No
---	-----	--------	----

Comment

Does the partnership have systems in place to consider reports of monitoring information?	Yes	Mostly	No
--	-----	--------	----

Comment

Has the partnership carried out a risk assessment for key projects?	Yes	Mostly	No
--	-----	--------	----

Comment

Do you need to review the way that you conduct meetings?	Yes	Mostly	No
---	-----	--------	----

Comment

Do you have a clear communication strategy in place?	Yes	Mostly	No
---	-----	--------	----

Comment

Evaluating progress

This Section is for all partnerships and covers the important issue of evaluation. It is never too early to start planning for it and can provide benefits even for the smallest projects. How are we doing? What impact are we having? Can we improve? Evaluation will help answer these and other questions. Many New Opportunities Fund initiatives will allow you to budget for evaluation expenses in your initial proposal.

This section will help you think through the issues and provides advice and suggestions on how to proceed. The Key Challenges covered by this section include the following:

Challenge 4:1 Developing an evaluation strategy	55
Challenge 4:2 Evaluating partnership working	60
Self-Evaluation Checklist	61

Why evaluate?

Evaluation has an important role to play in improving the delivery of projects and programmes, and the operation of partnerships, and in learning lessons for the future. It is now considered good practice. It can:

- Provide real-time feedback on the performance of projects and the partnership
- Inform the review of priorities and allocation of resources
- Provide an opportunity for reflection
- Identify and communicate achievements to funders, stakeholders and local communities
- Assess the value added by partnership working
- Assess the impact of partnership activities
- Provide lessons for the future

Evaluation is not the same as monitoring, although the two reinforce each other. Monitoring usually includes the day to day recording of activities and outputs as they are produced from a project. Evaluation takes a longer term view and asks 'deeper' questions about how effective the activity is, how cost-effective it is, what impact it is having, etc. Evaluation usually requires extra data and information to be collected, on top of 'monitoring data'.

Evaluation is also not something that can easily be 'bolted on' to a project at the end; it usually requires information to be collated from the start of the project if it is to be effective.

You might also be aware that some partners may view evaluation with some suspicion. Reasons sometimes given for this include:

- ... it is an intrusive and challenging process
- ... it is time consuming to participate
- ... it may cover issues that some would rather leave untouched
- ... it may be skewed to one partner's agenda
- ... it may allow benchmarking of activities against others operating under different circumstances, giving a misleading impression

Where partners have genuine concerns, these must be addressed. However, done sensitively and professionally, evaluation can bring important benefits.



Further information

Developing an Evaluation Strategy

Plenty of useful guides and sources of advice are available to assist you in undertaking evaluation. A list is provided in Section 6, with details of where to get them from. One example is:

A short and readable guide from the Audit Commission called “Aiming to improve – the principles of performance measurement”.

Many partnerships choose to commission independent consultants or researchers to help them. If you wish to do this, ask other partnerships for recommendations.

Challenge 4:1 Developing an evaluation strategy

The best time to start thinking about evaluation is during the early stages of setting up a project or partnership. Here are some thoughts to help you.

(1) What are we evaluating?

You need to decide first of all what you are seeking to evaluate. There are different possibilities:

i Your programme of activities

Is this one project or a programme of projects or activities? Do you want to include all of your activities (regardless of who funds them)?

ii Your partnership

Do you want to try to assess the added value that partnership working offers? This is usually a very difficult exercise, but can be rewarding.

iii Operational systems

Do you wish to assess the effectiveness of your project management and monitoring systems?

(2) Is there commitment?

Are all partners supportive? Do all share an understanding of the purpose of the evaluation? People may have different concerns. These should be discussed.

(3) Are there existing evaluations?

Many organisations will already be undertaking evaluations. How should this new one fit in with them? Is there the risk of any duplication?

(4) Who will do it / pay for it?

Can you undertake the evaluation within the partnership? Do you have the skills and experience to do it? Or does the evaluation need to be undertaken independently? Is there an opportunity to involve the local community (or users) in the evaluation? Most funding bodies now recognise evaluation as a legitimate cost.

(5) What should our strategy include?

A strategy needs to be built upon a clear conceptual framework; that is, a clear understanding of what you are measuring, the types of information you need to collate, when you need to do it, and what it will (and won't) tell you. Many strategies include three basic elements:

i A baseline

This is a 'snapshot' of the conditions that exist at the time that the project (or partnership) starts. The conditions are defined by a number of well defined 'indicators' which will be updated during the lifetime of the project, etc.

ii Interim evaluation

This is, literally, a review of the performance of the project or partnership at mid-way stage in its life. For long-term programmes, there may be several such interim evaluations. It allows any changes or impacts to be assessed and gives the opportunity to feed information back into the project – are there aspects that need to change? What is working? What is not working?

iii Final evaluation

This is undertaken at the end of a project or programme and often focuses more specifically on measuring the impact of the activities and lessons that can be learnt or transferred to others. It can provide valuable feedback to funding bodies to inform how future programmes should be delivered.

The diagram opposite offers an example of a typical conceptual framework for a project and the types of questions that an evaluation would seek to answer.

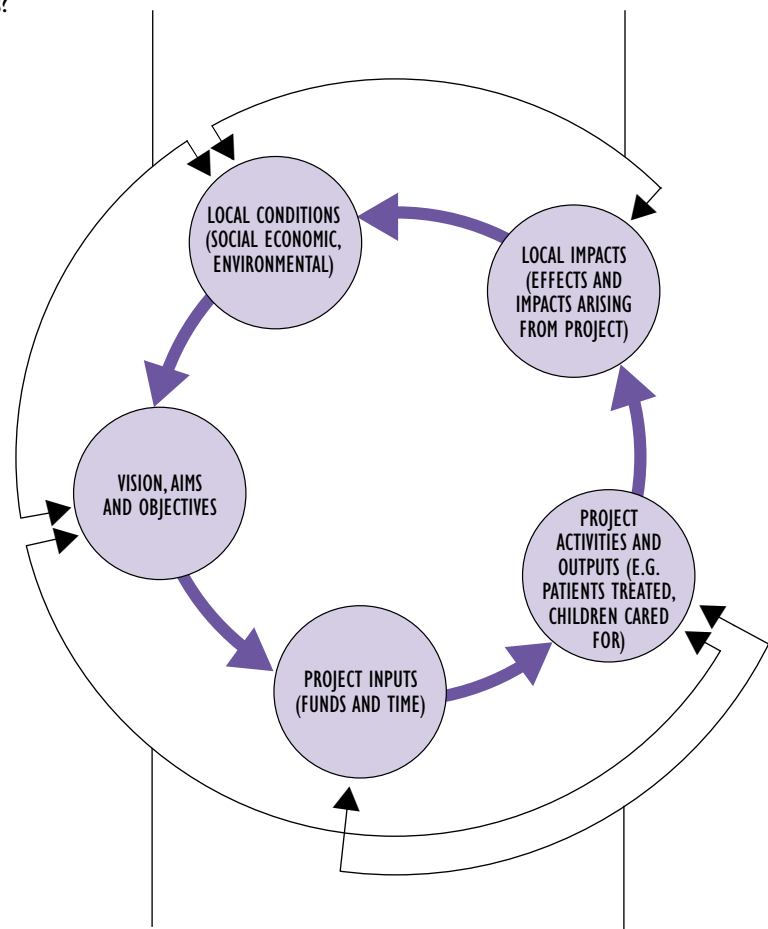
Typical Evaluation Framework

1 Rationale

Compare the identified issues in the area with the aims of the project. Do the vision and aims of the project match these? Is the project targeted at the appropriate issues? For interim evaluations, the question is whether conditions are changing and whether the project needs amending in the light of this?

4 Impact & significance

Assess the local impact of the project. Who is benefiting and how? Compare the nature and extent of the impact with the local conditions and any change in them. What difference has the project made?



2 Effectiveness

Compare the aims and objectives of the project with the outputs delivered. How effective is it proving?

3 Cost-effectiveness

Compare the inputs (i.e. the cost) with the outputs. What are the unit costs? Is this value for money?



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 4: I

Evaluation

As part of its evaluation strategy, the Irvinestown ARC Healthy Living Centre intends to use qualitative approaches to record and explore how individuals have benefited from the Centre. People will be encouraged to tell their 'story', as part of individual case studies. Other more formal (and quantitative) monitoring and evaluation will be used also.

Self evaluation or independent evaluation?

A lot of the information which is needed to answer evaluation questions is held by the partnership and by those implementing the partnership's strategy. Some also has to be gathered specifically for the purpose of the evaluation – in particular the views and opinions of the client group or community are less easy to access – but even here access to such groups is usually achieved via project managers and those delivering a service.

The question then becomes, who should gather and interpret this information?

- A secondee from one or more of the partnership organisations? (for example an academic from a partner university, or a monitoring and evaluation officer from a local authority)
- The programme manager of the partnership?
- A paid third party? (such as a specialist consultant)

Partnerships should decide which form best suits their needs, a decision which will reflect their progress, their anticipated use of the evaluation report, their openness, their available budget and their information systems. It is, of course, possible to mix approaches, with different aspects of evaluation being undertaken by different people or organisations.

Self evaluation

Self evaluation is the process whereby the evaluation questions are addressed by your partners and by your project managers. You ask the questions of yourself as part of a reflective process which ultimately should form part of a regular strategic review. It will only work if:

- People who have the authority to influence change are involved in the process so that they own the process and are responsible for its findings
- All partners are asked the same questions
- All project managers / service deliverers are asked the same questions
- There is an understanding that the process is supportive and not seeking to develop competitive pressure or apportion blame
- Monitoring systems are regularly updated, and systematically applied across the whole programme
- The views of those affected by the partnership's activities, the local community or client group, are sought in a reasonably consistent and systematic manner
- The timing of the evaluation is consistent, as far as possible across all projects
- Negative and positive feedback is encouraged in appropriate ways

- Analysis of findings from each project or partner is presented in a clear and consistent manner
- Findings are fed back to all those who participated

There is some debate regarding whether self evaluation should be part of a systematic process used by all projects across a range of activity or whether it should be a more creative process whereby each element of the partnership's work is evaluated in whatever way those associated with it think best.

In practice, the systematic approach will be favoured by those managing or overseeing the work of the partnership – not least because it provides data which can be more easily assimilated for external agencies.

Independent evaluation

Independent evaluation involves appointing an external third party to undertake the evaluation on your behalf. It could be a research organisation, a university or college or a commercial consultancy. Many organisations provide research services. If you are unused to commissioning evaluation work, here are five points to consider:

i. Focus

You should be clear about what it is that you are evaluating (which activities) and what you want to know at the end of the process (which questions you want answered). You may not have sufficient resources or time to evaluate everything so you may need to prioritise.

ii. Timing

Good research often takes time. Tender processes also take time. Try to plan well ahead if you wish to commission evaluation work. Ideally, the timetable and even budget should be defined in your project's business plan or annual delivery/action plan.

iii. Written specification

It is essential that you clearly define what services you want in writing. This is often called a 'research brief' or a 'research specification'. It does not need to be long but it should include a clear statement of:

Research objectives – defining the purpose of the evaluation

Basic background information – on the project being evaluated (refer to current strategies, business plans, etc if available).

Evaluation specification – defining what you want evaluated, how long it should take and the issues that should be covered. Set clear deadlines.

Preferred approach – if you have one, specifying any minimum requirements (e.g. review of certain activities) or constraints that may need to be observed in the evaluation.

Budget – some organisations prefer to give contractors an idea of how much funding may be available for the project.

Research outputs – if you have a preference, state how you want the research findings presented to you. Do you want a written report? How many copies and in what format? If you need an executive summary or one written for a wider audience, say so. Do you need help with wider dissemination (website, presentations, etc)?

Tender process – including when and how tenders should be submitted and to whom.

Contact details.

iv. Tender process

Many organisations have strict rules on how to tender work to outside contractors. You should check how your organisation operates tender procedures and ensure you follow the guidelines. You can either invite bids from a list of contractors or put out an open invitation. Whatever method you use, you should aim to secure no more than five or six detailed proposals; any more becomes very time consuming to review. If you use an open invitation process, you may wish to have two rounds, inviting only 'expressions of interest' in the first round to allow you to reduce the list of organisations submitting full proposals to a manageable number.

v. Reviewing tenders

You should design a clear set of criteria against which to judge tenders. These should include as a minimum:

How well does the tender meet your written specification?

Is the approach/methodology being proposed acceptable to you?

Do the organisation, and the individuals that would do the work, have the necessary skills to do the work?

Does the proposed price for the work justify the benefits?

In identifying organisations to bid for work, gauging what represents value for money and understanding how to choose a contractor; you should talk to someone who has been through the process before.

Many partnerships and public organisations have commissioned evaluation work and would be happy to discuss how they did it.

Challenge 4:2

Evaluating partnership working

As well as evaluating the activities of your partnership – projects, programmes, etc – you may also wish to evaluate the actual process of working in partnership. Does the fact that you and your partners work together actually provide new types of benefits that cannot be achieved otherwise? Can the process be improved? What do your partners think about this?

Evaluating partnership working is complex and difficult to do, and there is no 'right way' to do it. Some of the guides listed in Section 6 offer possible models and suggestions. Here we have suggested a basic approach that you could use, or amend to suit your own purposes. It could be done with outside assistance (an independent 'referee' almost) or as a form of self-evaluation.

Your partnership is important. It is worth investing time (and money) in reviewing it, developing it and improving it. The best partnerships are the ones that are seeking to 'continuously improve'.

We suggest that there are three dimensions of partnership working that you could evaluate. Under each one, we have identified a set of criteria that could be used. The self-evaluation checklist at the end of this section presents this as a form you could use.

(A) The partnership process

This looks at the day to day, week to week process of meetings, decision-making and planning and considers its qualities. Are the right conditions in place to allow fruitful inter-organisation working? Key criteria are:

- Purpose
- Leadership
- Communications
- Decision making
- Participation
- Human resources
- Organisational cultures

(B) Operational systems

This considers the various systems required to run the partnership and its activities. Are they effective? Many of these issues are covered in Section 3 of this guide. There are four types of system/arrangements:

- Management
- Financial control
- Monitoring
- Evaluation

(C) Partnership value

This final set of criteria attempts to probe what the nature and extent of the benefits of partnership working might be, from your partnership. We suggest that there are eight main types of benefits that could arise from working with others. Can you identify some or all of these in your partnership?

- Consensus
- Innovation
- Efficiency
- Stronger voice
- Joined up services
- Quality
- Scale and coverage
- Bending main programmes

The assessments are very qualitative but no less useful for that. You may wish to carry out a similar exercise on an annual basis and compare the results of each exercise with the previous one to track changes and improvements over time. It may also provide a useful 'safety valve' for the partnership, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to express their views and feelings about how the partnership is working.

Section 4 – Evaluating progress

This checklist can be used to help assess the quality of your partnership and how it works. It relies on judgements and qualitative assessments, but provides a framework to cover many of the key issues that apply to partnerships. For most partnerships, using this checklist may highlight important issues that you need to discuss and explore with your partners. Try to use the process as a positive opportunity to move forward and develop the partnership. You may wish to photocopy these pages and use them with your partners. You can of course also adapt the form if you wish to suit your own circumstances. An electronic version of the form is available to download on the New Opportunities Fund website at www.nof.org.uk

Criteria	Assessment and comment
(A) THE PARTNERSHIP PROCESS	VERY GOOD, GOOD, SATISFACTORY, POOR, N/A
<p>1 Purpose The partnership has a clear purpose, expressed in writing and agreed. Key factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a clear vision and mission statement ● The activities of the partnership are clearly stated in an action plan/business plan ● All partners understand the purpose of the partnership ● Objectives are realistic and achievable 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>
<p>2 Leadership The lead partner or a main decision-making body of the partnership provides clear leadership. Key factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is senior commitment to the partnership from within the core partners ● The partnership is not afraid to make difficult decisions ● The Board (or main decision-making body) make the strategic decisions 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>
<p>3 Communications The partnership communicates well internally and externally to all stakeholders. Key factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● All partners are informed of key meetings and are given necessary papers in advance ● Progress and issues are reported to the Board/main decision-making body regularly ● All partners feel confident that they know what is going on in the partnership ● Key events and milestones are publicised to the wider community ● There are opportunities for partners to air problems and issues and resolve conflicts 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>
<p>4 Decision making The partnership makes well informed decisions without undue delays. Key factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Decision-making is open and transparent with decisions recorded in writing ● Key decisions are based on research, monitoring data or well informed experience 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>

Section 4 – Evaluating progress

Criteria

Assessment and comment

(A) THE PARTNERSHIP PROCESS

VERY GOOD, GOOD,
SATISFACTORY, POOR, N/A

5 Participation

All key stakeholders are involved in the partnership in an appropriate way, including the community.

Key factors include:

- All key stakeholders are involved in the partnership, even if not in the core decision-making group, and have appropriate roles
- Representatives of partners are of an appropriate seniority
- The community are involved in the key decision-making, or there is a clear strategy to involve the community
- The partnership operates a clear equal opportunities policy, including attention to the promotion of racial equality

Assessment:

Comment:

6 Human resources

The staff and decision-makers of the partnership have the necessary knowledge, skill and confidence to make decisions and undertake key tasks.

Key factors include:

- The needs of partners, including the community, for capacity building are assessed and addressed
- New members and participants are clearly briefed and properly introduced to the partnership

Assessment:

Comment:

Assessment:

Comment:

7 Organisational cultures

Partner organisations provide the necessary support, flexibility and assistance to enable their representatives to participate fully in the partnership.

Key factors include:

- Partner organisations allow their representatives sufficient time and resources to fulfil their roles in the partnership
- Decisions made by the representatives are supported by their organisations

Assessment:

Comment:

Section 4 – Evaluating progress

Criteria	Assessment and comment
(B) OPERATIONAL SYSTEMS	VERY GOOD, GOOD, SATISFACTORY, POOR, N/A
<p>1 Management arrangements Effective management arrangements are in place and operating Key factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A clearly identified manager with defined responsibilities ● Clear lines of accountability from the manager to the Board or decision-making body of the partnership 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>
<p>2 Financial control systems Effective financial control systems are in place and operating Key factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Expenditure is approved by the appropriate signatory ● Clear audit trails for expenditure are being laid ● Accounts are audited annually 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>
<p>3 Monitoring systems Effective monitoring systems are in place and operating Key factors include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● The requirements of all funders are being met ● Clear definitions for outputs and milestones are provided ● Monitoring is undertaken regularly and feeds back into decision-making 	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>
<p>4 Evaluation strategy A clear evaluation strategy has been prepared and is being implemented</p>	<p>Assessment:</p> <p>Comment:</p>

SELF EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Section 4 – Evaluating progress

Criteria

Assessment and comment

(C) PARTNERSHIPVALUE

VERY GOOD, GOOD,
SATISFACTORY, POOR, N/A

1 Consensus

Partners usually make decisions by consensus and have agreed common goals and objectives. Significant conflicts between partners are rare and settled quickly.

Assessment:

Comment:

2 Innovation

By working together, partners have been able to develop new services or approaches that would not otherwise have arisen.

Assessment:

Comment:

3 Efficiency

By working together, resources are being used more efficiently, with a lower unit cost achieved for the relevant services.

Assessment:

Comment:

4 Stronger voice

The area or issue being promoted by the partnership has a higher profile and is higher on the agenda than before the partnership began work.

Assessment:

Comment:

5 Joined up services

By planning and working together partners have been able to improve the 'joining up' of their services on the ground, as experienced by the community/users. They are easier to access and there are less gaps.

Assessment:

Comment:

6 Quality

Partners have brought about an improvement in the quality of one or more services they are delivering as a result of their close working and learning from each other.

Assessment:

Comment:

7 Scale and coverage

By working together the partners have been able to pool resources and services and increase the scale and/or geographical coverage of their services to reach more people and to do so more consistently.

Assessment:

Comment:

8 Bending main programmes

There is evidence that working together in this partnership has encouraged partners with mainstream programmes to amend the way that they deliver these programmes to tackle the needs of the partnership's target beneficiaries more effectively.

Assessment:

Comment:

Moving on

This Section is for partnerships that have been operating for some time or have reached a 'break point' in their development and are considering their options for the future. Do we carry on? Do we need to change? It will also be of relevance for any partnership considering its future strategy.

This section will help you think through the issues and provides advice and suggestions on how to proceed. It is never too early to think through these issues. The Key Challenges covered by this section include the following:

Challenge 5:1 Do we need to change?	66
Challenge 5:2 Preparing a forward strategy	66

Challenge 5:1

Do we need to change?

At various points in the lifetime of a partnership – such as the end of a funding period, an unexpected event, the departure of a partner or the conclusion of a project – you may find yourselves at a natural ‘break-point’. These can sometimes be turbulent and difficult times, but can also be a good time to stop and review the partnership. Do we need to change?

Changes you might need to consider making include:

Changing the membership

Have circumstances changed since the partnership was last reviewed? Are there other agencies you should be working with? Are there any partners looking to leave? Are some partners not proving to be very committed? Review the situation.

Taking a longer view

Sometimes partnerships and projects emerge in response to funding opportunities. There is nothing wrong with this, but it means that interventions can sometimes be more disjointed or incomplete than they might otherwise be. Break points are a useful opportunity to consider whether the partnership should take a longer view, outside of specific funding concerns, and prepare a strategy or mission that is based more fully on local needs and opportunities and priorities.

Changing approach

Sometimes as partnerships develop they decide they want to move to a different approach. For example, some regeneration partnerships have taken the opportunity at the end of their funding programmes to become ‘community development trusts’ or other community-led companies. If the organisation has an asset base or other source of income, the partnership is no longer dependent on particular funding sources to continue and can take a longer term, and more independent, view of its mission. Would your partnership benefit from a change of approach?

Relaunch

For some partnerships that have encountered difficulties or significant changes, a relaunch can be a useful way of making a ‘fresh start’. This may entail a change of image, new partners and a public event to mark the change.

Disbanding the partnership

Partnerships exist for a purpose. Sometimes it may be appropriate, if the original mission is complete, to disband the partnership. This should never be done lightly and care should be taken to preserve networks and other benefits where appropriate.



CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 5:1

Do we need to change ?

MERSEYVALLEY PARTNERSHIP – MOVING WITH THE TIMES

The Mersey Valley Partnership has been operating for over 20 years, but has been through three significant ‘turning points’ during this time. At each point, the Partnership has reviewed its purpose, its opportunities and has reshaped itself.

The Partnership began in 1980 as a countryside management project, with a range of partners, growing to a point where it was operating a large programme of environmental projects and employing a large number of people. Interestingly, the Partnership was originally formed to submit a funding bid, which subsequently proved unsuccessful. However, the partners felt that there was sufficient common cause for the Partnership to continue.

After nearly a decade, in 1989, three important partners – the Manpower Services Commission and two local Development Corporations – were wound up and therefore withdrew from the Partnership. The Partnership had to review the way it was delivering its aims, and drew up a new Business Development Plan for the future in response. New partner organisations were invited to join the Partnership.

The second turning point came in the mid-1990s following local government reorganisation. This prompted a need to amend the Partnership’s arrangements.

Cont. p. 67

CASE STUDY EXAMPLE 5:1**Do we need to change?**

Cont. from p. 66

The most recent turning point involved the Partnership reviewing how best it could meet its objectives, and deciding to transform itself into a Groundwork Trust. From April 2002, they will be known as Groundwork Mersey Valley. They used an external facilitator to help them think through this process, which they believe was valuable in building a consensus amongst partners.

There are several reasons for this change. The Partnership has, up to this point, relied upon Halton Borough Council as its 'accountable body', to employ staff and enter into contracts on its behalf. The Partnership considered that establishing itself as a Trust, separate from its local authority partners, would provide it with important new benefits. They would gain greater freedoms on employing staff, be able to engage in a wider range of business activities and contractual arrangements and be able to access new sources of funding not available to public sector organisations. They would also have the benefits of being part of a national network of Groundwork Trusts. Other options that they considered and rejected included:

- Continue as a partnership with a local authority as accountable body
- Become a stand-alone Trust or a company limited by guarantee
- Continue as a partnership, but with a separate fundraising trust

The pressures for change faced by the Partnership during the last 20 years have come from both the outside, with wider changes beyond their control, and inside, with partners making decisions about priorities. The Partnership has been able to 'move with the times' successfully by not being afraid to review its options and make changes when necessary. This means that it is better placed to respond to future needs and opportunities.

Challenge 5:2

Preparing a forward strategy

All partnerships should consider their future and where they wish to develop. Some partnerships may be time-limited, existing only for a specific task. Many will wish to continue and evolve over time.

It is never too early for a partnership to prepare a forward strategy. At its simplest, this is a statement of how the partnership intends to continue past its current planning or financial period. For partnerships relying on short-term funding, this is particularly important. The time lags in securing new funds and the need to maintain continuity mean that preparations should be engaged in relatively early.

The business plan or delivery plan is a good place to consider and set out future intentions, even if they may change. They should be reviewed each year to check whether the assumptions still hold good. As break-points near or funding comes to an end, forward strategies will usually require greater elaboration.

Further reading

This Section provides pointers to where you can find further information and advice on various topics. It lists reports, other good practice guides and gives details of organisations who can help. It is by no means exhaustive and many other guides and sources of advice exist.

Further information and reading

Author	Date	Title and publisher	Comments and availability
I. 'How to' guides to good partnership working			
Burns, Danny & Taylor, Marilyn	2000	Auditing Community Participation: An Assessment Handbook (<i>Joseph Rowntree Foundation</i>)	A detailed guide providing tools and appraisal exercises to assess the nature and extent of community involvement in partnerships and programmes. Available from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation www.jrf.org.uk
Chapman, M	1998	Effective Partnership Working, Good Practice Note No. 1 (<i>Scottish Executive Central Research Unit</i>)	General guide to good practice in partnerships written in a Scottish context. Available from the CRU at www.scotland.gov.uk/cru
Clarke, Caroline	1999	Effective Partnerships for Voluntary and Community Groups (<i>Civic Trust</i>)	A guide to working with cross-sectoral regeneration partnerships. Available from the Civic Trust www.civictrust.org.uk
Department for Transport, Local Government & the Regions	1997	Involving Communities in Urban and Rural Regeneration – a Guide for Practitioners (<i>DTLR</i>)	Contains a lot of ideas on how to approach community involvement. Available from DTLR Publications Sales Centre on 01 709 891 318.
Department for Transport, Local Government & the Regions	2000	New Deal for Communities – Race Equality Guidance (<i>DTLR</i>)	Designed for use by NDC Partnerships, but likely to be of value for many partnerships in addressing the important issue of race equality. Available from DTLR on 020 7944 4278.
NCVO	2002	Guidance for Public/Voluntary Sector Partnerships – a supplement to the Funding Code (<i>NCVO</i>)	Provides advice to public sector organisations on how to improve the prospects for good partnership working with the voluntary sector. Part of the NCVO's ongoing work based on its Compact between the public and voluntary sectors. Further details are available from NCVO's website. www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Further information and reading

Author	Date	Title and publisher	Comments and availability
I. 'How to' guides to good partnership working			
Wilcox, David	1999	The Guide to Development Trusts and Partnerships (<i>Development Trusts Association</i>)	Available from DTA on 020 7706 4951 www.dta.org.uk
Wilson, Andrew & Charlton, Kate	1997	Making Partnerships Work – a practical guide for the public, private, voluntary and community sectors (<i>Joseph Rowntree Foundation</i>)	A good practice guide offering a wide range of advice to multi-sector partnerships. Available from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation www.jrf.org.uk

Further information and reading

Author	Date	Title and publisher	Comments and availability
2. Research Publications Including Findings on Partnership Working			
Audit Commission	1999	A Fruitful Partnership – Effective Partnership Working (<i>Audit Commission</i>)	A Management Paper on partnership working. Available from the Audit Commission website www.audit-commission.gov.uk
Carley, M et al	2000	Urban Regeneration Through Partnership – a study in nine urban regions in England, Scotland and Wales (<i>The Policy Press</i>)	Study exploring the factors that affect the success of urban regeneration partnerships. Available from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation www.jrf.org.uk
Dean, J et al	1999	Fitting Together? – a study of Partnership Processes in Scotland (Research & Information Report No. 70) (<i>Scottish Homes</i>)	Study identifying lessons on good partnership working in a Scottish context. Available for downloading from the Scottish Homes research archive, via the research page at www.communitiesscotland.gov.uk
DTLR	1998	Evaluation of the SRB – a Partnership for Regeneration: An Interim Evaluation (<i>DTLR</i>)	A report from the long-term national evaluation of the Single Regeneration Budget Programme, containing some study findings on the issues that have affected regeneration partnerships. Available from DTLR Publications Sales Centre on 01 709 891 318.
Edwards, B et al	2000	Partnership Working in Rural Regeneration (<i>The Policy Press</i>)	Findings of a research study exploring the effectiveness of rural partnerships. Available from the Policy Press www.bris.ac.uk/publications/tpp
GFA Consulting & EIU	1999	Building Partnerships in the English Regions – a Study Report of Regional & Sub-Regional Partnerships in England (<i>DTLR</i>)	A study of regional and sub-regional partnerships, including an assessment of what makes for successful partnerships. Available from DTLR Publications Sales Centre on 01 709 891 318.

Further information and reading

Author	Date	Title and publisher	Comments and availability
2. Research Publications Including Findings on Partnership			
Hutchinson, J & Campbell, M	2001	Working in Partnership – lessons from the literature (DfEE Research Report No. 63) (<i>Policy Research Institute, Leeds Metropolitan University</i>)	A comprehensive literature review of partnership studies up to 1998.
NCVO	2001	Co-operation, Participation & Complexity – local partnerships & public policy (<i>NCVO</i>)	Short report considering the implications of partnership working for voluntary organisations. Available from NCVO 020 7713 6161 or www.ncvo-vol.org.uk
3. Advice on How to Evaluate Partnerships			
Audit Commission		Aiming to Improve – the principles of performance measurement (<i>Audit Commission</i>)	Presents advice on the principles that underlie the development of performance measurement frameworks and systems. Available from the Audit Commission website www.audit-commission.gov.uk
Audit Commission		On Target – the practice of performance indicators (<i>Audit Commission</i>)	Gives advice on the development of performance indicators. Available from the Audit Commission www.audit-commission.gov.uk
Charities Evaluation Services		How Well Are We Doing ? – a guide to monitoring & self-evaluation (<i>CES</i>)	A short simple guide aimed at small organisations, explaining how to set up monitoring processes. Available free from CES, contact 020 7713 5722.
Clark, C		Community Participation – a self assessment toolkit for partnerships (<i>Engage East Midlands</i>)	A detailed toolkit to support more effective voluntary and community participation in partnerships. Provides detailed self-assessment tools for partnerships to use at each stage of their development to identify issues and plan actions. Available from Engage East Midlands 0115 934 8471

Further information and reading

Author	Date	Title and publisher	Comments and availability
3. Advice on How to Evaluate Partnerships			
Government Office for London	2001	Testing the Mix (GOL)	Provides advice and gives ideas on how people from black and ethnic minority communities can become more involved in partnerships and projects. Based on an action-research project in London. Available from GOL's website at www.go-london.gov.uk/sustainabledevelopment/local_government.htm
Groundwork, New Economics Foundation & Barclays	2000	Prove It! – measuring the effect of neighbourhood renewal on local people (Groundwork, NEF & Barclays)	General guidance on evaluation written for the layperson, with guidance on the selection of performance indicators for local renewal. Available from Groundwork www.groundwork.org.uk or the NEF www.neweconomics.org.uk
Local Government National Training Organisation		Smarter Partnerships Website	An interactive website that provides a generic set of checklists to help partnerships assess their learning and skill requirements. Located at www.lgpartnerships.com
McCabe, A, Lowndes, V & Skelcher, C	1997	Partnerships and Networks – an evaluation and development manual (Joseph Rowntree Foundation)	Presents an evaluation approach that takes a particular interest in how organisations relate to each other through networks and other links. Available from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation www.jrf.org.uk
Roger Tym & Partners	1999	Local Evaluation for Regeneration Partnerships – good practice guide (DTLR)	A readable introduction to evaluation for partnerships. Available for downloading from www.regeneration.dtlr.gov.uk

Further information and reading

Author	Date	Title and publisher	Comments and availability
3. Advice on How to Evaluate Partnerships			
Scottish Enterprise Dunbartonshire	2001	Partnership by Design	SED have developed a full toolkit and process for partnerships to identify skills needs and areas for improvement. The process is in three stages and involves interviews, seminars and workshops. The process focuses on seven characteristics of effective partnerships. An information pack and further details are available from SED
Scottish Executive Central Research Unit	2000	Guidance for Social Inclusion Partnerships on Evaluation (<i>Scottish Executive Central Research Unit</i>)	Written for SIPS, but may be of wider interest. Available from the CRU at www.scotland.gov.uk/cru .
Wilson, M & Wilde, P	2000	Active Partners – benchmarking community participation in regeneration (<i>Yorkshire Forward</i>)	A benchmarking tool to facilitate the self-evaluation of community involvement in regeneration partnerships. Available from Yorkshire Forward 0113 243 9222 or www.yorkshire-forward.com

Further information and reading

Author	Date	Title and publisher	Comments and availability
4. Specialist guides			
DfES		Raising Standards, Opening Doors – developing links between schools and their communities (DfES)	Available from DfES on 0870 0012345
DfES		Good Practice for Early Years Development & Childcare Partnerships (DfES)	A range of guides are published by DfES to assist Early Years Development & Childcare Partnerships. Titles include No. 5 'Working with local agencies and other partnerships and networks' and No. 7 'Communication and Consultation Strategies'. Copies are available on the DfES website at www.dfes.gov.uk/eydcp/
Meyrick, Jane & Sinkler, Paige	1999	An Evaluation Resource for Healthy Living Centres (Health Development Agency)	Provides advice on evaluation for HLCs. The guide is available on www.hda-online.org.uk