



Practitioner's Guide to Partnerships

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Bureau of Land Management
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Practitioner's Guide to Partnerships

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Introduction

One plus one never equals three, except in the world of partnerships. This equation makes sense when people work together to accomplish what they cannot do alone. In times of shrinking budgets, increased public demands, and advances in communication technology, many federal land management agencies recognize the benefits and value in inter-governmental and public-private partnerships.

Public agency personnel have many opportunities, and in some cases even mandates, to participate in partnerships to meet short- and long-term objectives. By engaging key stakeholders in decisions, a partnership may help avert time-consuming and costly legislative or legal actions.

This guidebook is for federal employees engaged in partnerships whether novices or skilled practitioners. The material is presented in a sequential format, guiding the practitioner in partnership development from the beginning to the end.

Step 1: Partnership Overview

introduces basic concepts and definitions covered throughout this guide

Step 2: Preparing for a Partnership

discusses agency readiness for partnering, and selection of potential partners and appropriate projects

Step 3: Developing a Written Agreement for the Partnership

provides an overview of administrative agreements and their common elements

Step 4: Implementing a Partnership

describes ways to manage and resolve conflicts, to comply with applicable laws and regulations, and to celebrate success

Step 5: Ending a Partnership

offers insights on why and how to end a partnership



STEP I: Partnership Overview

What is a partnership?

A partnership is a voluntary and mutually beneficial relationship between an agency and one or more partners. It is built on the contributions of each partner and formed to achieve or to assist in achieving a common goal.

Collaboration is defined as a decision-making process in which interested parties, often with widely varied interests, work together to seek the best solutions to solve conservation issues. For example, if one of the partnership goals is to expand opportunities for citizens to directly engage in the use, care, and protection of public lands and resources, a collaborative decision-making process would be an appropriate choice.

Partners contribute resources that allow each participant to accomplish objectives none could achieve alone. A partnership may involve one partner using another's unique abilities, or it may constitute a sharing of resources (i.e., money, time, knowledge, equipment) to accomplish short or long-term objectives agreed upon by all participating partners. Some partner relationships are informal; others are covered by well-defined agreements or regulations.

A partnership is a relationship; collaboration is a process a partnership uses to make decisions.

Reference:
www.doi.gov/partnerships/partner_what.html
Department of the Interior,
Departmental Manual,
Part 301: Major Program
Issues and Decisions,
Chapter 5: Partnership
Policy, effective
November 19, 2008.

What types of groups partner?

Governmental organizations:

All Federal agencies (land management, other civilian agencies, and military organizations), regional organizations, state agencies, and local governments partner.

Native American tribes:

Federal land management agencies, American Indian, and Alaska Native groups partner in government-to-government relationships.

The Federal Government has trust responsibilities relying on direct consultation between agencies and tribes. Many opportunities are available for Federal agencies to partner with tribal entities, including tribal governments, Native American-owned businesses, Native American contractors, and tribal interest organizations. Tribes are uniquely positioned to contribute to partnerships involving tribal lands through the use and sharing of traditional ecological practices.

Private sector organizations: The Federal Government partners with the business community, those providing goods or services for profit (i.e., corporations), banks, and local or regional businesses. Corporations tend to support projects that benefit the home communities of their employees and customers.

Charitable foundations: These foundations are established to provide financial support to diverse causes typically undertaken by nonprofit organizations. They are frequently associated with large tax-exempt family or corporate trusts. Charitable foundations do not commonly contribute to Federal programs, but seek projects to improve social or environmental conditions.

Professional societies: This category includes members of specialized groups who are highly knowledgeable in their field. Usually incorporated and tax-exempt, these societies serve and communicate with members in localities that may be geographically dispersed. All levels of these organizations offer capabilities relevant to a partnership.

Nonprofit organizations: Nonprofit organizations are affiliated with specific causes. Their goals and objectives can range from local to world issues. Nonprofits often have limited administrative support services and seek innovative approaches to accomplish their mission.

Special interest groups: A group of people with specific demands and interests who try to influence resource management decisions (e.g., wilderness, recreation and off-highway vehicles, conservation groups). Partnering with these groups accomplishes projects and builds constituencies.

What are the principles of a partnership?

Partnerships are formed among organizations, but succeed because of individuals. Successful partnerships usually have a strong leader who champions the partnership projects and goals with vision, energy, and enthusiasm.

Leaders play a critical role in maintaining good relations and set a tone of trust and respect. Leaders need to be patient, articulate, fair, and sufficiently knowledgeable to inspire the confidence of others.

Successful partnerships model the following principles:

- >> Walk in your partners shoes by listening respectfully
- >> Create a shared vision
- >> Foster willingness to be proactive
- >> Share responsibility equitably
- >> Offer constructive and timely feedback
- >> Engage key stakeholders
- >> Ensure people with decision-making authority are present
- >> Demonstrate commitment to the process
- >> Address difficulties in a forthright manner
- >> Ensure the partnership is supported by your whole organization
- >> Commit to open and honest communication
 - Open and easy access to information provides transparency and strengthens the partnership. Delineate how information will be shared among partners (e.g., how meetings are documented, annual reports).

"Most successful partnerships recognize and value their differences and find ways to integrate them into workable overarching partnerships."

- Brian O'Neill

What is the role of culture in a partnership?

Culture is defined as the set of learned beliefs, attitudes, values, and behaviors that are characteristic of a particular social group or organization. A person may be a member of any number of cultures (e.g., an ethnic community or nationality, a religious community, or a professional organization with a distinct agency or corporate culture). Those engaged in partnering with other cultures need to recognize that partners' values, worldviews, and communication habits may differ from their own.

Reference:
www.pbs.org/ampu/crosscult.html
Marcelle E. DuPraw and Marya Axner, Working on Common Cross-Cultural Communication Challenges

What are the benefits of a partnership?

Benefits to the partnering organization

Shared Purpose and Efficiency: Broad-based participation may speed project accomplishments and build long-term support for project goals. Participants can reduce, if not eliminate, duplication of effort while increasing productivity.

Increased Resources: Partnerships enable organizations to pool such resources as expertise, skills, labor, materials, and financial support.

Decreased Risks: Reliance on complementary strengths, resources, and perspectives can lessen the risks to individual partners and help ensure success. A collaborative approach provides greater flexibility for responding to and managing crisis.

Innovative Solutions: By bringing people together with varied experiences and perspectives, partnerships may develop a wide range of options from which to select the best solutions.

Better Communication: Working together fosters improved communication, increases understanding and trust, and reduces conflict (e.g., partners agree on a common language to describe partner or project relationships).

Builds Stewardship: Increased understanding of agency and partners' goals and procedures builds stronger support for shared stewardship of public lands.

Benefits to individuals

Enhanced Organizational Morale and Image: Increased productivity builds morale and enhances each partner organization's profile.

- >> A sense of personal accomplishment
- >> Pride in achieving a shared goal
- >> A sense of shared responsibility and ownership
- >> An opportunity to participate in a collaborative activity to support conservation
- >> Satisfaction in a job well done
- >> An expanded professional network

What are the best practices of an effective partner?

Conscious effort and commitment is required by individuals to discover common ground, share expertise, and solve problems. Effective partners commit to work together toward mutually beneficial outcomes.







Best practices of an effective partner include:

- >> Be creative in the ways you use partnerships to further agency objectives
- >> Be realistic in estimating the often lengthy time periods required to initiate and implement a partnering relationship
- >> Think creatively about ways to work with others to achieve common goals
- >> Clearly define the objectives of a potential partnership, the resources that each participant would bring to the activity, and the benefits that each stands to gain
- >> Take the initiative. Talk and listen to people. Ask clarifying questions
- >> Learn about prospective partners, their reputations, and capabilities before joining the partnership
- >> Early in the project, include management whose approval or participation will ultimately be required
- >> Remember that timeframes are estimates when implementing a project. Anticipate, be prepared for, and expect delays
- >> Avoid turf battles
- >> Keep focused on the goals of the partnerships

Reference:
www.nps.gov/partnerships
Brian O'Neill's 21 Partnership Success Factors



CHECKLIST STEP 1 Partnership Overview

-  Understand what a partnership is
-  Understand the different types of groups that can be partners
-  Understand the principles of partnering
-  Understand the role of culture in developing and sustaining a partnership
-  Understand the benefits of partnerships
-  Understand the best practices of an effective partner

STEP 2: Preparing For A Partnership

Have you assessed your agency's potential to partner?

A partnership builds synergistically on the time, talent, and support of all partners toward mutual benefit and interest. Because an agency's resources change over time, it is important to assess your agency's ability to partner:

- >> Identify and assess the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities of your staff
- >> Determine the available resources
- >> Consider how partnering on a potential project might affect resources already committed to other relationships or partnerships
- >> Determine if the agency has the time to devote to a partnership in addition to performing all its other work

Should you create a partnership to accomplish your goals?

A partnership may be appropriate if it promises to accomplish significantly more than your organization could accomplish on its own. Partnerships build community support and stewardship. Before initiating a partnership, investigate alternative strategies to achieve your objectives. Evaluate whether these approaches would be more efficient or effective for your project. There may be reasons not to partner.

Reference:
www.partnershipresourcecenter.org

James W. Tamm and
Ronald J. Luyet, *Radical
Collaboration*, 2004

Russell Linden, *Working
Across Boundaries: Making
Collaboration Work in
Government and Nonprofit
Organizations*, 2002

If the partners:

- >> Do not agree on a shared goal or vision
- >> Lack the commitment to work together toward a shared goal
- >> Lack the resources and/or expertise to accomplish the goal
- >> Have irreconcilable differences
- >> Have unrealistic goals and/or expectations about the partnership

If the agency:

- >> Prefers to dedicate limited resources to other existing partnerships
- >> Cannot guarantee future funding
- >> Decides the cost of developing and nurturing a short-term partnership outweighs the benefits
- >> Address difficulties in a forthright manner
- >> Ensure the partnership is supported by your whole organization
- >> Determines the proposed project does not align with the agency's mission or priorities

All partnerships present risks. Potential risks include:

- >> Investing time in failed projects
- >> Cost of managing the partnership is greater than the anticipated return on investment
- >> "Mission drift" - being steered away from an organization's core objectives or services by the partnership agenda
- >> Key personnel leave mid-process
In the event of leadership changes, a succession plan can take the form of a "Handover Memo." This plan describes: Relationships with partners; collaborative efforts under way; current commitments; and any work agreements or procedures partnerships have with the agency. A handover memo is completed by the agency's outgoing representative and is given to the incoming person responsible for working with the partnership.

What are potential barriers to a partnership?

In addition to considering available resources, identify and assess potential barriers - legal, structural, procedural, and interpersonal.

Examples of potential barriers:

Legal

- >> Partnership activities violate agency regulations, policies or federal law
- >> Limitations on spending Federal funds in public-private partnerships

Structural

- >> Incompatible differences in the mission of potential partnering organizations
- >> Competition for budgets or publicity
- >> Nonprofit organizations may perceive a partnership could threaten their unique niche for fundraising

Procedural

- >> Public-private partnerships have the most potential to generate perceived or actual conflict of interest issues. Agencies may legally receive money and other in-kind assistance from public-private partners, but should refrain from actions that raise a red flag (i.e. endorsements, selective alliances).
- >> Federal procurement regulations and procedures can potentially alienate partners
- >> Partnerships for government-supported projects often face advertising restrictions on the use of logos

Interpersonal

- >> Lack of commitment
- >> Lack of collaborative skills
- >> Prejudice against some entity
- >> Racial stereotypes

Appendix 1:
Transition Management of
Agency Personnel

What are the steps in finding and selecting the right partner?

1. Research

Research is a vital step not only in evaluating whether to seek a partnership, but also in finding and selecting the right partner. The project's success depends on partners' characteristics and resources: Interest and ability to participate; willingness to cooperate in a project; capability to contribute diverse ideas, technical information, and/or financial resources; prospective partners' track record in collaborative relationships.

Sources include:

- >> Chambers of Commerce, local libraries or universities with directories and resource guides that describe organizations having interests in line with your project
- >> Professional stakeholders, acquaintances, co-workers, friends, and family
- >> Communities of practice, like-minded organizations, friends groups, special interest or user groups (e.g., youth groups, disabled veterans)
- >> Internet, list-serves, social media networking tools

Many groups are interested in broad-reaching "big impact" projects. Consider who would be interested in contributing at different levels and points of involvement. The goals of each partner must overlap with the project mission. A good partner for the project may be a traditional ally or a group you initially considered unlikely to respond to a partnership invitation.

Consider potential political and public image risks when working with a prospective partner. In addition, a partnership with one group could alienate another partner.

Reference:
www.nonprofitcenters.org/partners/find-partners-by-location



2. Evaluate

Prospective partners should:

- >> Strive for partnership success
- >> Understand that partners depend on one another
- >> Be prepared to trust
- >> Be open and clear about their own goals
- >> Respect others' ideas and contributions
- >> Listen well and respond constructively
- >> Seek win-win solutions
- >> Manage disagreements or other difficulties directly and openly
- >> Act with professionalism and integrity in carrying out tasks
- >> Support a collaborative process

3. Recruit

When discussing mutual benefits of a proposed partnership, both entities should identify how respective needs and expectations will be met. Once shared benefits have been agreed upon, invite the potential partner to join the partnership.

People and organizations are motivated to partner when they:

- >> Feel they belong and are valued
- >> Are helping achieve goals in which they believe
- >> Have clear ways to communicate, perform work, make decisions, and affect outcomes
- >> Have adequate resources or a financial plan to sustain the work

Reference:
www.icl.org

Institute for Conservation,
*Working Together: A Toolkit
for Cooperative Efforts,
Networks and Coalitions*

How do you select a partnership project?

Projects that succeed are of mutual benefit to partners; projects that fail are usually not. The best projects are easily justified, highly visible, and have broad long-term impact.

Participants should consider the following:

Are the project goals within the agency's mandate and the public interest?

- >> A clear relationship should exist between the agency's mission and the partnership project.

Will the partnership project solve a problem or meet an agency objective?

- >> The project should produce significant benefits or it is a waste of valuable time and money.

Are cooperation and collaboration required to accomplish the project?

- >> The proposed partnership should be able to achieve more than the organizations can accomplish alone.

Reference:

www.fws.gov/policy/AppendixA6.pdf

Conservation Partnerships, A Field Guide to Public-Private Partnering for Natural Resource Conservation, Management Institute for Environment and Business and the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, Washington, D.C., 1993

How do you begin the partnership process?

Once people agree to work together, formalizing the relationship is usually the next step.

A written agreement is an essential tool in detailing the partnership's goals and objectives. It documents commitment and signals to your agency the relationship is necessary to accomplish project objectives.

Develop working drafts and formal partnership plans collaboratively. Joint authorship ensures greater ownership and buy-in among all partners. Revise as appropriate when other partners join.



CHECKLIST STEP 2 Partnership Preparation

- Have assessed your agency's potential to partner
- Have decided that a partnership is the desired approach to reach your goal
- Understand potential barriers to a partnership
- Know where to find partners for your project
- Understand how to select appropriate partners
- Understand how to select the right partnership project



STEP 3: Developing A Written Agreement For The Partnership

Each agency within the Department of the Interior manages partnership agreements differently. The content in this section provides general information about the importance of and components of partnership agreements.

The world of partnership agreements is complex with many nuances. Federal employees should consult with their partnership specialists before entering into any partnership agreement, accepting donations or participating in partner fundraising events.

Why do you need a written agreement?

A written agreement documents the joint ownership. These agreements vary from simple to highly complex. The agreement serves as a tool for partners to benchmark their commitments, especially financial or in-kind support. Review and revise written agreements annually.

Consider the following components to ensure all partners know:

- >> What is expected of them
- >> The extent to which they will have a role in decision making
- >> Who is accountable for what and to whom
- >> How resources will be obtained and expended
- >> The strategies and action steps used to achieve goals

What are the common formal written agreement mechanisms?

Your goals, resources, and limitations determine which written agreement will work best. Involve agency staff early to determine the most appropriate type of partnership agreement.

Interagency Agreements are used when one agency is providing payments, goods, or services to another agency.

Intra-agency Agreements are used when one bureau within an agency is providing payments, goods, or services to another bureau in the same agency.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) typically document responsibilities and coordinate efforts when different entities will be carrying out separate activities. Signatories agree to work toward mutual goals (e.g., perform joint work, share research results), but no transfer of funds are involved.

Grants transfer money, property, services, or anything of value to an outside group for a project of mutual interest where substantial agency involvement is not anticipated.

Cooperative Agreements transfer money, property, services, or anything of value to a non-federal group for a project of mutual interest where substantial agency involvement is anticipated.

Challenge Cost-Share (CCS) authority is available to specific Federal agencies on a year-to-year basis by the annual appropriations bill and requires recipients to match Federal money with non-Federal funds, labor, materials, equipment, or land and water. The specific level of match is spelled out in the document.

Research Joint Venture Agreements pool resources in support of research activities of mutual interest. Parties must share at least 20 percent of total project costs. Parties may enter into an agreement without regard to Federal assistance regulations, but sound financial control is required.

Volunteer Services Agreement for Natural Resource Agencies secures services of individuals or groups without compensation, although some incidental expenses may be provided. See form OMB 0596-0080

Fundraising Agreements are required when a partner is raising money for the benefit of the agency and the fundraising activity is expected to raise more than \$25,000 in one year.

What are common components to include in a written agreement?

The following components are commonly found in written agreements between partners:

- >> Authorities
- >> Names of Partners
- >> Goal of the Partnership
- >> Action Plan
- >> Duration of the Project Agreement
- >> Budget
- >> Evaluation
- >> Reports

Authorities

Each agreement must cite the legal authority(ies), relevant legislation or statute that directs or authorizes the agency to participate in partnership activities. This is especially important if fundraising activities are anticipated.

Reference:
www.doi.gov/partnerships/partnership_legal_framework.html

Names of Partners

Every written agreement: States the names of the partners; if new partners can be added; and how partners exit the agreement.

Goal of the Partnership

This component outlines the anticipated accomplishments made possible through the partnership. The goal helps unify efforts in partnerships where partners play complementary but separate roles.

Action Plan

The action plan describes partner roles and responsibilities. It establishes accountability by serving as a roadmap to identify what will be done, by whom, and by when. The roadmap includes a realistic timeframe to accomplish action items.

Accountability:

- >> Defines division of responsibilities among partners
- >> Defines the individual commitments of each partner
- >> Documents that commitments are met
- >> Assures dollars are spent for the purpose(s) specified by a donor
- >> Identifies the sources of funds and how they were expended, including the valuation of goods and services

Timeframes:

- >> Align resources and efforts
- >> Structure tasks to move the partnership forward in a systematic manner
- >> Ensures resources are available when needed
- >> Monitor commitments and progress
- >> Provide a tool for measuring accomplishments

Duration of the Project Agreement

Stating the expected duration of the project helps potential partners determine the level of commitment they are willing to make. Project dates are often set by partner availability and organizational funding cycles. The written agreement may contain a contingency plan to allow for unforeseen events (i.e., natural disasters).

Budget

The budget identifies the funding you will need to pay for project implementation as well as administrative support and personnel costs. A developed budget is a prerequisite for applying to foundations and other funding entities.

Evaluation

The written agreement includes an evaluation process that measures quantitative and qualitative progress and success.

Quantitative

Process measures indicate whether and how the partnership carried out the implementation plan for the project. They show that: deadlines are being met; cost estimates are accurate; and planned resource requirements match actual use.

Outcomes (results) assess whether the partnership met its goals by establishing benchmarks to determine if expected outputs are accomplished.

Qualitative

Broad intangible environmental and community benefits can result from a successful partnership. Success may also be measured by the benefits received from the partnership process itself (e.g., organization profiles are enhanced, partners feel they made a social contribution, trust is built, community networks are expanded).

Reference:
www.tgci.com

The Grantsmanship Center offers many publications about program evaluation and how to evaluate your partnership

Reports

Detailed reporting activities and formatting are governed by requirements of partner organizations. Reports should be available to both clients and the public.




At a minimum, reports answer the following:

- >> Did the partnership accomplish the target goal(s)?
If yes, were objectives met in the manner proposed?
If objectives were not met, why not? Explain the new planned outcome.
- >> Were all funding resources for the project accounted for appropriately?
- >> What lessons will be applied to future projects?



CHECKLIST STEP 3

Developing A Written Agreement For The Partnership

-  Understand why a written agreement is necessary for the partnership
-  Understand common written agreement mechanisms
-  Understand the written agreement may include the following components:
 - Authorities
 - Names of Partners
 - Goal of the Partnership
 - Action Plan
 - Duration of the Project Agreement
 - Budget
 - Evaluation
 - Reports





STEP 4: Implementing A Partnership

What are the building blocks of a funding strategy?

Pooling funds and resources from an array of partners to accomplish common objectives is often the driving force behind developing a partnership. Partners often bring their own funding as well as connections to other potential donors interested in supporting the project.

Building blocks in developing a funding strategy:

- >> Publicize the project during the initial stages
- >> Involve partners in initial stages of fundraising activities
- >> Designate matching funds in the agency's annual work plan
- >> Establish a funding plan to sustain the project
- >> Research potential funding from other internal programs
- >> Research competitive grants and alternative sources of funding
- >> Identify and recruit people who are enthusiastic and skilled in asking for money or contributions
- >> Create donor recognition plans

Agencies have strict rules regarding federal employee involvement in fundraising activities. Consult your agency's fundraising guidelines and requirements before becoming involved with fundraising efforts.

How can partners agree efficiently and amicably?

The consensus-building process is a time-tested method for reaching mutual agreements efficiently and non-confrontationally. Egos and emotions can creep into and sidetrack otherwise good agreements. Success means concentrating on the common purpose, attacking the problem and not one another.

The basic steps when leading a consensus building process are:

Search for common ground

Discussions based on interests promote exploration of a variety of possible solutions. Through consensus building, people with conflicting positions often discover they actually have compatible interests. Encourage partners to be open, honest, and specific about their interests so the group can work toward an agreement that will be responsive to these needs. Mediate between partners with polarized positions.

Establish procedural standards

Determine agreed-upon procedural standards to use in decision-making and taking actions requiring agreement. These standards provide a framework to evaluate future actions and processes.

Invent options for mutual gain

The principle of mutual gain means that by working together to address everyone's interests, people can create solutions acceptable to all.

Brainstorming generates possibilities and occurs in an atmosphere of total openness where all ideas are noted without judgment.

Written agreement

The agreement documents the commitment to work together and identifies shared goals and objectives.

How can you manage and resolve conflicts?

Conflicts are differences in perspectives inherent to every partnership. This diversity of perspectives helps generate ideas and facilitates change. Effective leaders understand conflict can be an impetus for change.

Common situations resulting in conflict:

- >> Misunderstanding or failure to communicate
- >> Unequal decision-making authority among participants
- >> Differences in values and goals of partnering organizations
- >> Differences in communication styles
- >> Unclear roles and responsibilities
- >> Lack of cooperation
- >> Differences in agency mandates
- >> Differences in the interpretation of rules, policies, or standards

Conflict Continuum

Conflict carries emotional aspects. When there is conflict, it is usually in relation to interests or ideas that are personally meaningful to the parties involved. Be mindful of decisions being made as a emotional response rather than based in logic.

Outside third-party facilitators or mediators can assist in resolving conflict. Because they are neutral, they are usually acceptable to organizations unable to reach agreements on their own.

Conflict can be thought of as a continuum of tension with escalating stages:

Differences

Diversity can exist in terms of organizational and individual culture, as well as learning style, problem-solving approaches, philosophy, values, circumstances, and temperament. Although such differences in and of themselves do not cause conflict, they can result in conflict if they are not respected, valued, and understood.

Disagreement

Disagreement occurs when people compare their preferences and priorities with those of others and find that they differ. Disagreement may not need resolution as people can agree to disagree.

Problem

When differences or disagreements result in negative consequences for at least one party, they may become problems. Unresolved problems may escalate into a dispute or a battle.

Dispute

In a dispute, more than one party acknowledges the differences and the problem. At least one party expresses a desire to solve the problem.

Battle

A dispute escalates into a battle when the parties feel that their goals are incompatible. None of the parties are committed to solving the problem together. Instead, the parties invest their energies separately to win.

There are alternatives in managing conflict with the goal of the process being a win-win for all. The conflict can be resolved without one side losing or necessarily changing its beliefs.

Reference:
Dudley Weeks, The Eight
Essential Steps to Conflict
Resolution, 1992

Individuals have choices during each stage on the continuum:

- >> Disregard differences if they not germane to the agreement
- >> Reconcile or accept differences before they become disagreements
- >> Settle disagreements before they become problems
- >> Address problems before they become disputes or battles

How do you celebrate success?

Recognizing success provides an opportunity for the partners and management to appreciate and publicize their work and commitment. The public's knowledge of a partnerships' accomplishment can lead to broader community support and future stewardship.

Some ways to recognize partners:

- >> Thank people publicly
- >> Organize a recognition dinner or special event
- >> Present awards
- >> Publicize major accomplishments in the media

Celebrate both big and little successes. Even when things don't go as planned, find something to celebrate. Reward the effort, not just the outcome.

What ethical considerations apply to Federal Employees involved in partnerships?

Federal employees are subject to Federal ethics statutes and regulations (e.g., fundraising, endorsements, gift acceptance). Partnership activities are not exempt from these laws and regulations.

Successful partnerships have been unraveled because of ethical misconduct. These situations create vulnerabilities for Federal agencies and individual employees regarding litigation and civil penalties, and can cause embarrassment to all partners.

Federal employees are prohibited from:

- >> Receiving anything of monetary value in exchange for influence while performing your official duties
- >> Use of appropriated funds for lobbying Congress or other entities
- >> Endorsement of any product, service, or enterprise
- >> Representing an outside individual or organization before a court of law or a Federal agency
- >> Receiving dual compensation (i.e., salary from both your Federal agency and the partnership)
- >> Engaging in activities which reflect a real or perceived conflict of interest (e.g., having or appearing to have a financial interest in a partnership)

Reference:
www.doi.gov/partnerships/ETHICS_table.html

Ethics Do's and Don'ts
When Establishing Partner-
ships with Private
Organizations

Federal employees in partnerships need approval for the following activities:

- >> Receiving anything of monetary value in exchange for influence while performing your official duties
- >> Use of official time to represent the agency in joint partnership efforts
- >> Use of official time to work on the joint effort for which the partnership was established
- >> Acceptance of gifts or travel expenses
- >> Soliciting donations or any type of charitable fundraising in an official capacity
- >> Serving as an officer or board member

Federal employees who are officers in partnering organizations must recuse themselves from any involvement in matters in which the partner organization has a financial interest. Consider participating as a Federal liaison instead of as a board member or officer

What does the partnership need to know about the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA)?

The basic purpose of the Federal Advisory Committee Act of 1972 (FACA) is to provide the public with access and input into policy decisions of Federal agencies. Congress intended FACA to promote open discussion and a collaborative environment.

FACA approval is necessary only if a Federal entity wants to use a committee to obtain advice. There is the mistaken belief that a formal Federal advisory committee must be established before people can gather to discuss issues.

FACA applies if the answers to the following three questions are **yes**:

1. Is the group a committee?

FACA regulations may apply if the group has a formal structure and seeks to advise the government (e.g., fixed membership, specific purpose).

FACA does **not** apply:

- >> If the committee is composed wholly of Federal employees
- >> If the committee meetings are held between Federal officials and elected officers of state, local, or tribal governments, or their designated employees
- >> If the committee was established to make recommendations to state or local officials or agencies due to their cooperating agency status
- >> If the advice is from an individual, taken either singly or in a meeting
- >> If an individual from a committee provides individual advice, as opposed to consensus.

Reference:
[www.gsa.gov/portal/
category/21242](http://www.gsa.gov/portal/category/21242)

2. Is the committee "established" or "utilized" by a Federal agency?

FACA regulations may apply if an agency establishes a group or controls the outcome of the group process (i.e., determining the membership or setting the agenda).

FACA does not apply:

- >> If the committee is established or utilized by a non-federal individual or group even if Federal employees are invited to participate

3. Is the purpose of the committee to give advice to a Federal agency?

FACA regulations apply if the purpose of the committee is to sway, direct, or influence an agency.

FACA does not apply:

- >> If a committee is formed for other purposes even if it incidentally advises the agency (e.g., monitoring, conducting investigations)
- >> To local civic groups established to advise or make recommendations to state or local officials or agencies

Consult your FACA representative to receive guidance regarding your agency's interpretation and application of FACA.



CHECKLIST STEP 4 Implementation

- Understand the building blocks of a funding strategy
- Understand how agreements can be reached efficiently and amicably
- Understand how conflict can be managed and resolved
- Understand how a successful partnership effort can be celebrated
- Understand what ethical considerations apply to federal employees involved in partnerships
- Understand what the partnership needs to know about FACA

STEP 5: Ending A Partnership

Why does a partnership end?

The end of a partnership does not imply failure. If one partner in a multiple entity partnership decides to leave, the partnership may choose to continue.

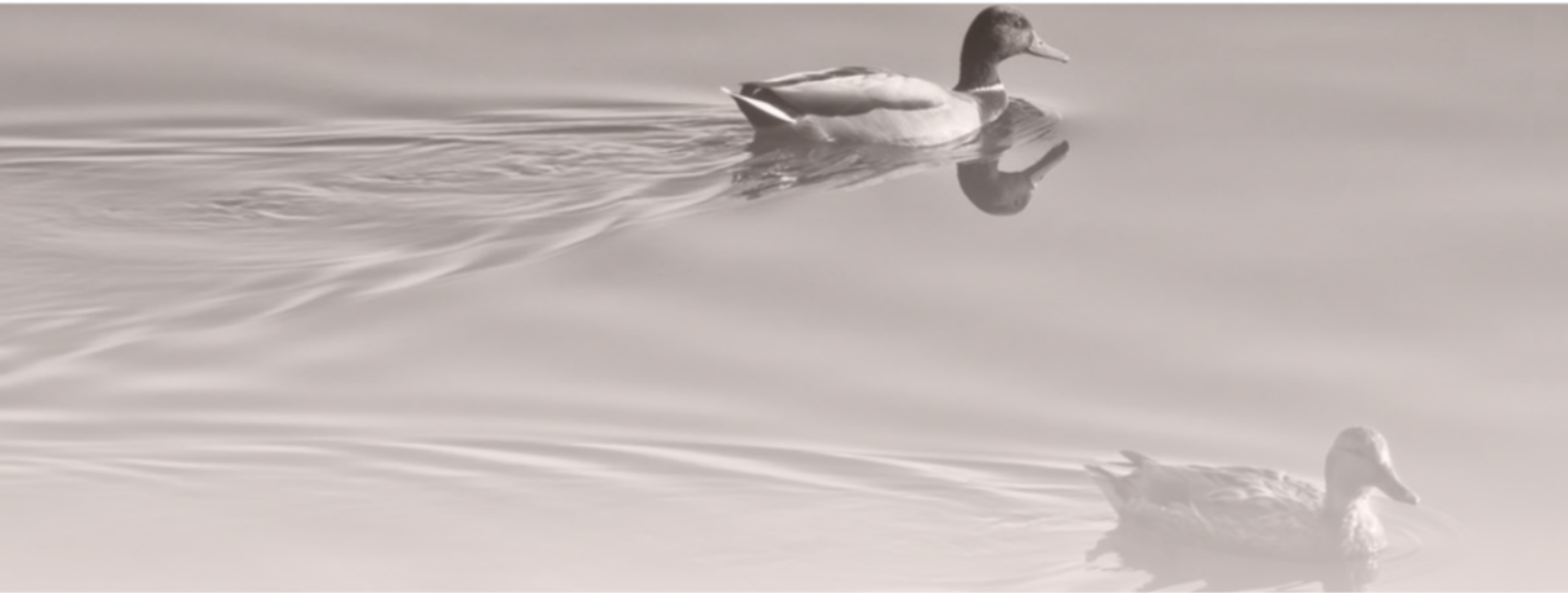
Partnerships may end when:

- >> The participants agree the project is complete
- >> Agreements have a sunset clause (language to end the partnership on or before a given date)
- >> They don't wish to continue as a partnership



How do you end the partnership?

Consider the following actions to responsibly end a partnership:

- >> Determine how to inform people, both inside and outside the partnership
- >> Identify if there is a need for an alternative to the current partnership
- >> Document the partnership's history and lessons learned
- >> Identify, if appropriate, steps to disperse assets
- >> Recognize incomplete tasks and redistribute, if necessary
- >> Identify the partnership's accomplishments, the people and organizations to be acknowledged
- >> Select a time, place, and event for the partners and community to celebrate accomplishments



CHECKLIST STEP 5 Ending A Partnership

-  Understands why partnerships end
-  Understands how to conclude a partnership

Appendix 1: Transition management of agency personnel

“Handover Memo”

The Federal Government’s ability to solve natural resource–related problems increasingly depends on the quality of long-term relationships between agencies, other organizations, and the public. As more organizations and communities partner with the Federal Government, more agencies are recognizing the importance of improving the transition between outgoing project leaders and those who will assume their partnership responsibilities.

A “Handover Memo” is an effective means of doing just that, because it succinctly describes existing agreements and commitments. It can also be used to inform and involve agency personnel whose continuing support will be needed. The very act of writing a Handover Memo helps create appreciation for the importance of those relationships and cooperative efforts that you have helped develop, so they can continue to grow and evolve.

Template

To: Address the memo to the new agency project leader (and any interim leaders).

From: The memo is completed by you as the outgoing leader. At a minimum, you should develop the memo with the participation of your primary staff. At your discretion, you may find it useful to have others review it as well before signing off.

cc: Send a copy to your primary staff and supervisor. At your discretion, you may want to copy others as well if that will better meet the purposes of this memo.

The memorandum should include:

A Description of Current Partnerships and Collaborative Efforts

Briefly describe each of your projects or programs that is using a partnership or collaborative approach. Where partnerships and collaborative efforts are the subject of formal agreements (for example, Memorandums of Understanding or Cooperative Agreements), you can simply reference the agreement and highlight the pending activities, projects, or goals. Where relationships have not been memorialized in a formal agreement, focus on key aspects of the arrangement. Basic information about the length of time a partnership or collaborative effort has been under way may also be useful. Where possible, consider having your key partners assist with crafting this section, and include their signatures on the memo.

Commitments or Schedules Associated with Current Partnership and Collaborative Efforts

For each of the above relationships, describe any formal or informal commitments you have made. Be sure to include any shared understandings about specific schedules for accomplishing joint projects or implementing shared programs. Commitments may include but are not limited to time agreements, financial arrangements, commitment of personnel, or commitment to accomplish a particular objective.

Regardless of whether renegotiation of these commitments would be appropriate after your departure (depending on agreements or understandings in this regard), the current status of existing commitments is critical information to pass on to your successor, supervisor, and project staff. Again, where possible, consider having your key partners jointly craft this section, and include their signatures.

Current Procedures

Briefly describe any local communication norms or procedural agreements that help keep relationships active and functioning well. These might include information about regular meetings, as well as formal and informal expectations that have developed—for example, the frequency and timing of communication frequency, particular subjects or issues of interest, key contacts, and so on. Supplement this memo with an on-site visit with your successor and other transition activities as appropriate.

Strategy for Meeting and Getting To Know Your Community

Describe a potential strategy by which incoming staff could foster and maintain relationships within the surrounding community. Include information on potential venues, regularly scheduled events (if there are any), community social gatherings, and contacts for each. Where possible, engage your key partners in development of this section.