Diversity of Cultural Expressions   **1.EXT.IGC**

INTERGOVERNMENTAL COMMITTEE
## FOR THE PROTECTION AND PROMOTION OF THE DIVERSITY OF CULTURAL EXPRESSIONS

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INFORMATION DOCUMENT

THE PARTNERING PROCESS

This document has been elaborated with the input of The Partnering Initiative, a global programme of the International Business Leaders Forum (IBLF) in association with the University of Cambridge Programme for Industry. The document outlines the four key phases in the partnering process: creation and relationship building (scoping and building); implementing, managing and maintaining; reviewing, evaluating and revising; sustaining outcomes. Its purpose is to serve as a guide to stakeholders in developing partnership relationships in areas covered by the Convention.

The Partnering Process

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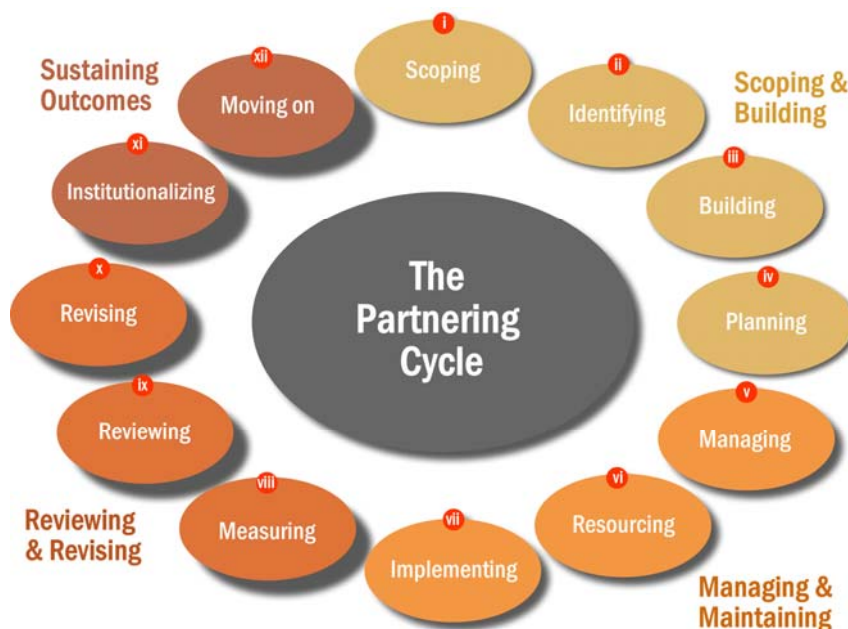
PHASE 1: CREATION AND RELATIONSHIP BUILDING

Scoping – preparatory research

It is essential to understand the fundamental needs of the project, for example which aspect(s) of the value chain the work will focus on and what its impact will be. The inclusion of beneficiaries in the needs assessment and identification of goals and objectives is also important.

⇒ Determine the geographical scope: local, national, regional
⇒ Determine whether an international partner (or more) would add value and why (technical expertise versus implementation in each country) in order to identify committed partners
⇒ Map the constituencies of a broad range of stakeholders (a stakeholder map) by exploring their needs, interests and motivations
⇒ Consult informally with selected stakeholders, and UNESCO Secretariat, use UNESCO's website, and possible external resource providers to explore the potential

for alignment with the project goals and other external factors, such as timing and other existing or planned initiatives

⇒ Draft a vision for the partnership but maintain flexibility since it will change with partner input

Identifying partners

⇒ Identify potential partners from the stakeholder map, according to the needs of the project as validated by preparatory research and consultation

⇒ Determine the level of engagement of different stakeholders: advisory group, pilot, or an active partner

⇒ Identify what types of partner organizations would add value to the partnership because of their unique attributes, skills, networks, etc.: remember to explore the range of options from both existing contacts and new ones

⇒ Keep to a maximum of five or six organizations as active or key decision-making partners

⇒ Make initial contact with each organization to understand their working culture, strategy, needs and objectives as well as to assess interest, fit and capacity

⇒ Invite partners to an initial meeting and determine the role of your organization: partner, facilitator or both?

⇒ Conduct a simple internal assessment before entering the negotiations to help understand:

- Benefits, desired objectives, outcomes and risks (shared and for individual organizations): capacity-building; knowledge transfer; money; reputation; positioning; advocacy; core activity delivery and networks

- Anticipated cost and resources available to invest: human, financial and technical resources; contacts; networks; products; services; premises; transport and internal capacity

- Assumptions about the other partners, the project, time-frames, etc.

- Opportunities and risks: internal as well as for the project and all the partners

Building – Initial negotiations

During the initial negotiations, it is important to determine what degree of decision-making power is held by each representative at the meeting.

⇒ Actively explore the following:
- Common goals and shared objectives, as well as each partner's interests and clarify assumptions being made
- The working culture of the other partners

The way in which these discussions are undertaken will determine how relationships develop, the level of transparency and trust, the power dynamics and the potential success of the project.

⇒ Practise from the start the partnership principles (equity, transparency, mutual benefit, as well as responsibility and complementarity) and establish ground rules for working together, e.g. be transparent about what objectives need to be met for an organization's participation

Planning - Project elaboration and resource mapping

After an agreement in principle (not a formal agreement) is reached, confirming that partners are willing to work together, partners can initiate a preliminary planning discussion. If there are areas of disagreement at this stage, it should be decided whether they are central and need to be resolved immediately or whether they can be put on hold until a later stage.

In the absence of a facilitator, all parties must help the building process and take responsibility for ensuring there is equity, transparency and mutual benefit, and that everyone has an opportunity to contribute and be heard.

⇒ Create: open up the discussions by brainstorming a wide variety of possibilities, without judgement
⇒ Refine: from the suggestions, agree on a programme of possible activities and collectively begin to outline a coherent project, including outputs and outcomes
⇒ Map resources and commitments:

- Identify resources needed (skills, logistics, people, facilities, information, distribution, contacts, publicity, money, services, products) – engaging in this activity together ensures a participatory approach and builds the relationship
- Identify how the resources may be sourced firstly within the partnership, then externally if needed – keep an open mind
- Be fair in the distribution of resources, roles and responsibilities, to maintain equity buy-in

⇒ Negotiate the decision-making rules: how decisions will be made and by whom (all, some, committee or task force), how frequently partners will meet, how often they will communicate, what means will be used

⇒ Discuss time-frames for implementation as well as assumptions about the duration of the partnership and the project

⇒ Negotiate how financial contributions will be managed

⇒ Seek to clarify language and terminology (e.g. whether the term 'ownership' refers to branding or responsibility for sustaining outcomes)

⇒ Discuss codes of conduct:

- Agree on ground rules and principles to indicate how partners wish to operate
- Bear in mind the three partnering principles of equity, transparency and mutual benefit as well as complementarity and responsibility

⇒ Pay special attention to discussions on the management of communications and relevant decisions that should be included in the partnership agreement

⇒ Discuss communications between partners:

- Agree on the mode and frequency (email, telephone, meetings) with consideration to the restrictions some partners might have (internet connectivity, location)
- Include all key partners
- Agree on when it might be appropriate to share information (and what kind) with other stakeholders

⇒ Discuss communications externally and to other stakeholders:

- Discuss protocols for communicating publically: modes and type of information
- Agree who the audiences may be and how the partnership (and the project) will be described
- Explore the external communication needs of each partner and the time-frame for going public
- Agree on protocols for using others' materials, such as logos
- Determine the objectives of external communication: visibility, awareness raising, advocacy, publicity, etc.

⇒ Discuss internal communications within each partner organization is crucial for buy-in and sustained participation. Consider:

- How will the project be described internally to each organization? For example, how does it contribute to core organizational objectives?
- How will successes and learning be communicated?
- Will other staff be involved and, if so, how?
- How will the partnership be communicated to the organization's stakeholders (trade associations, customer, board, etc.)?
- How does this partnership contribute to core organizational objectives and targets?

Setting indicators for reviewing, monitoring and evaluation

⇒ Define what success would look like: indicators and methodology for capturing data (how and by whom)

⇒ Foster a learning culture where reviewing the project and the partnership is seen as a way of learning and improving the work being done, not as a test to pass. To do so, establish a safe environment to discuss and report on aspects of the partnership that are not working

⇒ Understand each partner's reporting needs (what, to whom, how, when) and find a way of meeting them

⇒ Try to avoid communicating problems for the first time in official documents by discussing issues with partners as they arise

⇒ Track and follow-through on commitments made by each partner

⇒ Discuss how partners keep each other up to date with developments (reporting between partners), the process for communicating obstacles when they arise, and for finding solutions collectively (Is the partnership achieving its goals? What are the obstacles? How can the obstacles be removed?)

⇒ Decide how often to review the project and partnership effectiveness and efficiency (management, decision-making, other modalities)

Risks and assumptions

⇒ Discuss possible risks and challenges and explore together how the partnership could mitigate these risks

⇒ Be transparent about any assumptions and identify any non-negotiable or deal-breaking aspects for each partner

Partnership agreements

The discussions outline above will invariably take time and span many meetings but they will form the basis for the partnership agreement. No one party should assume that their template or pro-forma agreement will be suitable.

⇒ The agreement will need to ensure commitment, accountability as well as flexibility

⇒ The agreement needs to be acceptable to all partners

PHASE 2: IMPLEMENTING, MANAGING AND MAINTAINING

Partnerships frequently find many challenges in Phase 2: quite often partnering is "learning by doing" as partners may not have worked together before; however, once the partnership starts implementation, this work should be project managed like any other.

Managing

⇒ Review efficacy of timetable and deliverables and adjust where necessary

⇒ Respect the partnering principles and ground rules established together

⇒ Balance the need to pay attention to the partnership relationships as well as the project implementation needs

⇒ Keep communicating between partners and maintain good records

Resourcing

⇒ Ensure partners keep to their resource commitments and, where necessary, revisit project needs

Implementing

$\Rightarrow$ Refer back to decisions made in the planning stage and ensure that implementation is in line with agreements made

PHASE 3: REVIEWING, EVALUATING AND REVISING

Working in partnership is different to contractually based relationships and this affects the way partnerships need to be reviewed and evaluated. Review and evaluation of partnerships must be participatory (reflecting the experience and view of all partners) and ongoing.

Measuring

$\Rightarrow$ Each individual partner will have its own internal or preferred mechanisms for monitoring and evaluation of projects; however, partners must decide collectively what needs to be measured, how, by whom and how frequently

Reviewing

$\Rightarrow$ Partners will usually review and evaluate the partnership on two levels: together, as a partnership, and as an individual partnering organization
$\Rightarrow$ Partners will also need to distinguish between evaluating the partnership (as a relationship and process for achieving results) as well as the project (the focus of the partnership's work)
$\Rightarrow$ Conducting an evaluation is a good opportunity to capture the story of the partnership, how it has developed and why, learning and recommendations

The table below shows the aspects that need to be reviewed in partnerships:

Evaluating partnerships (Fig. 1)

ASPECT	WHAT	FOCUS
Project impacts	Delivery and progress towards objectives	**Monitor activities (ongoing)** • Tracking and performance
	Impact and sustainability of solution/outcome/outputs	**Evaluate activities (what was accomplished)** • Inputs, outputs, outcomes and impact
Partnership relationships and functioning	All partners together evaluate the effectiveness, efficiency and how they work in partnership to achieve the common goals	**Review relationships and operations** • Decision-making process and governance • Roles and responsibilities • Communications systems • Working relations and commitment • Financial operations and resources
Methodology: Using partnership to achieve results	**Partners evaluate whether or not the partnership was the best approach for the development goal as well as for themselves as individual organizations**	**Partners reflect on whether benefits outweigh investments** Assess the value of being in partnership (for partners), such as: • Reputation, positioning and credibility • Networks and contacts • Capacity-building, institution building and knowledge transfer • Advocacy • Money and other resources • Core activity delivery The benefit (added value) for society should also be considered NB: These benefits should be compared to the resources and transaction costs involved in partnering

Revising

⇒ Following a review, and in light of experience, decisions should be made regarding:

• Revisions or changes to the partnership and/or the project

• The continued participation of current partners or the need for new partners

• Any other new projects to be undertaken as a result of the current one

PHASE 4: SUSTAINING OUTCOMES

In the final phase of the cycle, partners will need to decide issues around next steps. In all situations, the partners should discuss next steps together, agree on the way forward and how this will be communicated externally and how experiences and learning will be shared.

Sustaining

⇒ Continue the work as it is or pursue the partnership but with a re-negotiated focus and scope – refer to the beginning of the process

Institutionalizing

⇒ Where necessary, build appropriate structures and mechanisms to ensure longer term commitment and continuity, recognizing that this will change the dynamic of partner collaboration

Closure

⇒ Due to successful completion of the work or the inability to work together – clear communication of learning and impact is particularly important in the case of closure

All information on successful partnerships and best practices should be passed onto UNESCO for further dissemination.

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