



Developing the capacity of governments and business for effective cross-sector partnering

“Let me repeat, this is an era of partnerships. Governments cannot do it alone. The UN cannot do it alone... NGOs cannot do it alone, and business can’t. We need to work together.”

Former UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan

“...We have an important role to play, in partnership with others in the public and private sectors and civil society, to help spread the benefits of development more widely.”

Joint CEO Statement on Global Corporate Citizenship, World Economic Forum

Introduction

Partnerships¹ between government, business and civil society are proving to be an effective mechanism towards achieving sustainable development. They help develop markets, stimulate economic activity and contribute to the provision of public services whilst ensuring social and environmental benefits.

But there is caution about cross-sector partnering among many Southern governments. There may be several reasons for this – including perhaps a limited awareness of the potential of partnerships to achieve government goals; a lack of skills and capacity within government (and indeed in other sectors); or a legislative framework that makes partnering difficult in practice.

As a result, relatively few cross sector partnerships involving Southern governments have been established. And, of those that have been formed, many have not fulfilled their potential.

At the same time, partnerships between businesses and civil society and other non-traditional partners are becoming more robust, better understood and more widely practised in Africa and globally. But, without government involvement, there may be risks to the long-term legitimacy and sustainability of these initiatives. And in areas where such partnerships address the

provision of basic (and traditionally public) services, they also risk undermining the responsibility – and therefore likely future capacity – of governments to provide these services.

‘Partnering with Governments’ is a major new international initiative to examine these issues in detail and help build the capacity of governments and business to partner more effectively. The initiative is itself a partnership between GTZ (the German Government’s Agency for International Sustainable Development), the International Business Leaders Forum, and a number of major international companies.

During the initial period of fifteen months, the programme will focus on five countries in Africa: South Africa, Madagascar, Gabon, Guinea and Zambia. Working with local partners in each country, it will facilitate multi-stakeholder groups as a source of insight, information and connections to help develop the capacity building programme.

Specifically the programme aims to:

- **Better understand the challenges** businesses and governments face in partnering together;
- **Increase understanding** of the value of cross sector partnering for African and other governments in achieving more effective sustainable development;
- **Create a more enabling environment** in which partnership approaches to sustainable development can flourish and;
- Help **build governmental capacity** to partner more effectively with business and NGOs through awareness-raising, partnership skills training and mentoring.

¹ By ‘partnership’ we mean an alliance of parties across the sectors combining resources and competencies towards a project in an area of shared interest from which all parties benefit. This is beyond purely a commercial government/business arrangement.

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Programme Overview

The programme is initially designed in three phases over a period of 18 months from June 2007 to November 2008.

Phase 1 – Scoping (9 months)

- Investigation of existing successful and unsuccessful partnerships between governments, business and civil society, drawing specifically on the partnering experience of the business sector;
- Exploring with key players (businesses and business organisations, NGOs, development agencies) the challenges and potential for building partnership activity and capacity in each of five focus African countries;
- Development of partnership case studies, tools and other learning material to be used in the capacity-building and communication phases;
- Creation of an overview of the opportunities and challenges of partnering with governments in Africa from both business and government perspectives.

Phase 2 – Capacity building and programme support (6 months)

- Awareness-raising at senior government level (both within national and sub-national government) through seminars, written material and priming of partnership ‘champions’;
- Training to improve the understanding and build the skills necessary for successful partnerships;
- Independent mentoring and support of one partnership project involving a government agency in each of the five focus countries over a period of six months.

Phase 3 – Communication and dissemination of findings (3 months)

An integrated communication strategy will be developed to widen the impact of the programme outside the five focus countries and beyond Africa. The strategy may include:

- A dedicated website – for governments and those who seek to work with governments as partners, especially in the international and national business sectors;
- Tool book(s) – for building partnerships with government and a set of skills-building, training and coaching materials that can be used by others;

- Case studies – emphasising partnering processes and effective ways of dealing with challenges;
- A Southern Africa regional workshop – to present and discuss findings.

Governance and Implementation

The programme is a partnership between GTZ and the private sector coordinated by the International Business Leaders Forum. At the global level, a Steering Group (made up of GTZ, IBLF and Core Corporate Partners) provides direction to the programme and a secretariat (run by The Partnering Initiative, a global programme of IBLF) manages the overall programme.

In each focus country, the programme is being developed and implemented by an in-country partner, and is engaging strongly with government at various levels. The in-country partner will facilitate the creation of a multi-stakeholder group to provide support, input and local insight into the programme.

Business Input and Support

The programme is seeking the substantive input and support from businesses with an interest in partnering in Africa. Please contact us if you would like to participate in the programme, or would be willing to contribute case studies or other relevant material to support the research or capacity building.

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