



# PARTNER VALUE CANVAS

**What:** A structured approach to improve existing partnerships or to create new ones.

**Why:** A partnership is a value exchange between two or more organisations. Understanding what value your and other organisations have to offer is the foundation for creating impactful synergies.

Partnerships can bring fresh insights, experience, skills, worldviews, and knowledge to a problem, as well as new capabilities to achieve your ambitions. The Partnership Value Canvas tool will help you develop more impactful partnerships by identifying what resources or elements are missing from your operational model to fulfil strategic ambitions and, consequently, what resources or elements that you need from a partner. It will additionally, and importantly, help you understand what you can offer a given partner.

**When:** Use this tool as part of your mobilisation efforts at any time during your project or annual cycle. It is particularly useful when a new operational or programme strategy has been developed and modes of implementation are to be explored.

**NOTE:** If you have not yet defined a specific potential partner in your strategy to realise your ambitions, the [Ecosystem map tool](#) can help you in this task.

## Step 1

### PREPARE THE EXERCISE

Depending on the number of participants, you can use this tool as a group exercise, in pairs, or have participants fill out the template individually followed by round up discussions. Choose the set-up that works best for you and your team.

Identify the specific area of work for which you seek a new partnership.

If you have already selected a relevant partner or identified specific potential partners, prepare to present it/them and bring some key information on who they are, what their mission is, what they do, and where they work.

To structure the exercise discussions, familiarise or remind yourself of the main types of partnership and their key attributes for effective partnering, so you can support your team during the exercise:

#### 5 common partnership types for in humanitarian action

1. Funding partners: Often termed as partnerships, but rarely move beyond the transactional.
2. Implementation partners: Where you are working with others on the implementation of an intervention.
3. Vendor partners: Where you are contracting others to deliver products or services.
4. Co-creation partners: Where you are working with others to co-create new value (e.g., other organisations, interest groups, communities etc.).
5. Cross-sector partners: Where you are working with organisations from other sectors, such as the private sector, academia, or government.

## INFORMATION

**PHASE**  
MOBILISE

**TIMEFRAME**  
60-120 MINS.

**MODE**  
BOTH

**PARTICIPANTS**  
4 - 10

**FACILITATION LEVEL**  
BASIC

**MATERIALS**  
PARTNER VALUE CANVAS  
TEMPLATE IN A#, STICKY  
NOTES, PENS, AND TIMER

The list is not exhaustive, so feel free to add more partnership types if needed.

**Face-to-face:** Download the Partner Value Canvas template and print the number of copies needed (one per participant/group and one for consolidating all inputs).

**Online:** If you divide the participants into groups, copy the pre-made Miro template (one template per group) and prepare plenty of virtual sticky notes. Before the workshop, encourage participants to familiarise themselves with the chosen online platform. If you use Miro, you can share [this short video tutorial](#) (3 min) in advance. Prepare break-out rooms if you're diving up the group into smaller ones.

#### **Facilitators tip**

Print out the list of partnership types to share with participants as a reference point. If potential partners are already identified, print out brief, key information about these partners.

Prepare a few general points of what you think your organisation may bring to a partnership to help get discussions going during the exercise, if participants get stuck. If you are in need to make a strategy for more than one partnership, prepare more Partner Value Canvases – you can complete as many as necessary.

Consult your partner(s), community engagement and accountability advisor or other relevant stakeholders to understand whether specific local stakeholders in the given context should be included when assessing potential new partners.

---

## **Step 2**

### **SETTING THE SCENE**

Introduce the participants to the timeframe and the purpose of the exercise:

- What are we going to do today?
- Why are they invited?
- What are their roles, if the participants are not familiar with each other?
- What is the timeframe?

Present the pre-selected area of work for which you need a partner strategy for. Agree on the exact scope for this area of work. This will ensure that you can be as specific as possible when you discuss the pre-identified potential partner(s) or identify a new one.

If you do not have a specific partner in place before this exercise, you need to identify a potential partner before the canvas can be filled out:

- To help the participants start reflecting on this, share and discuss the 5 common partnership types to narrow the scope.
- Depending on the number of participants, split into smaller groups or pairs or discuss possible partners in the entire group. Brainstorm who the potential partners could be.
- With the entire group, decide on a partner to complete the Partner Value Canvas for.

At the end of this step, you have selected a clear area of work and a specific partner.

Allow between 10–45 min for this step, depending on whether a partner is pre-selected or not before this exercise. If this step goes to 45 minutes, allow the participants a break now to re-energise them.

**Facilitator tip**

Ensure all participants are clear on who the selected partner is before moving on. If you have access to a printer, print out key information and the partner logo and hang on the wall/place on tables for the participants to keep them 'in the room' during the exercise.

---

## Step 3

### FILL IN THE CANVAS

The Partner Value Canvas consists of 3 pages:

Page 1: **Partner Value Canvas**

Page 2: **Partner Portrait**

Page 3: **Value Proposition Statements**

If you are running the exercise with more than five participants, split them into three pairs/groups. Distribute one canvas to each group.

**Partner Value Canvas**

On page 1, you define what you want to achieve through the partnership and what you have to offer. Instruct the group(s) to discuss and document:

- Your intervention goals.
- What role you would like to play in the partnership.
- What you have and what you need.
- What your "hidden asset," are, what you have to offer. These are the unique attributes or resources you offer to a potential partner. Think holistically in terms of what a partner may find valuable in your organisation.

Allow participants approximately 10 minutes to complete page 1, then come back as a group and consolidate and agree on the content. Assign a person to merge inputs on the consolidated/joint canvas as you discuss. Allow another 10–15 minutes to agree on inputs.

**Partner Portrait**

On page 2, you create a profile of your partner. Instruct the group(s) to discuss and document:

- Who your targeted partner is and from which sector.
- Background of your partner.
- What the partner wants to achieve.
- What the actions/services/functions of the partner currently are. What do they offer?
- What values drive the partner.

Allow participants approximately 10 minutes to complete page 2, then come back as a group and consolidate and agree on the content. Assign a person to merge inputs on the consolidated/joint canvas as you discuss. Allow another 10–15 minutes to agree on inputs.

**Value Proposition Statements**

On page 3, you define your value proposition statements based on pages 1 and 2. Instruct the group(s) to discuss and document:

- Put yourself in the position of your target partner. Identify statements that you think may be persuasive and use these statements to create 5–8 compelling value proposition statements. A value proposition is a clear and compelling statement that explains the unique benefits and value a partnership, product, service, or solution provides to a clearly defined target group or stakeholder.

- The statements should reflect concrete actions that would be valuable to the partner as well as reflect what the joint created value would be supporting each partner organisations mission and key ambitions.
- Looking at the value proposition statements, discuss what assumptions you have for them to hold true, and what needs to be validated after this exercise to build an effective partnership.

Allow participants approximately 10 minutes to complete page 3, then come back as a group and consolidate and agree on the content. Assign a person to merge inputs on the consolidated/joint canvas as you discuss. Allow another 10–15 minutes to agree on these inputs.

Allow 60–80 minutes for this step.

---

## Step 4

### NEXT STEPS

You now have a clear idea of the partnership you need for your project, and what you can offer to the prospective partner.

To support building your strategy or plan for how you will engage with the identified partner in order to establish the desired partnership, these attributes for effective partnering may be helpful:

1. A clear understanding between partners of the word 'partnership'.
2. Agreement on a shared vision and common purpose.
3. Account taken of, and allowance being made for, individual partners' interests.
4. The co-creation of design, decisions, and solutions.
5. Commitment to sharing risks as well as benefits.
6. Every partner contributes resources (whether tangible or intangible).
7. Partners share decision-making and leadership responsibilities.
8. Partners commit to mutual/horizontal accountability.
9. Partners work together to develop a principled approach to their partnership endeavours.
10. Attention is paid to the partnering process as well as the partnership's projects.

The fewer the attributes you can identify in your proposed partnership model, the more transactional the relationship is; the more attributes you have, the more transformative the partnership can be.

**Next step:** Discuss what the concrete next steps should be with the participants. Decide who should do what and when. Remember to thank the participants for their time and inputs.