ADB

Guidelines for Knowledge Partnerships

Asian Development Bank

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2011

Asian Development Bank

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Foreword

Knowledge solutions and partnerships are two of five key drivers of change identified in *Strategy 2020*[1]—the long-term strategic framework formulated to help the Asian Development Bank play a more relevant and innovative role in shaping the future of Asia and the Pacific.

Knowledge solutions underpin development effectiveness and increase the relevance of ADB vis-à-vis its developing member countries and development partners. *Strategy 2020* argues that knowledge solutions must be enriched through internal learning from operational practice, and external learning from long-term knowledge partnerships.

Partnerships with multilateral and bilateral institutions, the private sector, research institutes, nongovernment organizations, community-based organizations, and foundations will become central to planning, financing, and implementing ADB operations. Notwithstanding, time and again, a subtler but far more important rationale behind partnerships is obscured by their explicit strategic motives. That rationale is the intent to learn—especially knowledge that is tacit, collective, and embedded—and failure in this arena probably explains shortcomings. In brief, partnerships open up opportunities for organizations to gain knowledge and leverage strengths. (Indeed, the ability to learn through partnerships is often vital to their continued existence.) However, even though a partner's knowledge is tacitly or explicitly deemed useful, organizations will not necessarily actively seek to acquire it. Learning is a difficult, frustrating, and often misunderstood process.

The *Guidelines for Knowledge Partnerships* offer a framework to enable ADB to strengthen its existing knowledge partnerships and develop new ones. Olivier Serrat, head of the Knowledge Management Center in ADB's Regional and Sustainable Development Department, was the task manager.

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[1]   ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/strategy2020/

Preface

Strategy 2020[2] states that "ADB will play a bigger part in putting the potential of knowledge solutions to work in the Asia and Pacific region." Recognizing the steadily increasing value that developing member countries and development partners attach to knowledge support, *Strategy 2020* explains that ADB's knowledge management activities must be enriched through (i) internal learning from operational practice, and (ii) external learning from long-term strategic partnerships with other international finance institutions and world-class academic and research institutions. It also calls for streamlining and enhancing institutional arrangements for knowledge management where appropriate.

Knowledge management at ADB is evolving purposefully in the right direction, although more needs to be done. In 2008, to accelerate progress, better institutionalize knowledge, and help ADB improve the way it conducts its core business, the Knowledge Management Center in ADB's Regional and Sustainable Development Department reviewed knowledge management practices in the organization. In 2009, based on the findings of the 2008 review and in support of *Strategy 2020*, ADB management approved *Enhancing Knowledge Management under Strategy 2020: Plan of Action for 2009–2011*.[3] Four pillars support the plan of action: (i) sharpening the knowledge focus in ADB's operations; (ii) empowering the communities of practice; (iii) strengthening external knowledge partnerships; and (iv) further enhancing staff learning and skills development.

The *Guidelines for Knowledge Partnerships* relate to the third pillar of the action plan and can guide ADB's efforts to strengthen existing, and design new, external knowledge partnerships. They were drafted by Heather Creech, director for global connectivity, International Institute for Sustainable Development, and Michelle Laurie (consultant) under my supervision. They specify the essentials of designing for performance, articulate building blocks, and underscore success factors and special considerations. They are offered as a resource document and reference to ADB staff members in general. The document may also help other organizations design and manage their knowledge partnerships. Readers are invited to refer to ADB's *Knowledge Solutions* series,[4] which offers numerous related tools, methods, and approaches to drive development forward and enhance its effects.

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[2] Footnote 1.

[3] The paper is reproduced in ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf

[4] ADB. 2008–. *Knowledge Solutions*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/default.asp

Summary

ADB has developed the following working definition of knowledge partnerships:

Box 1: What Are Knowledge Partnerships?

Knowledge partnerships are associations and networks of individuals or organizations that share a purpose or goal and whose members contribute knowledge, experience, resources, and connections, and participate in two-way communications. They thrive when there is a strategic, structural, and cultural fit, and when members embrace a collaborative process, behave as a coherent entity, and engage in joint decision making and action.

Source: ADB. 2010. *Designing Knowledge Partnerships Better*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/presentations/knowledge-management-and-learning/designing-knowledge-partnerships-better.pdf

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Central to this definition is shared purpose or goal among participants. A starting point for any knowledge partnership should therefore be that the founding entities clearly define what the particular challenge is that they are seeking to address together, and that partners, as they join, understand and share that purpose. Ultimately, the partnership should be driven by the change the partnership wants to achieve through the solutions its members create together.

There are two basic structures for solutions-oriented collaboration:
• groups of institutions
• groups of individuals

Within groups of institutions, of course, it is primarily the individuals who undertake the activities of the network, partnership, or community. However, there are important distinctions based on the formality of the relationships (level of endorsement of and engagement in the activities by the senior management of the institutions), resource flows, shared institutional risks and liabilities, and so forth that separate those structures connecting institutions and those connecting individuals more directly. These guidelines focus primarily on building and managing institutional relationships.

In designing knowledge partnerships, how the knowledge generation and exchange process will be evaluated over time must be considered at the onset. The *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance*, negotiated and released by the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD),[5] come closest to providing a well-established framework that can be applied to knowledge sharing initiatives among institutions working in development. Interpretive notes are provided below to help design knowledge partnerships that meet the criteria:

• **Relevance** – this refers to the extent to which the work of the knowledge partnership was suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient, and donor.

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[5]   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2010. *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance*. Available: www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1_1,00.html

- **Effectiveness** – this refers to the extent to which the knowledge partnership achieved its objectives.
- **Efficiency** – this refers to whether or not the knowledge partnership adopted the most efficient process to achieve its outputs with respect to costs and time.
- **Sustainability** – this refers to whether or not the benefits of the knowledge partnership are likely to continue independent of the partnership's interventions; and whether and how the partnership itself will continue.
- **Impact** – this refers to the changes produced by the knowledge partnership's interventions, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended.

Read more about designing for performance on page 21.

In laying the foundation for a knowledge partnership, there are several building blocks to consider:
- What is the challenge you want to solve by working with other organizations, that you cannot address by working on your own?
- Who will be your partners?
- How will you decide and agree on what to do?
- How will you manage differences in the capacity, engagement, and performance of partners?
- What are your internal communications and collaboration methods and processes?
- How will you ensure that, together, you and your partners create change in the world?

Read more about building blocks on page 27.

All knowledge partnerships have unique histories, drivers, and personalities. There is no one-size-fits-all structure for setting up and managing a partnership. However, there are a few key success factors to keep in mind when establishing knowledge partnerships. These include
- focus management,
- leadership and coordination management,
- partners management,
- short- and long-term benefits management,
- risk management, and
- communications management.

Read more about success factors on page 35.

Special considerations for two types of partnerships are the following:
- strategic, high-level relationships that ADB wishes to establish with other multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific, World Bank, United Nations Children's Fund, and others; and
- partnerships with grassroots, community-based actors, which require paying special attention to the varying degrees of capacity and knowledge of the local partners.

Read more about special considerations for high-level strategic partnerships or alliances on page 42 and special considerations for grassroots and/or community-based partnerships on page 44.

Knowledge partnerships take time to build and grow. No matter the nature of the work or the specific challenge to be addressed, the activities of the partners must support initiatives that strengthen the sharing of knowledge and the generation of new knowledge to have greater influence on policies, practices, and solutions for use outside of the partnership. Knowledge partnership managers may find it useful to have a short checklist in hand to review from time to time, to ensure that the partnership is serving its purpose. When the partnership has done so, it is useful to consider several good practices in winding up the activities and relationships.

While these guidelines are for managing partnerships and networks that are focused on or grounded in knowledge processes and actions, they may also apply to other forms of partnerships and networks.

Introduction

ADB's long-term strategic framework, *Strategy 2020*,[1] outlines five drivers of change that will help pursue its agenda. Two of the drivers identified are knowledge solutions and partnerships. A critical component in implementing *Strategy 2020* is the establishment of a wide variety of partnerships to support generation and sharing of knowledge that contribute to solutions to development challenges across the Asia and Pacific region.

The *Guidelines for Knowledge Partnerships* are designed to assist ADB staff in creating, managing, monitoring, and evaluating partnerships with other organizations—partnerships that are focused on or grounded in knowledge processes and actions, and which will, based on the knowledge shared and new knowledge and understanding created through collaboration, serve to advance sustainable development in Asia and the Pacific region. The guidelines are short, descriptive, and advisory in nature. They are intended as a tool to help ADB staff implement and strengthen the practice of creating and applying knowledge solutions for development through the effective design, deployment, and assessment of partnership arrangements with other organizations in the region, and with strategic international partners.

These guidelines were conceptualized by the Knowledge Management Center in ADB's Regional and Sustainable Development Department and enjoyed substantive insights, inputs, and support from its staff. Special thanks go to Olivier Serrat, head, Knowledge Management Center and Leah Arboleda, senior knowledge management assistant. The exercise entailed consultation with a cross section of departments, communities of practice, and partnership managers throughout ADB. The guidelines are grounded in current research and practice in the field of knowledge sharing, networks, and partnerships.[2] They draw from and build on ADB's *Knowledge Solutions* series,[3] in particular, *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*, *Creating and Running Partnerships*, *Building Networks of Practice*, and *Learning in Strategic Alliances*.

While the guidelines are targeted toward partnerships with a primary focus on knowledge generation, sharing, and mobilization, they will be valuable in guiding the development of all partnerships.

The guidelines are a living document that can be supplemented and revised with inputs from partnership practitioners throughout ADB. It has been laid out to support easy transfer into a web-based version.

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[1]   ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/strategy2020/

[2]   The International Institute for Sustainable Development prepared these guidelines through a review of current practice, interviews with leading practitioners, and individual and group consultations with ADB staff. A reference document that summarizes the background research effected is available separately.

[3]   ADB. 2008–. *Knowledge Solutions*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/default.asp

Knowledge, Learning, and Complexity

ADB affirms that "the generation and application of knowledge underpins development effectiveness."[4]

Knowledge can be defined as information received and interpreted by an individual or group to increase understanding or to apply to a task. This process may lead to new knowledge and understanding. Knowledge involves individual or group interaction with, interpretation of, and response to information. This transformative process can be catalyzed through fostering relationships, improved communications methods, and collective problem solving.

Types of Knowledge[5]

Explicit knowledge is knowledge that can be written down, recorded, or codified in some manner.

Tacit knowledge is an understanding of how to do things (such as how to develop new policy recommendations, how to run a community consultation, or how to negotiate a policy change with a decision maker). It is created by doing, and personal trial, error, reflection, and revision. It can be difficult, however, to articulate what that "how to" actually is. The transfer of tacit knowledge, therefore, is facilitated through shared processes (working together, mentoring, and so forth) in addition to the physical transmission of related written or recorded content.

Implicit knowledge refers to the inherent values and cultural considerations that shape and influence the perceptions, choices, and actions of knowledge holders.

Key Knowledge Processes

Knowledge mapping is the process of identifying knowledge needs and gaps, and sourcing knowledge accordingly. Knowledge mapping exercises are often a starting point for knowledge management, and include not only questions of "what" is known (formally published in peer-reviewed journals and books; as well as institutional "gray" literature) but also "who" knows it—the experts and practitioners.

Generating or creating knowledge can be accomplished through both original research and through refining, testing, and implementing new applications of existing knowledge. Intellectual capital depends on the combination of knowledge and experience of different parties, which is greatly facilitated by social capital.[6] Actors in a network can share a joint interest. However, they also have different expertise, behaviors, motives, and activities which create the potential for innovative solutions.

The quantity and heterogeneity of new and different knowledge solutions and cross-traditional boundaries to promote innovation and learning is positively correlated with successful innovation.[7]

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[4]   ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf

[5]   Creech, H. 2005. *The Terminology of Knowledge for Sustainable Development: Information, Knowledge, Collaboration and Communications*. An International Institute for International Development Knowledge Communications Practice Note. Winnipeg: IISD.

[6]   Monnavarian, A., and A. Amini. 2009. Do Interactions within Networks Lead to Knowledge Management? *Business Strategy Series*. 10 (3), 139–155.

[7]   Ramstad, E. 2009. Developmental Evaluation Framework for Innovation and Learning Networks: Integration of the Structure, Process and Outcomes. *The Journal of Workplace Learning*. 21 (3), 181–197.

Storing and retrieving knowledge can be achieved through appropriate information systems and protocols. Such systems often sit at the heart of good knowledge management practice, although they are only one part of the full range of knowledge management activities. The emergence of the "semantic" web (Web 3.0) is an international effort to begin linking taxonomies of knowledge and enhancing online content management systems in order to improve the retrieval of knowledge relevant to one's needs.

Sharing and applying knowledge can be carried out through interactions with other stakeholders and broader communities of interest.

Engaging in cycles of learning and reflection leads to adaptation and progress against given objectives.

The three "orders" of learning include
- learning about new ideas and facts (what),
- learning new techniques and processes (how), and
- learning to make appropriate and timely choices, and decisions (why).

Knowledge Management and Complexity

- Knowledge management initiatives should not underestimate complexity. The sharing of knowledge should be about trying to cope with complexity in real-time situations—people coming together to make sense of the challenges they face through dialogue and joint problem solving. The concept of knowledge can be linked to the process of change management and innovation: what is needed to make a difference? This extends the challenge of knowledge management beyond activities related to creating new insights and innovation, and leads to discussions of how policy and actions can be changed for the better.

- Guidelines, lessons learned, and good practice documents are the first generation of knowledge management—the process of attempting to make tacit knowledge explicit and therefore replicable. The second generation of knowledge management is based on the identification of experts and bringing them together through communities and networks of practice. The third generation of knowledge management recognizes knowledge flows in complex, living systems— how people interact; how sense is created and shared; how innovation emerges; and ultimately, how systems are transformed through knowledge and experience.

- The study of third generation knowledge management[8] is important to acknowledge. There is an ongoing shift from an initial focus on information storage and retrieval methods to a more organic perspective where knowledge is part of a complex system, and understanding it relies on sense-making techniques (facilitating interaction and collaboration) as opposed to reductionist methods.

ADB's Types of Knowledge and Its Knowledge Products and Services

ADB focuses on value-generating types of knowledge, that is, the expertise that enables an organization to achieve its goals. The Knowledge Management Center suggests that ADB's knowledge might fall into four categories:

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[8] Ingenious People's Knowledge. 2009. *A Conceptual Framework of the Evolution of Knowledge Management*. Available: http://i-p-k.co.za/wordpress/allowing-human-ingenuity-to-unfold/a-conceptual-framework-of-the-evolution-of-knowledge-management/

Lending and Nonlending Operations Knowledge. This is largely tacit, even if official reports and reviews are strictly codified. There is much potential for ADB staff to learn before, during, and after implementation in more explicit ways.

Sector and Thematic Knowledge. This is largely tacit, but ADB's communities and networks of practice increasingly offer ways to make that know-how explicit, through meetings, publications, and other mechanisms.

Research Knowledge. This is primarily published and therefore explicit. However, staff also hold a wealth of tacit research know-how in their subject areas and research methods, as well as insights about how their work fits into the wider development context.

Business and Corporate Knowledge. This is primarily explicit know-how about the corporate framework, for example, the operational policies, operational procedures, project administration instructions, and business processes. Much codified project management knowledge lies in databases. Tacit "street-wise" knowledge also exists.

Knowledge Management in ADB has characterized the variety of knowledge products and services that ADB provides to its developing member countries and other stakeholders as follows:
- formal knowledge products and services that are programmed as such and targeted at specific clientele and stakeholders in the developing member countries, subregions in Asia and the Pacific, and the region as a whole; and
- knowledge by-products derived from delivering loans or other activities.

Table 1: Knowledge Products and Services of ADB

Formal Knowledge Products and Services	Knowledge Products and Services By-Products
• Publications and journals on specific development issues such as *Asian Development Outlook, Asian Development Review,* and *Key Indicators* • Economic, sector, and thematic work (country economic, poverty and thematic assessments, etc.) • Information posted on Asian Development Bank websites • Project, program, and evaluation reports • Policy and strategy reviews • Seminar, workshop, and training materials and synopsis of brainstorming sessions, regional meetings of stakeholders, etc. • Statistical data	• Analyses of sectoral and institutional issues as part of loan preparation • Problem analysis, alternatives, and solution trees • Environmental and social assessments and surveys as inputs to loans • Social action plans associated with loan projects • Understandings created through information exchange at external networks, seminars, and conferences • Other sourced research information that provides insights into policy, processes, and performance • Loan-related knowledge transfers, including innovative designs and introduction of new technologies • Best practices embodied in loan and technical assistance projects

Source: ADB. 2004. *Knowledge Management in ADB*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/policies/knowledge-management/default.asp

Networks and Partnerships

There are several benefits to engaging in networks and partnerships for knowledge generation, exchange, and application beyond the organization. The interplay of conflicting advice and opinion is a useful expansion of an organization's experience and can bring a radical re-visioning of existing practices and structures for all involved.[9] Another benefit to such collaboration and debate is social learning—a process of iterative reflection that occurs when experiences and ideas are shared with others.

ADB's Definitions of Partnership and Knowledge Networks

- A partnership is "a formal or informal agreement between two or more partners to work together to achieve common aims."[10]

- ADB considers that "knowledge networks facilitate information exchange toward practice-related goals."[11] Six main functions describe the strategies and activities of networks:[12]
    – filtering
    – amplifying
    – investing and providing
    – convening
    – community building
    – learning and facilitating

- These definitions suggest that, for ADB, partnership is more focused on accomplishing external goals (the "common aims" of the partnership), while networks are more focused on information sharing related to strengthening individual or institutional practice.

- A knowledge partnership has a particular emphasis on the role of knowledge in accomplishing the common aims of the group, including the sharing of knowledge among members, the generation of new ideas and understanding, and the communication and application of that knowledge beyond the partnership itself.

ADB's *Action Plan for Knowledge Management, 2009-2011* highlights the need to strengthen external knowledge partnerships including knowledge networks.[13] Moreover, knowledge partnerships should be considered when entering into agreements with other institutions.

> **Box 2: Networks of Practice**
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> The Knowledge Management Center's *Building Networks of Practice* paper recognizes that knowledge cannot be separated from the networks that create, use, and transform it. Networks play significant roles in how individuals, groups, and organizations operate. They are a mechanism to influence practice. Networks are founded on the collaborative advantage hypothesis that we can accomplish more by working together than by working alone. The whole becomes stronger as well as the individual parts. To stay competitive, organizations should promote participation and stimulate activity in communities of practice, networks of practice, and electronic communities.
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> Source: ADB. 2008. *Building Networks of Practice*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/building-networks-of-practice.pdf

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[9]   Kurtz, C. F., and D.J. Snowden. (n.d.). Bramble Bushes in a Thicket. *Cognitive Edge*. Available: www.cognitive-edge.com/ceresources/articles/52_Bramble_Bushes_in_a_Thicket.pdf.
[10] ADB. 2008. *Creating and Running Partnerships*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/Documents/Information/Knowledge-Solutions/Creating-Running-Partnerships.pdf
[11] Footnote 9.
[12] Mendizabal, E. 2008. *Supporting Networks: Ten Principles*. Available: www.odi.org.uk/resources/download/1130.pdf
[13] Footnote 10.

Private Sector Approach

In the private sector, the term "partnership" is narrowly construed to mean a business entity in which partners contract with each other to share the profits or losses of the undertaking in which they have all invested. What is useful here are the concepts of commitment (contracts), value exchange (all partners have invested), and the sharing of benefits and risks (sharing both profits and losses). Irrespective of whether or not a partnership in the international development arena carries with it the strict parameters of a private sector long-term relationship contracted by law, the principles of commitment, value exchange, and sharing of risks and benefits should underlie all arrangements.

Attributes of Collaboration

The word partnership is increasingly used to describe almost any kind of collaboration, when[14]
- enough people recognize it as an appropriate description of their working relationship,
- those centrally involved are willing to define themselves as partners, and
- the partners continue to accept each other's legitimacy.

In strengthening collaboration practice, it can be helpful to focus on the attributes of a wide range of organizational models for collaboration, performance planning, building blocks, and success factors. These *Guidelines for Knowledge Partnerships* have therefore been structured along these lines.

Innovation

Innovation has as many definitions as knowledge, networks, and partnerships. It is considered to be any one of the following:
- a totally new process or technology, unique and scalable to solve a problem;
- the application of existing knowledge in new ways to solve problems; and
- an incremental refinement.

Knowledge partnerships can create an enabling environment for innovation to emerge, through the process of constant scanning for new ideas and trends, combined with planned personal interactions designed to challenge and provoke. An element of surprise is important. This is consistent with views around the concept of the "third generation" of knowledge management, which is grounded almost entirely in the process of interaction—getting together to work on challenges.

A preliminary exploration of the link between knowledge solutions and the innovation process has been carried out by the Knowledge Management Center with a paper entitled *Harnessing Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace*.[15] There is scope for more attention to this issue to demonstrate the "value chain" from collaboration to innovation, and innovation to knowledge solutions implemented on the ground.

Those managing knowledge partnerships should aim to keep the partnerships fluid and accept a certain level of risk, chaos, and uncertainty as conducive to the emergence of the unexpected, and ultimately, to innovation.

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[14]   Footnote 12.
[15]   ADB. 2009. *Harnessing Creativity and Innovation in the Workplace*. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/harnessing-creativity-and-innovation-in-the-workplace.pdf

Role of Partnerships in Strategy 2020

Connecting Knowledge Solutions with Partnerships to Implement ADB's *Strategy 2020*

ADB's Strategy 2020[16] outlines five drivers of change that will help it pursue its agenda. Two of the drivers identified are knowledge solutions and partnerships. A critical component in implementing *Strategy 2020* will be the creation, strengthening, and mobilization of a wide variety of partnerships to support knowledge sharing that will contribute to resolving development challenges across the region.

While these two drivers are not directly linked in the strategy itself (the section on partnerships in *Strategy 2020* does not mention the role of knowledge inputs or outcomes as part of partnership development; and the section on knowledge solutions is likewise limited to exploring how knowledge will emerge through a variety of processes, from independent research through to crowd-sourcing for solutions), there is great opportunity to bring these together in implementing the strategy.

The Link to the Business of ADB

ADB stakeholders have asserted that ADB should "lend smarter" (more evidence-based inputs to lending decisions) and should enrich lending and non-lending services with provision of other types of support. Allied to the concept of knowledge solutions is the concept of knowledge services—knowledge-enriched operations and technical assistance, through the provision of technical and policy briefs to accompany investments. However, target beneficiaries have more options to access technical and policy knowledge and guidance than ADB alone. There are, of course, other sources of knowledge and expertise in the region, in universities, research institutes, government departments, nongovernment organizations, and the private sector. Partnerships for knowledge generation and exchange with these other sources are a solution to what otherwise might appear to be competition.

There are obvious benefits to be gained by ADB in linking to knowledge held by local institutions and actors. Therefore,
- ADB should draw upon local expertise to inform its work and provide evidence for lending and non-lending decisions. ADB should map that expertise and assess which institutions best complement and enhance its own capacity.
- Local institutions could also benefit from more direct engagement with ADB experts to acquire knowledge. The return on investment from building relationships with ADB should be clear to these institutions.
- ADB needs more channels to test or ground-truth its knowledge in the field, through established actors.
- The capacity of resident and regional missions and ADB field staff can be strengthened by connecting those units with networks of institutions and experts in the field. ADB field staff are the first point of contact with local beneficiaries, and should have more immediate access to locally recognized experts and institutions to both backstop and provide credibility and relevance to ADB's work.

These knowledge partnerships should be designed not only to deliver advice and solutions to ADB beneficiaries on particular challenges, but should play a substantive role in the daily work of ADB staff.

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[16] ADB. 2008. *Strategy 2020: The Long-Term Strategic Framework of the Asian Development Bank, 2008–2020*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/strategy2020/

The Commitment of ADB to the Role of Knowledge in Advancing Sustainable Development

The key success factors for advancing knowledge management in ADB are present: there is a corporate mandate and championship from the most senior levels of the organization; there are staff and financial resources invested in implementation; tools have been created; and an internal culture is evolving. The capacity for understanding knowledge processes is being built through the provision of practice notes and research reports to inform and guide staff, together with the creation of space for communities of practice to exist and grow. Progress is being monitored. The 13 communities currently hosted by ADB provide a productive environment for peer-to-peer learning, and there is increasing participation among ADB staff, combined with increased financial resources to these types of knowledge management initiatives. This provides a good foundation to start exploring how knowledge flows into those communities from external institutions and vice versa, and supports the steps necessary to catalyze knowledge interactions with institutions and individuals outside ADB.

There are, in addition to the communities of practice, more formal structures in ADB such as the operations (or regional) departments. The combination of sector and thematic knowledge with location-specific knowledge becomes particularly important in building relationships with partners in the region. Ensuring an optimized internal process for knowledge sharing among regional and sector and thematic staff will strengthen collaboration with external partners.

Box 3: Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies

The Knowledge Management Center highlights actions and outputs for enhancing knowledge management to help advance ADB's agenda, Strategy 2020. In *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*, the center proposed that actions should rest on four pillars:
- Sharpening the knowledge focus in ADB's operations
- Empowering the communities of practice
- Strengthening external knowledge partnerships
- Further enhancing staff learning and skills development

A critical step to ensuring ongoing implementation is to incorporate all actions into ADB's work program and budget framework and monitor progress with a focus on results.

Source: ADB. 2009. *Enhancing Knowledge Management Strategies*. Manila. Available: www.adb.org/documents/information/knowledge-solutions/enhancing-knowledge-management-strategies.pdf

Focus and Extensiveness

There is a growing literature exploring all the nuances and management innovations in interorganizational relationships, ranging from high-level strategic alliances to time-limited collaborations on projects, to information networks designed primarily for the distribution of published and gray literature, and to communities and networks of practice.

One method to help distinguish partnership and network types is to consider a matrix of *focus* and *extensiveness*[17] of the set of relationships. Focus deals with purpose and can be narrow or broad; extensiveness deals with scope or reach across institutions, sectors, and jurisdictions.

For example, a *problem-specific network* has a narrow focus that uses networking to help meet a specific need or solve a particular problem. This temporary type of network has the advantage of clarity as it pursues a certain goal with a desired end point. On the other hand, there are networks with a broader focus that aim to create systemic capacity to share knowledge and information whenever it is needed within a domain of action. A broader network is more difficult to design and implement, requires more capability, has a different set of operating challenges, and needs an appropriate and permanent organizational home.[18]

Typically, the more extensive and varied the organizational network is—more partners, more interests and agendas brought together—the greater depth and breadth of knowledge there is to share among the partners. One could argue that the reverse is also true: the greater the depth and breadth of knowledge that must be shared—the more complicated and interdisciplinary the challenge—the more extensive and varied must be the partnership to support that sharing. However, increasing the number and variety of stakeholders and contexts also presents more risks, costs, and barriers to overcome. The matrix below presents an intersection of the scope and purpose of different types of networks. It could provide a useful framework for understanding interorganizational relationships more generally.

Table 2: Types of Interorganizational Relationships

Extensiveness: Scope and/or Reach of Organizational Network	Focus: Purpose of the Relationship	
	Address specific needs Solve a particular problem Tend to be closed or restricted in number of participants	Create systemic capacity to share knowledge and information within a domain Move knowledge into policy and practice Tend to be open
Across organizations, multiple jurisdictions, sectors or levels of government	Public–private partnerships for service delivery	Multistakeholder partnerships, global public policy networks
Across organizations in same jurisdiction or sector	Strategic alliances	Research networks Open source development communities
Across units within the same organization	Internal task forces	Internal communities of practice

Source: Dawes, S.S., A.M. Cresswell, and T. A. Pardo. 2009. Information Sharing and Public Sector Knowledge Networks. *Public Administration Review*. 69 (3), 392–402.

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[17]   Dawes, S.S., A.M. Cresswell, and T. A. Pardo. 2009. Information Sharing and Public Sector Knowledge Networks. *Public Administration Review*. 69 (3), 392–402.

[18]   Footnote 16.

Operating Models

All organizations have a blend of these relationships in place. What is less frequently discussed are the governance and management structures of these relationships, and the paperwork (memorandums of understanding, secretariats, etc.) that support them.

A few common operating models are useful to understand. Common to all of these approaches is the need to address the dynamics of the relationships:
* promoting ownership of the shared purpose
* describing and accepting roles and responsibilities
* understanding where authority to decide and to act rests
* ensuring accountability for performance

Point-to-point knowledge exchange is governed typically under the terms of an exchange of letters or an MOU between the two institutions. It has no staff personnel assigned to manage the relationship.

A **strategic alliance** with real value appropriation between the partners is governed typically under the terms of a memorandum of understanding (MOU) between the two institutions. Staff is assigned to manage the relationship, and there are informal networks of staff who are engaged.
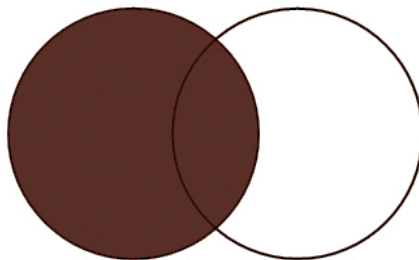
The **information hub** has one institution as the primary driver serving to centralize information on a specific topic, and encouraging other institutions and researchers to contribute. Contributors may agree to follow editorial policies or other guidelines for contributing to the hub; and may expect in return greater visibility for their own work as well as a mechanism to more easily access the work of others. Generally, however, there is no connection among contributors nor is there much interaction between the contributors and the hub.
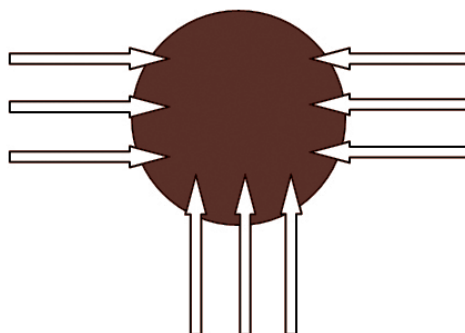
A **hub and spokes** have one institution serving as the primary driver and host a secretariat or coordination unit. There is less connection between the spokes; and the hub is administered typically through a series of bilateral contracts between the host institution and each participant, with little engagement among the spokes.
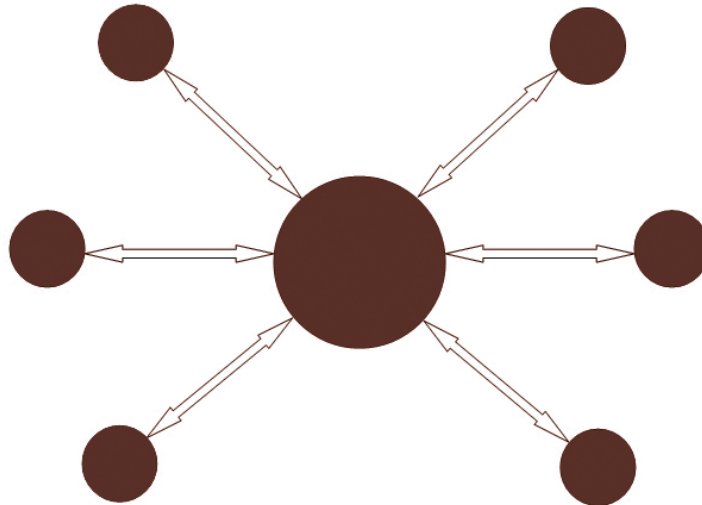
The **networking hub** has one institution serving as a primary driver and hosts a secretariat or coordination unit. It has bilateral contracts, honors a network agreement signed by all members, and uses appropriate tools and network animation to support knowledge exchange.
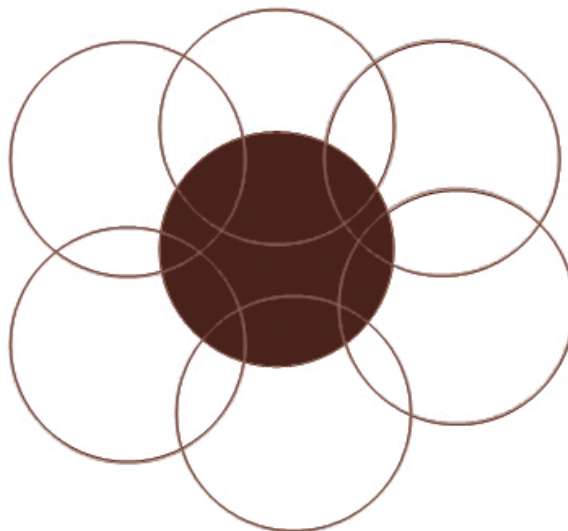
Typologies of Structured Relationships

Typologies of partnerships and networks can be organized in a number of ways. Typical arrangements are:

- by level of formality and obligation on behalf of the partners and/or participants; and
- by function, geographic distribution, and time.

Table 3: Typology Based on Formality and Obligations of the Partners

Type of Partnership	Characteristics
Formal, between organizations	
Strategic alliances	In the private sector, these alliances are "long-term purposeful arrangements among distinct but related organizations that allow those firms to gain or sustain competitive advantage."[a] In the public or nonprofit sector, a strategic alliance is established for a value exchange between the partners, governed typically under the terms of an Memorandum of Understanding. ADB describes these as voluntary formal arrangements between two or more entities with a common set of objectives to meet critical needs, which pool resources while remaining independent.
Public–private partnerships	Contracts between a private sector entity and the government, where the private partner delivers a desired service and assumes the associated risks. In return, the private partner receives payment according to criteria specified in the contract and assumes the financial and administrative burden of providing the service, while the government regulates and monitors performance.[b]
Tri-sector or cross-sector partnerships	This type of partnership consists of private investment, public objectives, and community participation.[c]
Less formal, between organizations	
World Summit on Sustainable Development Multistakeholder Partnerships	These partnerships are voluntary, multistakeholder initiatives aimed at implementing the sustainable development goals of Agenda 21, Rio+5, and the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation. Such partnerships are considered to be a key mechanism for translating political commitments into action. These may be long-term relationships or focused on specific project implementation.
Formal knowledge networks	Knowledge networks among institutions focus on strengthening the sharing of knowledge and generating new knowledge to have greater influence on policies and practices outside of the network. The knowledge is for use beyond the network; the network is purpose-driven, to create knowledge for application; and often time bound, in setting and achieving goals and objectives. "Formal" knowledge networks have a greater degree of structure, bringing together expert institutions for more specific research tasks, but retaining the focus on promoting the findings for use beyond the network members.
Less Formal, between individuals	
Open source development communities	These communities are purpose-driven in the development and testing of new ideas. They are open in that anyone wishing to contribute to the purpose can join; structured in the expectation that members will contribute actively to the purpose, with dedicated monitoring and reviewing of those contributions by the originators of the community; and hierarchical in that the endorsement and adoption of new ideas is through the inner circle of the original creators of the community. They are prone to regular branching off to new communities when ideas are not endorsed or adopted.

Table 3 *continued*

Type of Partnership	Characteristics
Networks of experts	These networks bring together individuals rather than organizations; the invitation to join is based on expertise in a particular area. Their purpose can be either advisory or focused on research and problem solving.
Communities of practice	Two or more individuals can create a community of practice for conversation and information exchange, possibly even leading to the development of new ideas and processes. Participation is purely voluntary and will wax and wane with the level of interest of the participants. Communities of practice primarily build capacity. They attract individuals who are willing to share their expertise in exchange for gaining expertise from others. The principal driver is the desire to strengthen their own skills for their own objectives, more than a desire to work together on common objectives. Communities of practice can exist within an organization, or be independent of any organization; they can be face-to-face in person or virtual/online.
Communities of interest	These are more loosely knit communities built around common characteristics or shared interests (youth activism, hobbies, etc.). Participation is purely voluntary and will wax and wane with the level of interest of the participants.
Information networks and portals	These networks provide access to information supplied by network members, occasionally with overlays of interpretative materials that organize content thematically. However, they are fundamentally passive in nature. Users must come to the network—physically or electronically—to benefit from the work of the network.

[a] Jarillo, C.J. 1993. Strategic Networks—Creating the Borderless Organization. Oxford: Butterworth-Heinemann.
[b] Loew, J. and M. McLindon. 2002. *A P3 Primer: Why Are Countries Interested in P3?* Available: www.ip3.org/pub/publication002.htm
[c] Karpova, K. 2002. *Public-Private Partnerships in the United States: A Snapshot of Recent Developments and New Directions*. Available: www.ip3.org/pub/publication2002_010.htm

Source: Creech, H. 2005. *The Terminology of Knowledge for Sustainable Development: Information, Knowledge, Collaboration and Communications.* An International Institute for International Development Knowledge Communications Practice Note. Winnipeg: IISD.

Table 4: Typology Based on Function, Geographic Distribution, and Time

Type of Partnership	Characteristics
Dispersed	Partners have agreed to a common aim and a modus operandi but they rarely meet. Instead they operate with different partners (for subgroups of partners) mandated to complete tasks on behalf of the partnership—to which they are ultimately accountable.
Temporary	This partnership structure is designed for obsolescence. It is time-specific and is dispensed with once the agreed program of work is completed.
Consultative	The "task" of the partnership institution is to provide advice and/or a "sounding board" for new ideas rather than to develop or implement a project.
Intermediary	An intermediary organization operates between (and on behalf of) many other players. Essentially, it supports the development of a number of independent partnership initiatives rather than being a partnership itself.
Learning	The partnership is established with the primary goal of learning and sharing information arising from other partnership experiences rather than creating new partnership programs or projects per se.

Source: Tennyson, R. 2003. *Institutionalising Partnerships: Lessons from the Front Line.* Available: www.toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/resources/0C/0CC00F20-85F6-4484-AB28-7D428002C84C/Infocus8.pdf

More details on creating and running partnerships, building networks of practice, and learning in strategic alliances are in the Knowledge Management Center's Knowledge Solutions series, at www.adb.org/knowledgesolutions/.

Social Networks, Communities of Practice, and Other Mechanisms for Building Relationships among Individuals

There is a shift in emphasis in network and partnership practice from institutional relationships to individual relationships. With the increasing power and pervasiveness of social media tools, everyone is building his or her own personal and expert networks. People who know each other, like each other, and want to work together find ways to share knowledge and work together on common challenges. The legitimacy of knowledge partnerships and knowledge networks is becoming more dependent on the willingness, support, and hard work of many individuals rather than the existence of a partnership agreement or contract between institutions. With the advent of social media, networks around development challenges could be engaging with millions—and the potential of "crowd-sourcing" for knowledge and solutions becomes significant. In this environment, it is more difficult to wrap an institutional context around a network.

The widespread availability of social media tools provides greater capacity for staff in ADB to build their own knowledge-based networks with other experts and actors, both internal and external to ADB. This will have an impact on the culture of ADB, from working solely with expertise in-house, to sourcing expertise and potentially mobilizing knowledge from as many channels and avenues as possible.

Given the attention to the growing critical mass of individuals working through social networks, the following questions should be kept in mind:
* Is social networking driving the transformation of the governance landscape?
* Is it merely diverting vast amounts of time from addressing the difficult sustainable development challenges at hand?
* Is it a useful means for mobilizing knowledge to efficiently and effectively apply to sustainable development challenges?
* How can one means ensure that social networks live up to their potential?[19]

It is useful to be aware of two models of social networks:

* Online social networks building from one individual to the next, based on emerging norms of digital rights and responsibilities as the governing mechanisms, with key connectors and stronger and weaker links.

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[19]   Willard, T. 2009. *Social Networking and Governance for Sustainable Development*. Winnipeg: IISD.
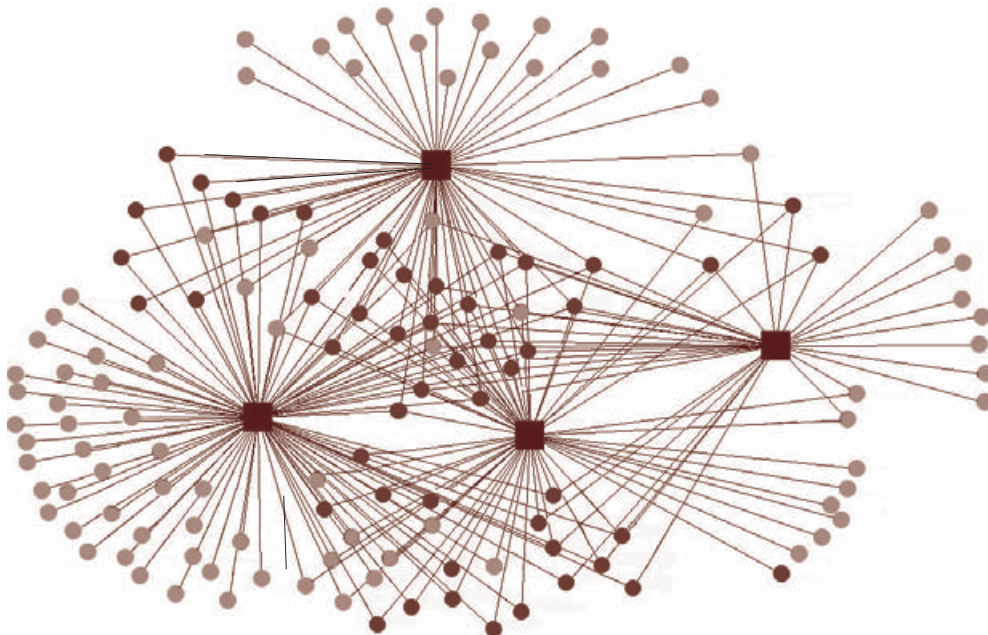
More formal   Less formal

- Facilitated, animated social networks, with central principles or value statements as the governing documents, and a central exchange hub. Note the similarity with the information hub; here the interaction is both two-way between hub and partner, and more diffused with connections between strong and weaker links in the network.
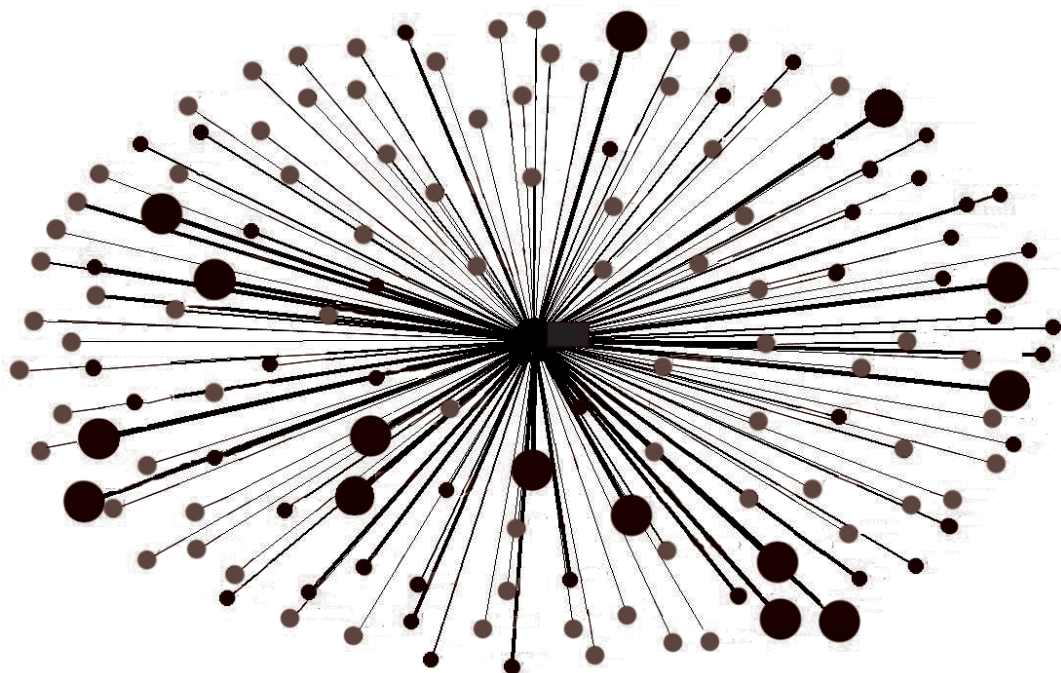
More formal   Less formal

In designing knowledge partnerships, consideration should be given from the beginning to how knowledge generation and exchange will be evaluated over time. The *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance*, negotiated and released by the DAC of the OECD,[20] are a good starting point to help nascent knowledge partnerships determine where they should be placing value and attention as they start up and grow. This framework for designing partnerships should simplify the downstream process of assessing performance. As much as the DAC criteria are designed to assess development assistance programs and projects for development outcomes, so this framework will help ADB staff and partners strengthen partnership practice for development outcomes.

These criteria, when taken at face value, have some limitations in their direct application to interorganizational relationships. Unique features of collaboration, such as accountability, connectivity, partnership health, and other common attributes of working together may not, at first glance, be easily revealed and thoughtfully assessed with a straightforward application of the DAC criteria. Where helpful, interpretive notes are provided with cross-references to other sections on building blocks and success factors, to ensure that unique features of partnerships can be planned for and subsequently assessed, within the main DAC criteria.

In working with this framework, it is helpful to keep in mind the knowledge processes, products, and services that are the central focus for establishing and building these relationships.

Table 5: Knowledge Processes, Products, and Services

Knowledge Processes	Formal Knowledge Products and Services	Additional Knowledge Products and Services (By-Products)
• Knowledge mapping • Generating or creating knowledge through research and testing • Storing and retrieving knowledge through appropriate information systems and protocols • Sharing and applying knowledge • Engaging in cycles of learning and reflection, leading to adaptive management and progress on objectives	• Publications and journal articles • Economic, sector, and thematic work (country economic, poverty and thematic assessments, etc.) • Policy and strategy reviews • Seminar, workshop, and training materials and synopsis of brainstorming sessions, regional meetings of stakeholders, etc. • Statistical data	• Problem analysis, alternatives, and solution trees • Environmental and social assessments and surveys • Social action plans • Understandings created through information exchange at external networks, seminars, and conferences • Other sourced research information that provides insights into policy, processes, and performance • Knowledge transfers, including innovative designs and introduction of new technologies

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[20] Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. 2010. *DAC Criteria for Evaluating Development Assistance.* Available: www.oecd.org/document/22/0,2340,en_2649_34435_2086550_1_1_1_1,00.html

Relevance

DAC Criterion: The extent to which the aid activity is suited to the priorities and policies of the target group, recipient, and donor.

In the context of knowledge partnerships, relevance relates to whether or not the purpose of the partnership serves to develop and/or exchange knowledge in order to address one or more sustainable development challenges, and that the purpose is suited to the priorities and policies of
- the member institutions; and
- those that the members wish to influence.

In evaluating a knowledge partnership for relevance, it is useful to consider the following questions:
- Does the knowledge partnership have a clear, shared purpose that meets defined needs?
- Will the knowledge partnership help each organization to fill their own knowledge gaps and, in so doing, achieve more than they could on their own?
- Will the knowledge partnership help each partner to define their own areas of knowledge, expertise, and influence more clearly?

Desirable Features
- Members clearly articulate purpose.
- Members align purpose of the knowledge partnership with defined needs of audiences and clients.
- Members discuss, understand, and share purpose, scope, and expectations.
- Members define, assess, and locate complementary skills, experience, knowledge, resources, and influence.
- All members understand the strategic directions of each member.
- Members raise awareness of the knowledge partnership among staff of their respective institutions.

Effectiveness

DAC Criterion: A measure of the extent to which the aid activity attains its objectives.
- In the context of knowledge partnerships, effectiveness refers to the extent to which the knowledge partnership attains its purpose.

In evaluating a knowledge partnership for effectiveness, it is useful to consider the following questions:
- Does the knowledge partnership have a clear outcome identified that is based on articulated processes for mapping, sharing, and creating knowledge necessary to achieve that outcome?
- Is there leadership in the knowledge partnership and governance mechanisms that provide the energy and continuity for work?
- Are there processes, infrastructure, and resources with sufficient flexibility in place for quality exchange of knowledge and experience; regular communications and meetings; and communicating beyond the partnership?
- Have the members mutually agreed upon a framework for monitoring their work over time?

Desirable Features
- Plan joint activities and knowledge products that lead toward the outcome.
- Establish ground rules for collaboration.
- Identify and foster champions.
- Plan a variety of methods for networking and knowledge exchange.
- Ensure sustained engagement of leadership.

Efficiency

DAC Criterion: Efficiency measures the outputs—qualitative and quantitative—in relation to the inputs. It is an economic term which signifies that the aid uses the least costly resources possible to achieve the desired results. This generally requires comparing alternative approaches to achieving the same outputs, to see whether the most efficient process has been adopted.

In the context of knowledge partnerships, attention should be given to
- alternative approaches to achieve the same outputs, and
- the extent to which the knowledge partnership made optimal use of all the resources available to it.

When evaluating a knowledge partnership for efficiency, it is useful to consider the following questions:
- Has the knowledge partnership explored alternative models to achieving the desired outcomes (open and/or closed membership, use of crowd-sourcing approaches, contracting out), including whether a partnership is the best approach?
- Are the necessary resources (staff, time, funds) available, properly allocated, and well matched for planned activities?
- Is there scope for adjustment of processes, activities, and resources during the life span of the knowledge partnership?
- Is there clarity on management of the assets of the knowledge partnership, including funds, intellectual property, and brand?there clarity on management of the assets of the knowledge ds, intelectual property, and brand?

Desirable Features
- Members discuss strengths and weaknesses as to how they will organize themselves to deliver outputs.
- Operational document lays out what each member will do, and how resources will be allocated and shared.
- Clearly define activities, timelines, and responsibilities for the delivery of outputs.
- Ensure that processes are in place for delegating the authority to individual members to act and adopt, for accountability, and for conflict resolution.
- Understand the capacities and constraints of each member organization.

Sustainability

DAC Criterion: Sustainability is concerned with measuring whether the benefits of an activity are likely to continue after donor funding has been withdrawn. Projects need to be environmentally and as financially sustainable.

In the context of knowledge partnerships, examining sustainability has two components:
- The likelihood that the achievements of the knowledge partnership will be sustained.
- The sustainability of the knowledge partnership itself.

In examining the sustainability of the knowledge partnership itself, four dimensions should be considered:
- Relevance: whether the purpose of the knowledge partnership is still relevant;
- Relationships: whether the members are still active;
- Resources: whether resources are available; and
- Time: whether the knowledge partnership has given itself sufficient time to achieve its purpose or if continuation is necessary.

When evaluating a knowledge partnership for sustainability, consider the following questions:
- How will the outcome of the knowledge partnership's work be sustained?
- Are there mechanisms in place to jointly reflect, learn, and adopt, over the life span of the knowledge partnership?
- Does the knowledge partnership know what motivates the members to join and continue to participate?
- Should the knowledge partnership itself be sustained and, if so, how?

Desirable Features
- Transparent discussions are held on current and future resources.
- Members are aware of evolving organizational and development priorities.
- Members make an effort to co-evolve and explore new activities.
- Members are committed to open and generous sharing of expertise and resources.
- The staff responsible for implementing the knowledge partnership's activities is recognized for his or her efforts.

Impact

DAC Criterion: The positive and negative changes produced by a development intervention, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. This involves the main impacts and effects resulting from the activity on the local social, economic, environmental, and other development indicators. The examination should be concerned with both intended and unintended results and must also include the positive and negative impact of external factors, such as changes in terms of trade and financial conditions.

In the context of knowledge partnerships, impact refers to the positive and negative changes produced by the partnership's sustainable development interventions, directly or indirectly, intended or unintended. The impact should be examined at two levels:
- The contribution that the knowledge partnership as a whole makes to the resolution of sustainable development challenges, and to the global body of knowledge and understanding about sustainability.
- The improvement of each member's knowledge and institutional capacity to have impact.

When evaluating a knowledge partnership's contribution to impact, consider the following questions:
- How will the knowledge partnership ascertain whether its outcomes will lead to impact?
- How will the knowledge partnership ascertain whether people outside of the partnership are aware of its knowledge, actions, and influence, and, in turn, act upon them?
- How will the knowledge partnership ascertain whether members' capacity increased as a result of the partnership?
- Does the knowledge partnership have flexibility for the unexpected to emerge?

Desirable Features
- Knowledge exchange is focused on solutions.
- Peer-to-peer learning is facilitated.
- Communication tools are used to extend the reach of the members.
- Strengthening relationships and capacity building with audiences and clients is a priority.

Building Blocks

There are no common and agreed standards of practice in building knowledge partnerships. Rather, there are numerous ways to build and foster relationships, ranging from improvised approaches—with little structure beyond agreeing to share ideas either in person or through electronic means, with no requirements for verifiable outcomes—to more deliberative, structured approaches. Throughout the process of building and managing a knowledge partnership, it is important to monitor performance to ensure that collaboration leads to knowledge solutions and change, and that there can be accountability to donors for funds invested in these processes.

While these building blocks emphasize actions relevant for knowledge partnerships, they can be applied to all types of partnership and networking relationships.

This section is linked to the section on Designing for Performance. Each component helps to answer the central questions under the five criteria of relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, sustainability, and impact.

Relevance

Establish a Clear, Shared Purpose

First, establish the value proposition, scope, and goals and objectives of the knowledge partnership: Why are the parties coming together, and what do they hope to accomplish? In a knowledge partnership, this should include consideration of the purpose of the knowledge exchange: what knowledge is needed, and for what purpose? Do the partners have, among them, the necessary knowledge, and simply need to consolidate and apply it, or do they need to work together to create new knowledge and understanding to apply to the challenge at hand?

Partnerships need to be purpose-driven and time-bound. And no matter what the nature of the work is to be or the specific challenge to be addressed, the work should be focused on the influence that the partnership will have beyond the partnership itself: the activities of the partners must support strengthening the sharing of knowledge and the generation of new knowledge to apply to solutions, to policies and practices outside of the partnership. Ultimately, the work of a knowledge partnership or network is "more work than net."[21]

A starting point for the relationship is that the knowledge partnership has defined the challenge it has come together to address. The challenge must be clear to the parties, and that challenge must be greater than any one institution can address on its own.

Select Partners Based on Capacity to Achieve More Together Than Separately

Be clear on who is to be considered a partner: who will be invited to join and under what criteria? What is the mix of skills, knowledge, expertise, and influence needed to contribute toward knowledge partnership? Partners' levels of knowledge, expertise, and capacities can vary, but they should complement each other. The expectations, roles, and responsibilities assigned to the partners should correspond to their skills and expertise.

At least one or more institutions must have a strong vested interest in the knowledge partnership: their ownership is essential to helping the whole become greater than the sum of the parts. As partners join, give them time to appreciate the bigger picture for collaboration and collective goal and context.

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[21] Creech, H., and T. Willard. 2001. *Strategic Intentions: Managing Formal Knowledge Networks for Sustainable Development*. Winnipeg: IISD. www.iisd.org/pdf/2001/networks_strategic_intentions.pdf.

Recognize Drivers behind Participation

Understand why partners may want to join. Ensure that partners have aligned their participation with their own institutional goals and objectives, and with the knowledge needs and gaps of their institutions. Institutions entering into these arrangements should be "self-aware": they must all carefully examine how this relationship will meet their internal objectives and extend their own spheres of influence and impact. Their participation must be mission-driven.

Partners should recognize self-interest in achieving success. Partners need to see the value added to their own goals by collaborating.

Effectiveness

Prepare an Outcome-Oriented Work Plan Together

Knowledge partnerships can be most effective when they are highly task-focused and have tangible outputs and planned outcomes. Consideration should be given to establishing procedures, processes, and work plans that will contribute to the knowledge products and services emerging from the partnership, and to the outcomes that those products and services will help achieve. The mechanisms for working together on a regular basis can catalyze problem solving, shared decision making, and ownership of outcomes. The partnership plan needs to be developed, reviewed, and adjusted regularly, together.

Provide or Foster Leadership and Governance Processes within the Knowledge Partnership

A founding organization can serve as leader. Alternatively, leadership can be shared among a core group of partners, but there must be at least one institution with a vested interest in the success of the knowledge partnership. Leadership needs a repertoire of behaviors and skills to support collaboration and trust. These skills can be more important than technical expertise in guiding the partnership to fulfill its purpose.

Even with one institution bringing the energy for leadership, there is a need to ensure good governance of the partnership through consultation, transparency, and shared decision making. Rules or principles of operation do not need to be complicated but they should be clear: who decides, about what, and who is to be held accountable? Formalization of these rules may progress as the partnership itself grows. It is also important to understand the decision-making authority of each participant, and equally each partner should know the authority of each other so that it is clear what type of decisions they can make on behalf of the organizations they represent.[22]

Establish mechanisms to use in the event of potential conflicts of interest or disputes among the partners. While it may seem that everybody is on the same page at the outset, it can be important to anticipate that this may not always be the case. Having agreed-upon guidelines for how to handle potential problems down the road can help keep partnerships working rather than dissolving when difficulties arise.

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[22] Tennyson, R. 2003. *Institutionalising Partnerships: Lessons from the Front Line.* Available: www. toolkitsportdevelopment.org/html/resources/0C/0CC00F20-85F6-4484-AB28-7D428002C84C/Infocus8.pdf

Efficiency

Choose an Appropriate Operating Model

A range of operating models is presented in the section on organizational models of networks and partnerships. However, the most significant challenge to address is whether or not the setting up of a knowledge partnership is the best way to achieve desired outcomes. Some consideration should be given to whether there is already a culture of knowledge management and sharing within each partner organization. The institutionalization of knowledge management processes within an organization positively influences the sharing of knowledge in a partnership: support for internal knowledge generation and dissemination lays the foundation for understanding both the value and process for knowledge activities involving multiple actors outside of the organization. Without this, the time invested in building that capacity may be disproportionate to the investment needed to achieve the outcomes.

There are several other barriers to collaborative work, including varying capacities for participation (staff time, technical skills, etc.), cultural barriers, and physical distance. It must be considered that groups with less resources or influence will need information and capacity building to level the balance of power and facilitate their involvement. All these must be taken into account in selecting the most appropriate model for collaboration.

Allocate Resources

The knowledge partnership work plan should include the financial plan, and should clearly highlight not only what the founding organizations or the donors are providing, but also what each partner is contributing, financially or in-kind, including staff and time.

If the knowledge partnership includes culturally different entities, more time should be allocated to understand how the various partners work out issues, for example, management and administration of funds and time needed to complete projects. Be aware that frustration can occur across the knowledge partnership when some believe that they are giving more than receiving.

Knowledge sharing does benefit from a certain amount of infrastructure: a common platform, ontology (or framework), taxonomies, collaboration spaces, and so forth. The level of investment in this infrastructure should be well matched for the planned activities and numbers of partners who will be relying on that infrastructure.

Make Adjustments

Partners often have trouble sustaining the high level of involvement intended.[23] Logistical barriers, such as conflicting schedules and deadlines, can become a challenge for partnerships.[24] Regular group reviews of the work plan, and necessary adjustments and possibly reallocation of resources need to be carried out. Individual contact with each partner should also be made from time to time, should there be capacity issues that the partner does not wish to share with others in the knowledge partnership.

Manage Benefits and Assets

The benefits that the partners will receive from participation need to be clear; and the contributions of each partner must be transparent. Knowledge partners both need to give and take, and to do so with respect for the knowledge brought to the table and what happens to the knowledge generated. The challenge of managing the intellectual property that flows into, and out of, the partnership's knowledge work must be considered. With local, community-based partners, it can be particularly

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[23] Footnote 21.
[24] IUCN Forest Conservation Programme. 2009. *Forest Partnerships*. Arborvitae Issue 39. Available: www.iucn.org/about/work/programmes/forest/fp_news_events/fp_news_arborvitae/

difficult to determine who developed the ideas brought forward into a knowledge partnership, and this can present problems down the road if the ideas are appropriated by the partnership as a whole for broader dissemination. Creative Commons has developed useful and tested licenses that networks and knowledge partnerships are now working with to address this challenge.

Recognition for investments in the development of that intellectual property can also be an issue. Donors want to ensure that their investments are appropriately acknowledged, but while the organization managing the knowledge partnership may do so, partners one step removed may not.

Sustainability

Sustain Outcomes

Whether the outcomes of the knowledge partnership work will be sustained will depend in large part on how successful the partnership has been at engaging stakeholders and beneficiaries beyond the partnership. As discussed earlier, keeping them informed from the beginning and seeking their inputs can help strengthen the work of partnerships over time.

Good practice includes the preparation of a communications strategy at the same time as the work plan for the knowledge partnership. With your partners, identify target recipients, and develop and deliver a suite of products (newsletters, social media, working paper series). Partners should share in this strategy, using their own communication channels.

There may be a need to develop knowledge partnerships at the grassroots, with community-based organizations, in order to ensure the long-term sustainability of outcomes. These local partners may be needed to apply new approaches and technologies developed by the partnership for scale up and replication. See the section on Special Considerations, for grassroots and community-based partnerships on page 44.

Value Reflection and Learning

Cycles of learning and reflection are as important to a knowledge partnership as they are to an organization. Mechanisms can include surveys followed by individual and group discussions, annual general meetings or conference calls; e-conferencing on what is working and what needs to change, etc. Ensure, however, in these listen and learn processes, to reflect on progress toward the shared purpose of the knowledge partnership. Participants are often more interested in problem solving around day-to-day management of topics than on the more intractable challenges of effecting and sustaining transformative change beyond the partnership.

Motivate Partners

Partners may have a number of motivations for participation, not all of which are directly related to the goals and objectives of the knowledge partnership. As discussed in the sections on success factors and management of short- and long-term benefits, each partner should be asked from the outset what they are bringing to the table, and what they would like to gain. Each member needs to understand what others will contribute, and when. Clarity on who is to contribute what and when will reassure partners that there will be a value exchange in the relationship. Motivations for sustained engagement will be strengthened through this value exchange, which includes state-of-the-art knowledge, and the gaining of a competitive edge through access to that knowledge.

Implement Sustainability Planning

One of the most useful definitions of sustainability of collaboration was prepared as part of a review by the International Development Research Centre of 20 years' experience in supporting research networks: "Sustainability means that a network continues to function until it achieves its goals, or

until its members are no longer willing or able to continue, or until it becomes irrelevant."[25] The review suggests that sustainability has four dimensions: time, relationships, resources, and relevance. To be sustainable across these dimensions, network members and coordinators must cooperate in establishing mechanisms to enable strategic management, internal management, external management, and financial management. Most importantly, however, members and coordinators must possess adaptive capacity that enables them to recognize the need for change and to respond appropriately to it. The following framework is excerpted from the document.

Table 6: Four Dimensions of Sustainability

Time	The life spans of networks vary. Sustainability does not mean that networks last forever. Longer life spans do not necessarily mean more successful networks. An appropriate time frame for a network is partly a function of its purpose. Ending a network is not necessarily a failure and can often be a necessary step in freeing individuals and institutions to develop new relationships and commit resources to new areas of work. Good practice in closing down networks should be recognized and embraced.
Resources	Sustainability does not necessarily mean that networks are financially self-sustaining. Resources include not only financing, but in-kind support from members and supporters as well. Sustainability requires networks to secure financial and material support from a variety of sources: donors, clients/users, members, hosts, and other stakeholders.
Relationships	Quality of network relationships is more important than quantity. Growth of network membership is not necessarily an indicator of sustainability. At the same time, sustainable networks do not necessarily have a static membership. Sustainability does not imply that the same members continue their involvement throughout the whole life of the network.
Relevance	To be sustainable, a network must fill a clear niche within the development context. The network must address an issue which is of deep concern to a critical mass of stakeholders. Network topics may be broadly or narrowly defined. What is most important is to articulate how the network fits within the constellation of other related networks. A network needs to undertake work of value to members and external stakeholders. And it must show progress in achieving its stated purpose.

Impact

Achieving impact is linked to the existence of the success factors identified in the section on Success Factors on page 35:
- Focus management and risk management will lead partners' outcomes to impact.
- Communications management will help to ensure that stakeholders and beneficiaries are aware of the work of the partnership; and engagement with those external stakeholders will help to create receptivity to the proposed solutions.
- The management of short- and long-term benefits will help strengthen the capacity of individual partners.
- Focus management combined with partnerships management will ensure that the knowledge partnership can remain flexible when the unexpected occurs, and innovation to emerge as a result.

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[25] Willard, T., and H. Creech. 2006. *Sustainability of International Development Research Networks*. Winnipeg: IISD. Available: www.iisd.org/pdf/2007/networks_sus_int_dev.pdf

Proactively Manage Collaboration, Knowledge Processes, and External Communications

Articulate Processes for Collaboration

In general, people prefer to obtain information from other people rather than from documents.[26] However, to do so, partners need to be able to identify each other's competencies and consult with each other. This requires the fostering of relationships. A knowledge partnership needs committed people, a core, who also feel the need to connect with others. The knowledge partnership should be about connecting with others in order to fulfill an agenda, not just about the agenda itself. What knowledge will be shared will depend on the strength of ties between institutions and people.[27] Hence, the partnership needs structure and tools for connecting. Built into the work plan should be the schedule for regular communication and interaction. Consideration should be given to deploying various communication options: not only e-mail but also weekly blog postings, phone conferences, online learning events, social networking sites, and face-to-face meetings. Facilitate joint planning, reflections, and evaluations to exchange essential views.

A common management dilemma exists between the need to manage a partnership to achieve its purpose and the need to provide the partnership sufficient space to self-organize and allow relationships to emerge so knowledge sharing takes place. Even if everything is on track, there exists a challenge of maintaining the enthusiasm and momentum of a partnership after the work plan has been established.[28] There is a plateau once the excitement of something new has worn off and the challenges associated with implementation become apparent. Setbacks are to be expected in engaging in knowledge partnerships, and due to their complexity there are no strict templates for success.[29]

Articulate Processes for Knowledge Generation and Exchange

Fundamentally, a knowledge partnership is a process of thinking together, talking together, and developing solutions together. Below are several good practices:
- Be clear about what knowledge is to be exchanged (relevant to purpose).
- Have a diversity of network actors, such as those with skills in research, in community development, and in communications, as well as across traditional boundaries such as science and policy analysis. These skills strengthen knowledge exchange and positively correlate with innovation. Furthermore, the greater the diversity of experiences and higher the commitment to the network, the more substantive the contributions will be.
- Maintain good quality data.
- Balance the types and applications of knowledge focused on the partnership. Stimulate the creation and sharing of content that is relevant to the whole without losing the relevance for partners' local daily practices.
- Suit technology used to support knowledge exchange to the scale and structure of the network, and create standards for communications and terminology so that people understand each other.

Articulate Processes for Communications beyond the Partnership

Set up mechanisms to broaden the knowledge partnership or share information with other stakeholders. In the sustainable development field, there tends to be many stakeholders who are not

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[26] Behrend, F. D., and R. Erwee. 2009. Mapping Knowledge Flows in Virtual Teams with SNA. *Journal of Knowledge Management. 13* (4), 99–114.
[27] Agterberg, M., B. van den Hooff, M. Huysman, and M. Soekijad. 2010. Keeping the Wheels Turning: The Dynamics of Managing Networks of Practice. *Journal of Management Studies , 74* (1), 84–108.
[28] Footnote 21.
[29] Footnote 12.

necessarily able to be a part of every discussion or action. Keeping them informed and seeking their input can help strengthen the work of knowledge partnerships over time.

Good practice includes the preparation of a communications strategy at the same time as the work plan for the partnership. With your partners, identify target recipients, and develop and deliver a suite of products (newsletters, social media, and working paper series). Partners should share in this strategy, using their own communications channels. See also the section on Success Factors, on communications management on page 38.

Put in Place Mechanisms for Monitoring and Evaluation

There is a certain discipline in identifying goals, intermediate outcomes, and outputs, with appropriate indicators, that knowledge networks and partnerships might do well to adopt. Approaches, such as outcome mapping, can be useful tools to help knowledge partnerships decide on their goals and set progress markers towards those goals. Even the simplest of guidelines can be helpful: what would you and your partners expect to see accomplished in a year's time; what would you like to see; and what would you like to see accomplished?

Due to the complex and multi-dimensional nature of knowledge partnerships and networks, evaluation is more difficult than in a traditional project setting. A knowledge partnership needs to be evaluated not only at its level of impact on the outcomes of its work but also in terms of its impact on the partner organizations themselves, who are also beneficiaries since partnerships are normally built on the assumption of mutual benefits.[30] Knowledge partnerships often have intangible qualities that contribute to their performance.[31] There is a call for innovative evaluation methods and new approaches, including more open-ended questioning and conversations and peer review systems.[32] Sometimes, partners, who are also donors or external resource providers, require the evaluation of the partnership, and the delicacy of this relationship also needs to be considered.

Not much has been researched and shared on metrics for knowledge generation and sharing. There is some use of web analytics to monitor collaboration sites; but in general, little else is available. And yet, quality of participation needs to be defined in terms other than frequency of interactions or number of participants.

Some practitioners have suggested simple, practical indications that knowledge generation and sharing between institutions is taking place:
- Representatives of organizations get together in the same room and start to talk.
- Representatives of organizations contribute what they have agreed to share (either financial resources, in-kind, or knowledge).
- Representatives of organizations accomplish something together that has had impact; combined with the counterfactual that, without the collaboration, there would have been no such outcome.
- Representatives of organizations keep in touch, and maintain conversations after the end of the knowledge initiative that brought them together.
- Individuals who participated on behalf of their organizations believe that they have gained knowledge.

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[30] Footnote 21.
[31] Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. 2005. *Partnerships for Sustainability: Evaluating and Improving Two Partnerships.* Available: www.cielap.org/pdf/twopartnerships.pdf
[32] Footnote 30.

Success Factors

The presence of certain success factors can help a knowledge partnership achieve its goals. The presence, or absence, of these can form an important component of the development of the partnership.

Focus Management

In implementation, it is important not to lose sight of the purpose of the knowledge partnership: the mobilization of institutions and individuals around a theme, project, or other action, with particular attention to the knowledge processes, products, and services that the partnership will engage in. A work plan can help to maintain focus for the partnership.

During implementation, consideration should be given to the institutionalization of procedures, processes, and work plans. The mechanisms for working together on a regular basis can catalyze problem solving, shared decision making, and ownership of outcomes.

To increase the likelihood of effective knowledge sharing leading to knowledge solutions, partners must share common schemas, models, motives, and way of work to cooperate. They must share similar goals for participating. This requires tailoring design to the needs of each organization and the range of stakeholders participating. Techniques for doing so include modeling and visualization tools.

While planning is critical, a flexibility and openness to unintended outcomes, as long as the central goals of the knowledge partnership are not compromised, is also important. It is not uncommon for a partnership to do something different than originally intended.

Leadership and Coordination Management

Appropriate leadership and management practices are essential. Leaders can work behind the scenes, but there is no reason why they should not be open and celebrated. Facilitative skills and a mindset that values integration by people or organizations are needed by those managing the knowledge partnership. They must understand not only the roles and responsibilities of partners, but also the strengths and potential contributions that individual partners can make. They need to create a social climate and culture conducive to knowledge sharing and learning. Ideally, a culture of learning emerges where mistakes or disappointments are a springboard for reflection, revision, and transformation. Managers should broker content but ensure that they do not inadvertently diminish the practice-based, socially embedded nature of learning which makes a knowledge partnership valuable to its members. Successful management of a partnership often involves at least two people: a more senior person with subject expertise; and a young professional with skills to connect and facilitate knowledge exchange.

Commitment by senior management of each member organization is crucial and should be visible. Senior management should work together to ensure that the knowledge partnership has an appropriate institutional home. Coordination by a secretariat that helps to provide infrastructure, time, and labor has often been noted as a key to success, even more than financial resources. Regular and robust communications from this secretariat to all the partners is necessary to ensure everyone is always informed of what is going on. Ongoing planning, documentation of progress, and reflection are important.

Partners Management

Partners management is the ability to negotiate and maintain a core set of relationships with those who bring important skills and connections to the knowledge partnership. One important task in partners

management is facilitating the emergence of shared understanding of the purpose of the knowledge partnership and the expectations of all involved, moving them from competition to cooperation. Through that process, the leaders of the group or animators help to build trust among the participants.

While the challenges of finding the most appropriate members would be addressed at the design stage, it is during implementation that the animators must have the skills to keep the members interested. However, capacity to do this is often not found in these knowledge partnerships. People involved in the work generally are not recruited because of their facilitative/partnership/collaborating skills, but rather because of substantive expertise. During implementation, it will become clearer whether the right institution has agreed to participate, or the right individuals have been identified to do the work. If there are particular collaboration skills gaps, then capacity for collaboration must be developed early on.

The informal aspects must be encouraged. A group of people who like each other are more likely to stay in touch, share, and work together more effectively over a longer period of time.

Trust is generally noted as essential to partnerships. However, the methods in which it is gained need to be understood. Working together on building a shared agenda, overcoming conflicts, and fully owning decisions contribute to robust knowledge partnerships. Iterative engagement and careful listening to partner interests and concerns are good trust building practices. Practitioners advise that one should take time and small steps to build trust, particularly among institutions that may have competing interests. Partnership development occurs in stages and takes time. Investing in trust building and social capital also requires personal skills and economic resources.

Working with the same organizations over several years on a variety of partnerships and collaborations can boost connectivity and attract key players through the promise of consistent and long-term engagement. The transaction costs lessen over time as partners become more skilled at collaborating.

In ensuring that trust and social capital are developed over time, partners' capacities may need to be enhanced to deliver on the partnership programs and/or projects as well as to be able to collaborate. Pay careful attention to potential inequalities in the design of the knowledge partnership including distribution of resources among partners. Expectations must be realistic, and must be communicated and shared among the partners.

It is useful to develop a network of *critical friends,*[33] individuals who are not partners themselves but are kept informed and engaged in the knowledge partnership's work as advisors and associates. This fulfills a number of functions including providing critique and feedback, undertaking reviews or action research, and arbitrating unresolved conflicts between partners.

Partners need attention to keep them going and some type of benefit needs to be realized by each. Moreover, the needs of the group as a whole may change: do you need new partners who bring new knowledge or different skills? What is the process for a graceful exit for some partners and a rapid introduction of new?

Managing cultural issues also warrants some attention: many partnerships are problematic because different cultural backgrounds influence the dynamics of collaboration.

Also important is the evolution of a common document outlining the operational framework, including clear governance rules for the sharing and co-creation of knowledge, from which everyone will work.

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[33]   Footnote 21.

The document should include
- a clear definition and delineation of the purpose or goal that the partnership sets out to achieve;
- key activities each member will participate in and everyone's role. Knowing your role and how to play is an inexact but very important science. Sharing power and responsibilities is also important;
- definitions of what is considered as ideal conduct and what is not acceptable, i.e., which partner organizations have the right to represent the partnership to whom and when;
- metrics to evaluate the participation of the members; and
- mechanisms for dealing with the almost inevitable disagreements and conflicts that will emerge.

Partners should be well informed and interested. They should ideally use the same language to describe the partnership's vision, goal, methodology, and relationships. Techniques to use include meetings, reviews, joint reflections on lessons, joint communication products for external audiences, and clear work plans.

Short- and Long-Term Benefits Management

Knowledge partnerships may start with a long-term view, and may consider what the long-term benefits for all will be. Short-term benefits that will keep members involved also need to be identified. It is important to take time to identify and celebrate incremental accomplishments and provide the partners with some sense of progress.

Members should give as well as receive. From the beginning, each partner should be asked what they are bringing to the table. Each member needs to understand what others will contribute, and when.

Linked to benefits management is the provision of incentives for participation. Certainly, clarity on who is to contribute what and when is a significant reassurance that there will be a value exchange in the relationship. This value exchange will include state-of-the-art knowledge, and the gaining of a competitive edge through access to that knowledge.

Central to this is that participation has to help in the individual's day-to-day work. Other incentives could include
- access to experts and other persons of influence for personal network building;
- help to build both personal and institutional profile and reputation;
- providing a testing ground for ideas prior to broader dissemination or commercialization;
- critical mass of influence to secure funds;
- increase buy-in to ideas from others outside of the partnership; and
- providing access to "market information": what other institutions are doing, what their needs are, and where there is competition but also opportunity.

Risk Management

The recognition of risks is done occasionally through strategic planning exercises, Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats analyses, and so forth. How those risks are managed or mitigated is not well understood.

Table 7: Managing and Mitigating Risks

Common Risks	Considerations for Mitigation
Financial resources fall short of what is desired or needed	• Make clear on what partners are able, and prepared, to contribute as in-kind support. • Share the challenge of raising revenues among partners. • Maintain regular communications and information exchange throughout periods when funding is limited or non-existent, through simple listserv or social networking tools.
Risk to reputation associated with underperformance	• Monitor activities regularly.
Transaction costs are considered to be high	• Promote the view that partnerships are all about transactions. These are costs related to the effectiveness of the partnership, necessary to achieving objectives, rather than an efficiency issue. Partners and donors alike should be coached to view transactions differently.
The champion or key animator leaves	• Establish corporate level endorsement and support of the partnership to ensure that efforts are made to continue the work. • Ensure there is a second person always working closely with the key animator, either from within the host organization or with one of the partners.
Individual experts leave the member organizations	• Carefully groom informal connections so that the departure of staff may have less of a negative impact. Departing staff often stay in the same area of work and stay engaged through social media tools, if the partnership provides them.

Communications Management

In discussions about the knowledge generation and sharing functions of knowledge partnerships, the dissemination of knowledge for use outside of the partnership (also called "knowledge mobilization") cannot be overlooked.

The tools and outlets for communications are numerous. The following updated table from Creech (2005)[34] provides a typology of communications approaches that can be incorporated into a strategy for a knowledge partnership to reach out to and engage those outside of the partnership.

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[34]   Creech, H. 2005. *The Terminology of Knowledge for Sustainable Development: Information, Knowledge, Collaboration and Communications*. An International Institute for International Development Knowledge Communications Practice Note. Winnipeg: IISD.

Table 8: Typology of Communications Approaches

Approach	Description
1. Communications through group processes: "many to many"	Based on principles of participation and the belief that solutions developed collectively are more likely to be implemented than those imposed by others. Innovation comes about through dialogue and joint problem solving.
Tool	
C4D	Communications for Development (C4D) is the practice of using communications and engagement methods to facilitate international development processes, primarily in the community. Emphasis is on horizontal communications which facilitates community and/or grassroots stakeholders to speak to each other about their concerns, needs, and capabilities, exploring solutions within the community, and learning how to bring their views to the attention of others.
Appreciative inquiry	An organizational development tool focused on the principle of positive change. A participatory process that engages all stakeholders in exploring values, assets, and contributions.
Participatory video	The use of video to record participatory processes in order to capture and share back to participants the exchange of views.
E-conferencing	Electronic conferencing is the use of e-mail or discussion boards to bring together dispersed groups to discuss issues of common interest. This tool is asynchronous in nature and participants are usually invited.
Chat rooms and online social networking sites	These tools attract dispersed participants to discuss issues of common interest in real time but using virtual space. Participants are self-selected.
Simulations and/or gaming	This tool brings together participants in real time, either in person or virtually, to solve simulated problems or tasks.
Conferences, negotiations	This tool is both a group process and a dissemination process. It brings together participants in real time to debate ideas, positions, and solve problems. In recent times, the knowledge sharing components of major international meetings has proven more successful than actual identification of problems and the planning process for actions at formal negotiations.
2. Communications by dissemination: "one to many"	This approach refers to the delivery of an individual's or organization's information, knowledge, and beliefs to others. Innovation comes from feedback loops: encouraging responses to the knowledge provided.
Tool	
Publishing (web, print, CD)	The trend is toward convergence and speed of publishing practices: more and more integration of book production with simultaneous release on the web; increased use of digital printing for faster production times and shorter print runs; and use of CDs to package large volumes of content for audiences with limited internet access.
Online databases, meta-databases	This tool uses structured information with a user interface that supports search and retrieval of data subsets. Meta-databases attempt to link or relate varieties of data and information. The structure of the database itself often communicates a particular perspective on an issue.

Table 8 *continued*

Approach	Description
WIKI technology	This tool allows open editing of websites. Anyone can contribute content and anyone can edit someone else's content.
E-mail lists, newsletters	This tool is used either for an individual or organization to periodically send out information to a group of subscribers. Subscribers are either preselected by the sender, or choose to subscribe in order to receive the content.
Web advertising	This tool evolved from the concept of "pull" technology—pulling users into websites. This is used either internally on a website to promote other sections of a website (e.g., popup screens inviting users to subscribe to a newsletter); or purchased on major portals (e.g., purchasing key words on Google that lead to web ads popping up on the right side of the search results page).
Really Simple Syndication (RSS) feeds	This tool is used to create a news feed from a website to a user's computer. This tool tacks new additions to favorite websites, without having to log on to each one. It evolved from the concept of "push" technology—pushing information out to users.
Blogs and twitters (microblogs)	This refers to personal web logs or online diaries. This tool is used to express personal views and knowledge. It is often created within larger web communities dealing with common interests. Interest in this tool is growing among corporations that encourage expressions of new ideas.
Theater and the arts	The use of storytelling, street theater, murals, and other artistic processes is often used in the development field to attract audiences and communicate messages in more accessible ways. These tools recognize that communication is not dependent on literacy.
Media (print, radio, TV)	Media targets and builds relationships with journalists and editors as both an audience that shapes public discourse and a means to reach decision makers responsive to public discourse. This tool also refers to the direct use of radio and TV and/or video production to deliver knowledge. Like theater, media also recognizes that communication is not dependent on literacy.
Social marketing	This tool refers to the adoption of mass media practices (advertising, branding, etc.) to promote social messages, with a view to influencing individual behavior change on a larger scale.
Corporate communications	This tool refers to the use of corporate identifiers, newsletters, annual reports, and other means to raise the profile and recognition factor of an organization.
Accountability communications	This tool makes use of corporate social, economic, and environmental reporting. It endorses and/or adopts principles and standards as a means to demonstrate responsibility to stakeholders and broader audiences.

Table 8 *continued*

Approach	Description
3. Restricted and/or secure communications: "one to one" or "a few to a few"	This approach is based on two concepts: the desire to catalyze and support the interaction of individuals and teams; and the concept of "safe spaces" where individuals feel empowered to take risks and express thoughts more freely. As with group process communications, innovation comes about through dialogue and joint problem solving. However, there is also a strong efficiency element: the provision of tools to individuals to support and speed up their interaction.
Tool	
E-mail	This tool is considered to be the single greatest innovation in the information and communication technology field.
Intranet	This tool provides restricted access of a website to employees of an organization. It supports the management process of the organization and used to post policies, directories, minutes, meetings, etc. It often includes an internal staff news function, for staff to promote events, trips, and recent research.
Extranet	Access to the extranet, like the intranet, is provided to a select group of organizations in a network, partnership, or alliance to manage their collaboration.
Groupware	This refers to collaborative work tools that allow dispersed groups of individuals to work together to draft and edit documents; build shared databases; "whiteboard" ideas; schedule meetings; and manage projects, tasks, and timelines. D-Groups (www.dgroups.org) are examples of groupware technology applied to international development work.
Instant messaging	This tool is similar to a phone call, only this one types instead of speaks. It has the advantage over phone in the ease with which one can bring in others into the "conversation" if they happen to be online at the same time. This tool is good for immediate problem solving.
Team meetings	There is growing recognition that even virtual teams will benefit from face-to-face (F2F) interaction from time to time.
Video conferencing	Recent studies indicate that video conferencing has not quite lived up to its promise, due to expense of installations and connect time; or cost and inconvenience of participants having to meet at conferencing facilities outside of the immediate office. Internet video conferencing also has not significantly improved with respect to image resolution and speed of transmission.
Webinar	This is an online meeting and learning platform where participants play a role in the meeting with the ability to view slides, ask questions, chat, take polls, and share views via the online screen.

Table 8 *continued*

Approach	Description
4. Education and training	This approach refers to the transfer of knowledge and experience through formal and informal means.

Approaches	The key variations here involve
	• incorporation of knowledge into formal education curriculum, ensuring that concepts are part of an accredited program, and become a baseline for future work;
	• targeted training, professional development, etc., which ensures individuals have access to new knowledge;
	• use of face-to-face training methods (classroom, workshops, etc.); and
	• use of distance education methods, such as
	  – facilitated learning: provision of materials (in print or online) combined with interaction virtually (by video conference, webinar, or e-mail) with an instructor, and possibly with other course participants; and
	  – self-directed: provision of materials combined with automated assessment against learning objectives.

Special Considerations for High-Level Strategic Partnerships or Alliances

Strategic alliances or interagency partnerships are those one-to-one relationships that one institution seeks to establish with another. These relationships are designed to share a purpose; mandate the exchange of knowledge, experience, resources, and connections; and leverage influence. Every institution must determine how to work with and through other institutions. At times, it may be of strategic importance to one institution to align more closely with another, to reinforce common messages, to add value to each other's work, and to achieve synergies of effort on common challenges. These relationships need to be strongly tied into corporate priorities and into geopolitical realities that should guide the choices of partners. What sets the high-level strategic relationships apart from other knowledge partnership and network practice, however, is that the emergence of a collective identity—the "whole" becoming greater than the sum of the parts—is not planned as part of establishing the partnership: institutional identity remains very much in place. These arrangements are similar to strategic alliances in the private sector.

There are special considerations to introducing and facilitating knowledge generation and exchange functions into strategic, high-level relationships that ADB wishes to establish with other multilateral institutions, such as the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific World Bank, United Nations Children's Fund, and others. The drivers for these relationships are related to improving effectiveness in the field through greater collaboration. The mechanisms for doing so through knowledge processes, and the performance indicators for assessing progress, need to be documented in the governing MOUs. The challenge in designing these alliances is to move beyond the high-level agreements to building the informal networks of staff across the institutions. There needs to be supporting infrastructure in place to manage these knowledge relationships: with staff assigned in both organizations to operationalize and monitor the knowledge processes, and processes for ensuring that the knowledge exchange permeates throughout all levels of the partnering institutions.

Specific success factors should be considered in high-level, strategic partnerships:
- Activities need to be aligned with corporate priorities—the partnership must help the organization to deliver on its mandate.
- There is commitment from the most senior levels.
- There must be a clearly defined stakeholder group who will benefit directly from the knowledge relationship.
- There must be a point person (a relationship manager), preferably from each party, to animate and monitor the relationship. A light, but targeted communications process would feed ideas in, animate discussion, and move towards real outputs and outcomes.
- Units responsible for managing MOUs or, alternatively, evaluation units, should have a role to play in monitoring and assessing the partnership.
- There must be strong technical platforms to support the knowledge exchange function: extranets that bridge the intranets of each partner.
- There must be a phased approach to building the relationship over time; and recognizing that the relationships may change over time and that interests and priorities may diverge.
- The MOU can be the starting point—agreeing in principle that a partnership is desirable.
- Efforts should be made to strive for joint activities. This may require more detailed appendices to the MOU that provide terms of reference for such activities. All such activities should be clearly documented for subsequent monitoring and reporting.
- There should be regular checkpoints to monitor progress, mutual value and to assess whether interests may be diverging over time.
- The desires for protection of institutional reputation, brand, and intellectual property must be acknowledged and respected.

In evaluating a strategic alliance and/or interagency partnership, particular attention should be paid to the following:
- complexity of activities envisaged in the relationship (are they achievable?);
- long-term commitment on both sides;
- risk to reputations of each institution;
- staff engaged in the development of the partnership from the start; and
- staff identified and supported in implementing the activities.

Special Considerations for Grassroots and/or Community-Based Partnerships

As noted in the introduction of these guidelines, there are sources of knowledge and expertise in the region that ADB should, and is, connecting with, in universities, research institutes, government departments, nongovernment organizations (NGOs), and the private sector. There are several benefits to be gained for ADB to link to knowledge in the field held by local institutions and actors.

- Local expertise can help to inform ADB's work and provide evidence for lending and other decisions.
- Local institutions can benefit from more direct engagement with ADB experts to acquire knowledge.
- ADB needs more channels to test or ground-truth its knowledge in the field, through established actors.
- The capacity of resident missions and ADB field staff can be strengthened by connecting those units with networks of institutions and experts in the field. ADB field staff are the first point of contact with local beneficiaries, and should have more immediate access to locally recognized experts and institutions to both backstop and provide credibility and relevance to ADB's work.

In addition to the more established institutions in the region, there may be a need to develop partnerships at the grassroots, with community-based organizations. There may be several drivers to work with local partners:

- New concepts should be developed in the field with local partners to be relevant.
- Access to field realities is needed for innovation.
- Local partners are needed to apply new approaches and technologies for scaling up and replication.

Working with community-based partners requires paying special attention to varying degrees of capacity, knowledge, and power relations with these local actors. Achieving equality among partners in a relationship when one party has more resources but the other may have more legitimacy is a challenge. The literature on co-management of natural resources, often between indigenous peoples and governments,[35] holds a number of relevant lessons, particularly for partnerships that are embedded in the local context:

- Governance of resources can be done in partnership, through the effective building of relationships over time. The emphasis must first be on the relationship, established through the sharing of experience and mutual concerns and hopes.
- Trust and social capital can be built through small joint activities that lead to larger endeavors. The partnership is strengthened through "learning by doing".
- The commitment must be sustained over a long period of time.
- Linking different levels of organization and knowledge systems (scientific knowledge and traditional knowledge, for example) can require different types of coordinators and facilitators. Support can be secured by working with bridging organizations that can provide a more neutral arena for trust building, sense making, learning, collaboration, and conflict resolution.

There is a recognized gap between learning on the ground and feeding the lessons back into policies, procedures, and processes.[36] With regard to involving the poor and marginalized in a community, it is suggested that there is a need to demonstrate immediate material benefits from their involvement.[37]

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[35]   Berkes, F. 2009. Evolution of Co-Management: Role of Knowledge Generation, Bridging Organizations and Social Learning. *Journal of Environmental Management*. 90 (5), 1692–1702.

[36]   Bolz, U., B. Knechtli, D. Lee, M. Mikos, and A. Stoll. 2008. *Evaluation of Knowledge Management and Institutional Learning in SDC.* Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation. Available: www.sdc.admin.ch/en/home/activities/ process_and_methodic_competencies_research/knowledge_management

[37]   Footnote 23.

Benefits include providing a space for negotiation rather than confrontation, giving a voice to weaker interests, and deepening the pool of knowledge and capacity for tackling problems. Challenges include ensuring meaningful participation, balancing the power relations between different partners, facilitating an open and informed exchange of views, and lastly, taking the time to let the partnership and dialogue flourish. Whatever the motives for participating, participants need information and capacity to make the most of their involvement. This is particularly true of groups that may traditionally see themselves as less influential or resource-constrained.

Finally, partnerships that focus on flowing knowledge into the local level for implementation, scale up, and replication also have specific requirements. The researchers and the users of the new knowledge must work closely together, creating together a joint framework for coordination of activities and having platforms for joint reflection and conflict resolution.

Consultative Principles for Managing Grassroots and/or Community-Based Partnerships

The following is an example of principles, developed by the International Union for Conservation of Nature, [38] which could be used to guide the process of managing community-based knowledge partnerships once established. These principles would need to be discussed, modified, and agreed to by the stakeholders concerned to ensure they are appropriate for the specific situations that the partnership is designed to address.

1. **Engage diverse stakeholders**. We will make efforts to consult with a broad range of stakeholders within local government, civil society, and industry.

2. **Institute reliable operating structure and process management**. We will ensure that meetings are adequately planned, facilitated, documented, and shared in a timely manner.

3. **Practice transparency**. We will ensure that the process is transparent to outside stakeholders through representation of diverse interests in our discussions, regular external reporting of deliberations, and additional consultation.

4. **Use effective communication channels**. We will use multiple communication channels to reach as many stakeholders as possible and raise their awareness of our process and its possible implications.

5. **Foster focus on interests, not positions or personalities**. In our own deliberations, we will seek to address the interests raised by underlying issues. When issues are raised we will ask for solutions.

6. **Allow for independent verification**. In reporting our successes, we will ensure that those outside the process can verify our positions and outcomes.

7. **Be responsive to all concerns**. While we will not be able to address every concern that is raised with respect to our work, we will strive to be responsive to them, explaining what action has been taken and if no action can be taken why that is the case.

8. **Make use of existing networks**. We will rely on members of our partnerships to use their own networks to communicate our work and solicit feedback and concerns.

9. **Incorporate capacity building.** We will look for opportunities to build capacity in each of the sectors to effectively participate in the process.

10. **Allow for process adjustments**. We will revisit the road map as necessary to ensure we are adequately achieving the milestones and including the necessary consultations.

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[38] Footnote 24.

Checklists and Winding Up

Checklist for Monitoring

The following is a simple operations checklist to monitor knowledge partnership health:
* Is there a clear and appropriately detailed work plan for achieving the goals of the knowledge partnership? Are the activities under way?
* Is the leadership still in place?
* Are the partners all participating? Are they communicating in productive and effective ways?
* Is it evident that the benefits are delivered to and received by the partners?
* Are the partners contributing sufficient and appropriate resources (in-kind, other) for achieving the goals of the knowledge partnership?
* Is there an appropriate level of formality to the relationships (based on correspondence, meeting notes, or written agreements)?
* Are the strategies for communicating the progress and results of the work of the partners being executed?

Winding Up

Bringing a knowledge partnership to an end is also something that should be considered.

For experts who focus closely on the impacts of knowledge processes on the individual, this is almost an irrelevant discussion: the relationships have been built, and may continue, or they may not. People routinely come in and out of knowledge sharing activities. The process of building one partnership can lead to the extension of relationships over time into many other activities, regardless of the success of the original partnership.

Whether a knowledge partnership has run its course or not, there is always a parallel benefit: an increase in the number of individuals who now know each other and who are working on similar goals around the world. These individuals and their organizations gain a shared understanding of what it takes to work together and separately towards broader goals.

However, from time to time, it may be necessary to recognize when people or activities do not fit together anymore.

The risk is that wind-up may take place too soon: knowledge generation and sharing must be placed on a much longer time scale (beyond 2–3 years), as it can take that length of time to clarify purpose and focus, encourage the building of shared understanding, create an environment in which trust can be built, develop capacities, and see some initial progress.

However, whether the knowledge partnership is temporary or long-lasting, eventually most partnerships do come to an end. This can be difficult and it is advised to take time in partnership dismantling just as one does in building up a partnership.[39] Some ideas to successfully close a knowledge partnership include:
* Capture and communicate the knowledge partnership's story.
* Celebrate achievements.
* Use an external broker or facilitator to manage the process professionally.
* Acknowledge activities that have resulted from the knowledge partnership.
* Make a clean break.

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[39] Footnote 21.

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Guidelines for Knowledge Partnerships

ADB's long-term strategic framework, *Strategy 2020*, argues that knowledge solutions must be enriched through internal learning from operational practice and external learning from long-term knowledge partnerships. The *Guidelines for Knowledge Partnerships* offer a framework for strengthening such partnerships. They specify the essentials of designing for performance, articulate building blocks, and underscore success factors and special considerations. The guidelines are offered as a resource document and reference to ADB staff members in general. They may also help other organizations design and manage their knowledge partnerships better.

About the Knowledge Management Center

The Knowledge Management Center facilitates knowledge management activities in ADB. It plays a critical role in introducing new knowledge management approaches, monitoring the progress of knowledge management, and reporting to ADB management.

About the Asian Development Bank

ADB's vision is an Asia and Pacific region free of poverty. Its mission is to help its developing member countries reduce poverty and improve the quality of life of their people. Despite the region's many successes, it remains home to two-thirds of the world's poor: 1.8 billion people who live on less than $2 a day, with 903 million struggling on less than $1.25 a day. ADB is committed to reducing poverty through inclusive economic growth, environmentally sustainable growth, and regional integration.

Based in Manila, ADB is owned by 67 members, including 48 from the region. Its main instruments for helping its developing member countries are policy dialogue, loans, equity investments, guarantees, grants, and technical assistance.

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