
7. Final reflections

Ultimately, successful partnering agreements hinge on getting the following elements right:

- **Purpose** - there is little point in developing and signing a partnering agreement just for the sake of it. Be clear about what the agreement process will practically lead to and what is hoped to gain in return.
- **Defining tasks and actions** – an agreement or understanding is fine, but what will actually happen when it's been signed and by who? Agreements that don't consider this important aspect will only ever have a ceremonial function. Assignment of tasks, responsibilities, contact points, and timeframes to review progress, are essential to making processes happen.
- **Timeframes** – be realistic and leave plenty of time to undertake the agreement process. Build in sufficient time for those participating to comment and seek feedback from others. It's worth taking the extra time to get it right.
- **Process** – don't be tempted to do everything by email or just cut and paste off old documents. Build in face-to-face meetings that encourage shared discussion, creativity and good ideas to be collectively developed and owned. People and relationships are just as important as the signed piece of paper.
- **Internal communication** – make sure to identify and involve all those in your organisation that will be interested in the agreement or will likely be involved in long-term relationships or projects with participating agencies. Different parts of organisations need to have practical opportunities to influence the agreement. This will ensure that the agreement is "owned", understood and implemented by organisations –not just individuals.

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