

Partnering Fundamentals TIS Conference

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Maria Hayes: PBA Artist in Residence



Intent



To consider what it takes to partner effectively



To share some frameworks for effective collaboration



To explore how TIS partners can support equitable partnering

Why Partner?

The simple issues of this world are solved!

It is unreasonable to consider that any one actor/organisation can bring about achievement of sustainable development outcomes

Various actors contribute to these through mobilising different resources - assets, skills, knowledge and capability.

Partnering recognises the contribution that different partners make to **complex** challenges

This suggests two exciting possibilities



The whole is greater than the sum of its two parts!

Where people / organisations work together, they are likely to achieve more than they can alone!

Transformation and innovation

The outcome will be greater and certainly different to the individual contributions.

WHY

ADDED VALUE

- Access to new resources
- Innovation
- Quality
- Legitimacy
- More integrated solutions
- Appropriateness
- Effective & efficient Implementation
- Scale
- Greater sustainability

ADDED OUTCOMES

- Meeting individual partner's or organisations drivers / underlying interests
- Changes in mindsets, behaviours and relationships
- Partners have new capabilities

ADDITIONAL BENEFITS

- Social capital
- Empowerment
- Technical transfer
- Spin off activities
- Wider influence on policy and practice
- System change
- Greater societal stability
- Learning / new knowledge



Setting the scene

Individual Reflection - 5 mins

- **In silence** have a think about the partnerships you are involved with
 - What works?
 - What challenges do you experience?
 - What would you like to do differently?
- Write down your thoughts

Setting the scene – 10 mins

At your table share your thoughts and write a few words down on:

- What challenges are common?
- What words would you use to describe your partnering experience?

Hang on to your pieces of paper – we are going to come back to them later!!

A decorative graphic on the left side of the slide, consisting of several concentric, overlapping circles in shades of light blue and grey, creating a sense of depth and movement.

How do your
partnerships stand up
to this definition?

PARTNERSHIP: a definition

“An on-going working relationship
where risks and benefits are
shared”

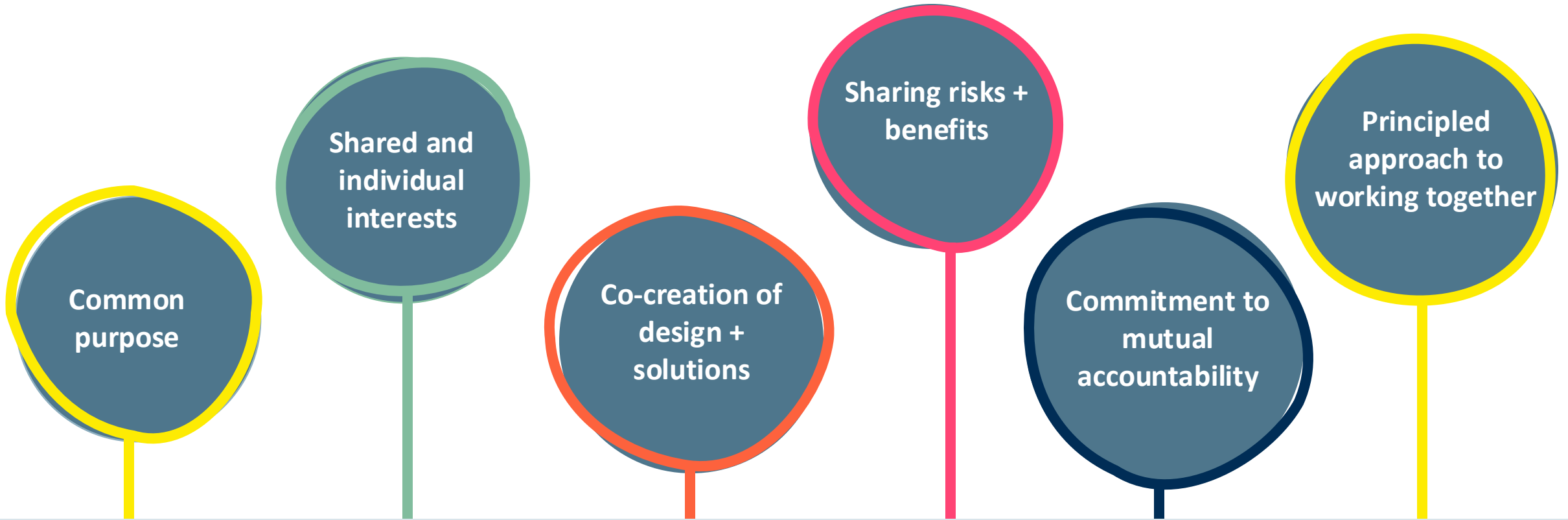
A partnership is based on **principles** of equity,
transparency, **and mutual accountability**.

In practical terms this means each partner's
involvement in:

co-creating projects and programs

committing tangible resources and

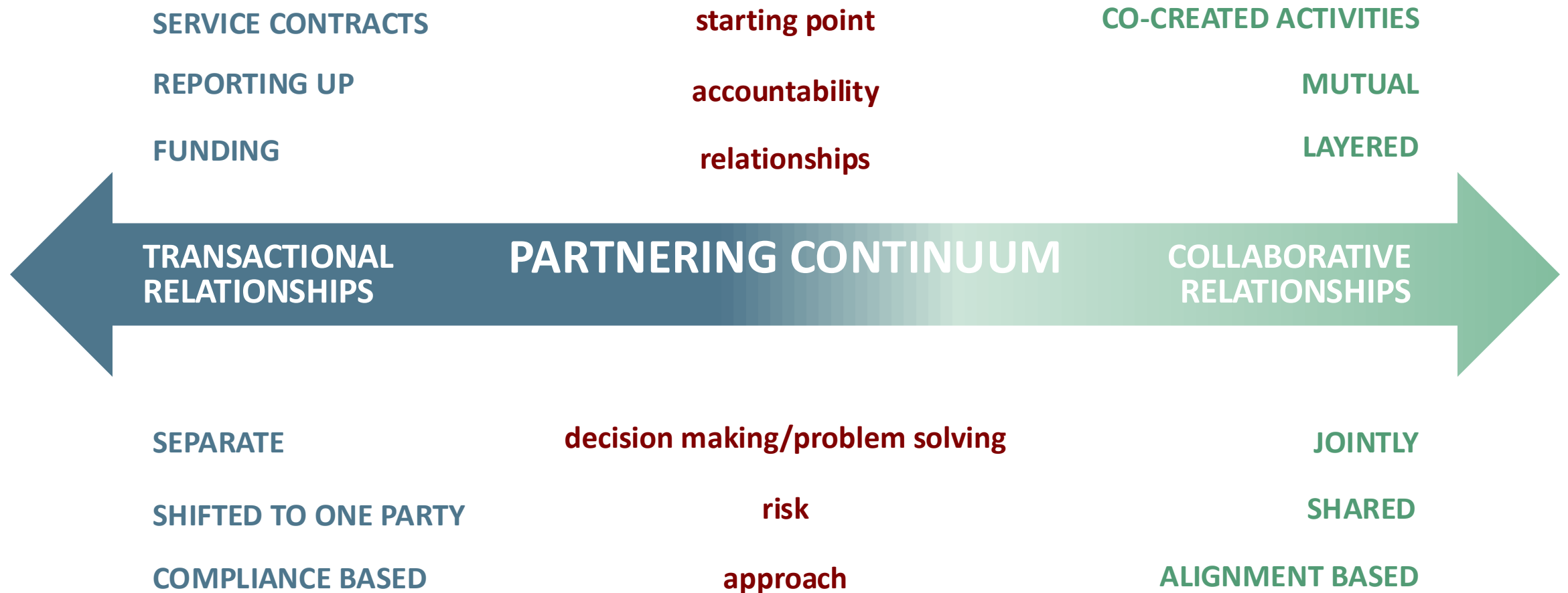
mutual accountability.



PBA's current thinking about fundamental characteristics of effective partnerships



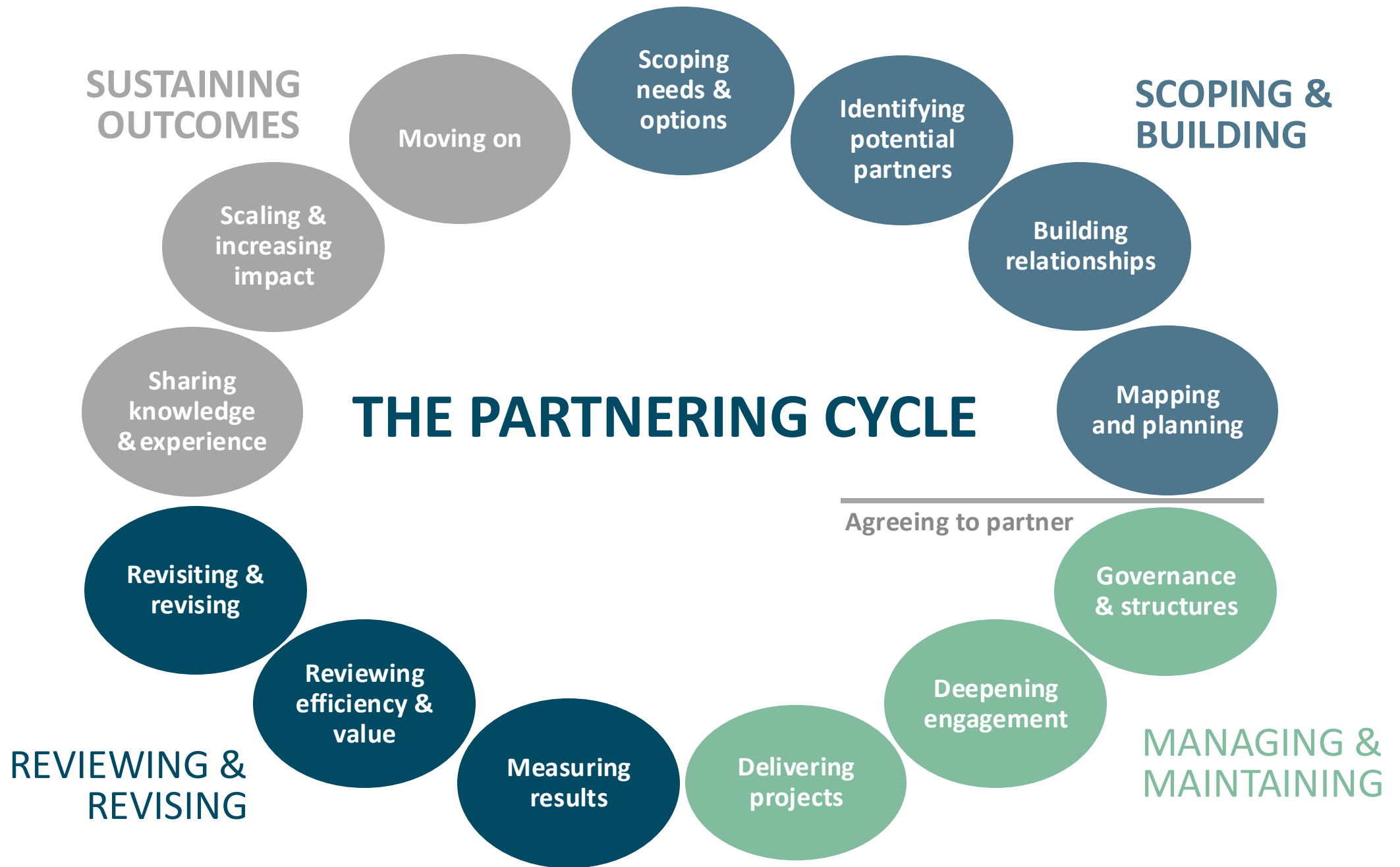
Where do your partnerships sit?



Partnering processes



A partnering approach uses intentional and structured **process management** to build equity and collaboration.



The 'partnering cycle' is distinct from but easily aligned with a typical 'project cycle'.

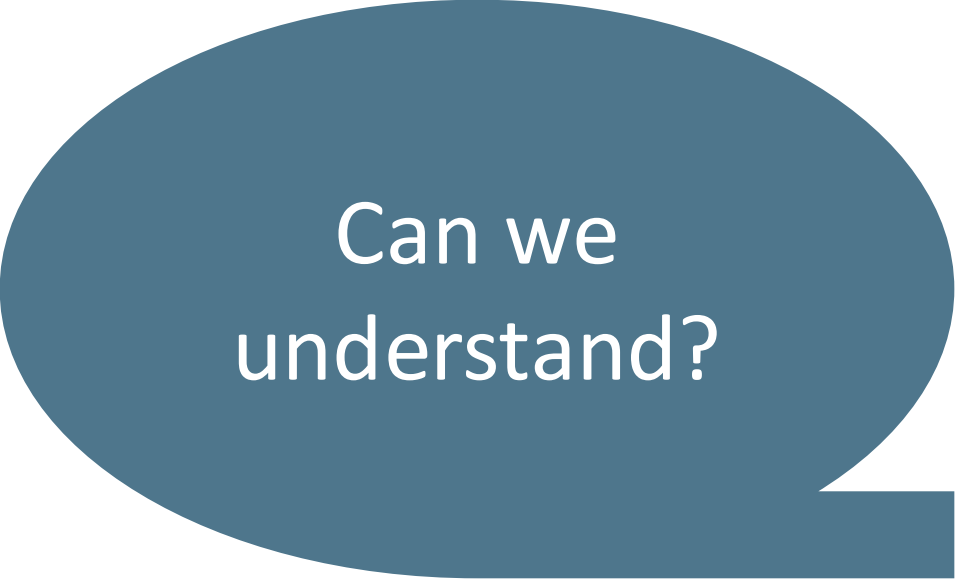
Each stage requires ongoing but different processes.

How far in your partnering work do you focus on the **partnership** as well as on the partnership's **project** throughout its life cycle?



What are some of the things you can do to support partnering throughout the cycle?





Can we
understand?

1. Focus on Scoping and Building

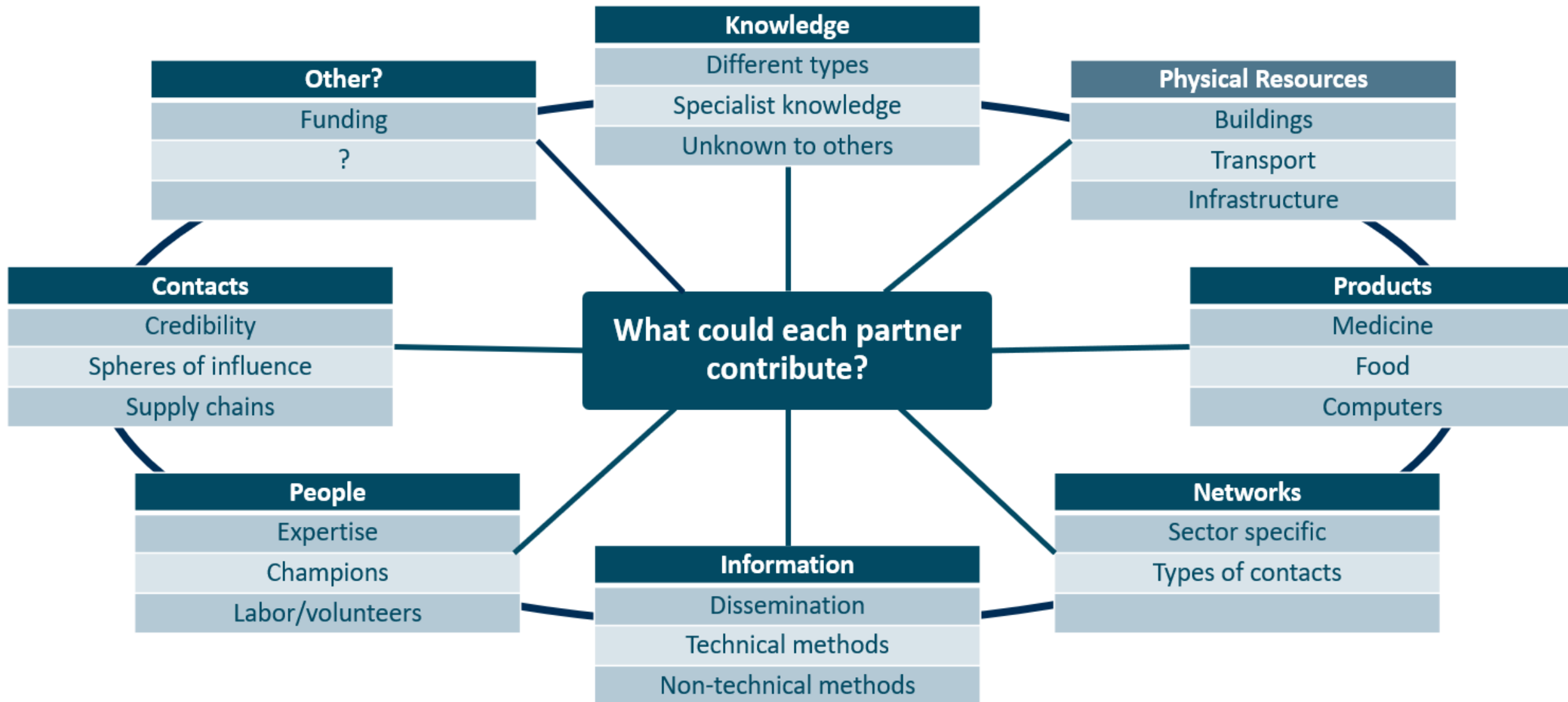
Why each type of stakeholder might want to partner?

What concerns that stakeholder may have?

But what about our own organisation? Do we understand these things?
Internal alignment is as important as alignment between partners!



2. Make visible what everyone's contributions are



3. Broker Actively

A **partnership broker** is an active 'go-between' who supports partners navigating their partnering journey.

Other terms might include - process manager, change maker, intermediary, navigator, bridge-builder, a practitioner.

Brokers may not only be individuals – they may be organisations



Partnership brokering roles

An **internal partnership broker** comes from one of the partner organisations but plays this role on behalf of the partnership – in addition to representing their own organisation.

An **external partnership broker** is someone with partnership brokering experience who supports a partnership at selected times for specific purposes.

Whatever you call the broker it is the role and how the broker manages their role this is critical to the process.



SUSTAINING OUTCOMES

Exploring moving-on options and supporting decisions

Managing moving-on processes collaboratively

Helping partners celebrate and learn from their partnership 'story'

Ensuring outcomes are able to be sustained / embedded / scaled /transferred

REVIEWING & REVISING

Supporting partners review added value and effectiveness

Assisting in revising the collaboration agreement

Helping partners implement changes to improve the partnership

Guiding partners to plan for sustaining outcomes and moving on



SCOPING & BUILDING

Scoping the partnership's potential

Exploring drivers, expectations and underlying interests

Embedding key partnering principles

Enabling partners to differentiate between the partnership and its projects

Negotiating a detailed agreement to underpin the partnership

MANAGING & MAINTAINING

Co-creating appropriate governance arrangements

Helping partners to work through complex internal & external challenges

Building partner capacities to strengthen and optimise the partnership

Enabling partners to explore new ways of transforming systems



Whatever you call the broker, or where the broker is from – internal or external, it is how the broker (and indeed the partners) manages their complex role is critical to the process.

The core function of the broker is to

work in service of the partnership NOT the interests of any individual partner.



When brokering we...



Strive to meet each partner's individual interests
(may change over time)



Support and reinforce a principled approach to all aspects of the partnership – equity, openness etc



Ensure partners remain engaged throughout



Build equity - shift power

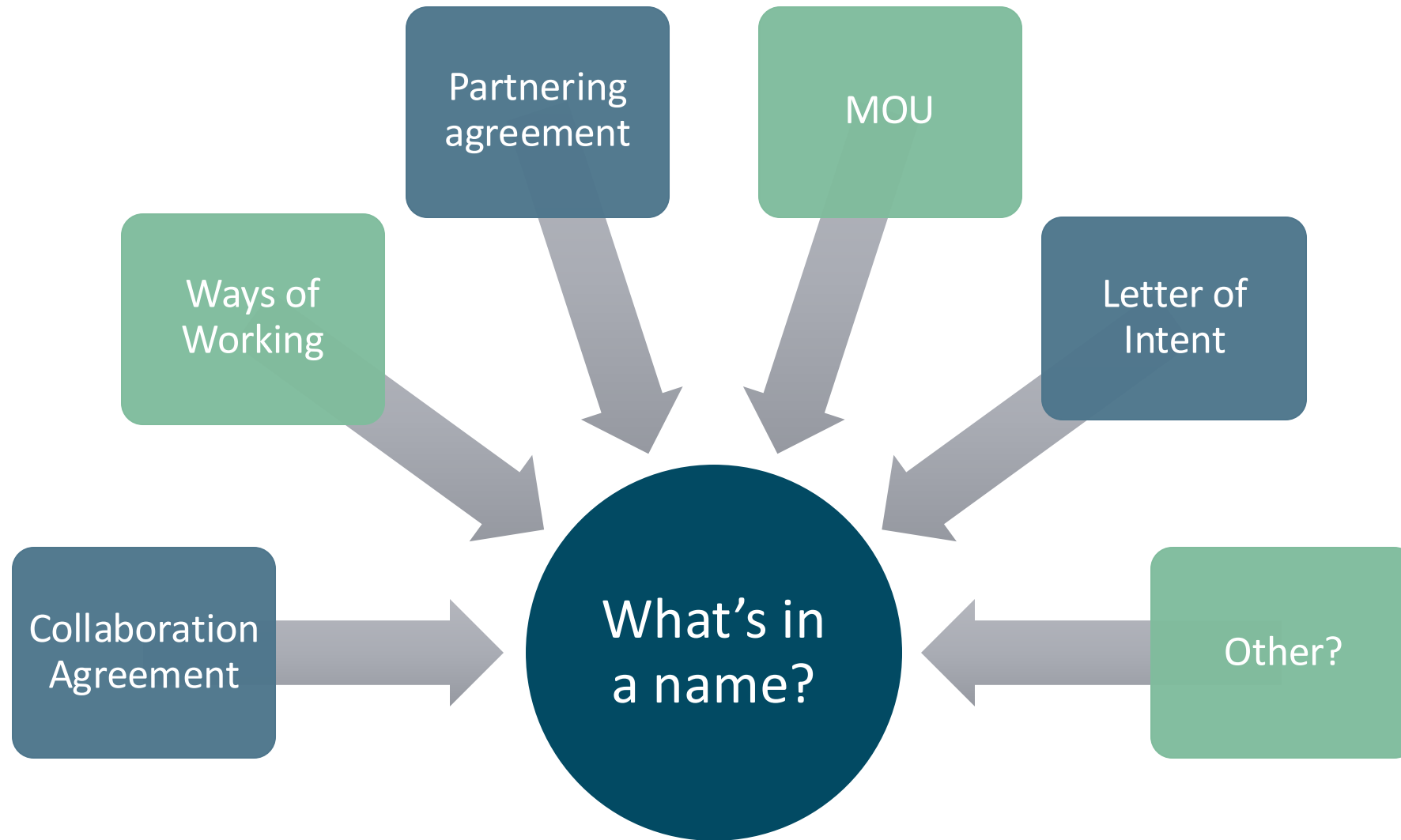


Enable newcomers to integrate fully and creatively
at whatever stage of the cycle they join



Continuously capture the story of the partnership and partners' involvement as it changes over time

4. Documenting Commitments and Ways of Working



Contracts vs. partnering agreements

Contracts

DESIGN is undertaken by lead party

Seek to **TRANSFER RISK** from principal to agent

Obligations generally **DICTATED** by one party

Usually **TIME-SPECIFIC**

Work plan implemented by **ONE PARTY** using their own resources

Collaboration Agreements

DESIGN is undertaken by the group: 'co-created'

Seek to **ALLOCATE RISK** between parties, or to the party most able to manage it

Obligations agreed and **SHARED** between parties

Usually **OPEN-ENDED**

Work plan implemented by **ALL PARTIES** using **POOLED RESOURCES**

- Partnering agreements – establish indicators and agreed questions at the outset
- Regular check in questions during routine events
- Annual health checks



**Processes for
reviewing
partnerships**

5. Reviewing and Revising

The focus of partnering review is **NOT** about the impact of the project or program which can be carried out by standard project *M&E* methodologies.

We are concerned here with **continuous improvement of the partnership:**

- The **added value, efficiency, effectiveness** and **contextual relevance** of the partnership for partners and beneficiaries
- The creation of a **collaborative mindset and skills** – **how the partners work together**
- Identifying and making **improvements in efficiency and effectiveness** of the partnership as it progresses

Partnering processes need to be

- Good enough to get partners moving together along a shared trajectory
- Developmental – allowing for growth
- Regularly reviewed
- **Fit for purpose!** Resist the urge to over do it ...



Partnering Effectively – 15 mins

At your table share your thoughts and write a few words down on:

- How do the concepts of a partnership brokering approach align with your practice?
- What else could your organisations do to support more effective partnering at the different stages of the program cycle.

Be CONCRETE - think processes, systems, capacity relationships

More Information and Resources

Partnership Brokers Association

Associate Directory –international cohort of experienced brokers for mentoring, training, brokering, “advice”

Resource Library

Training and professional development courses – commissioned and public programs

<https://www.partnershipbrokers.org/courses-2/partnership-brokers-training/>

Other Resources

<https://thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-brokering-guidebook/>

<https://thepartneringinitiative.org/publications/toolbook-series/the-partnering-toolbook/>

<https://thepartneringinitiative.org/>

<https://partnershipbrokers.org/>

<https://partnershipbrokers.org/w/issues-archive/>

