



TPI works with organisations to assess and build their *institutional* capability to partner

The delivery of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) requires an unparalleled level of collaborative action between business, government, DFIs, the UN, NGOs and civil society. The types of innovative, systemic and transformational collaboration required go well beyond the typical transactional and contract-based approach organisations are most familiar with. Scaling up partnering will require organisations from all sectors to have the *institutional* competency and readiness to be able to effectively deliver these new forms of collaboration.

As the demands for collaboration grow, most large organisations are finding they are not set up and operating optimally to be able to deliver on the rhetoric. Too many organisations find themselves involved in a whole plethora of 'arrangements, all called 'partnership', some delivering strategic value, many not, some stagnating or completely forgotten since an MoU was signed with much fanfare. Staff are finding it challenging to navigate their internal procedures to set up collaborations in the first place, or finding that partnerships are taking too much of their time

and effort without producing sufficient results to justify their investment.

For organisations to maximise the benefits of collaboration, they need to ensure they understand **how and why partnerships can deliver value** for their organisation and have a **clear strategy** to inform and prioritise engagement, along with the right **leadership commitment** to implement it. They must have sound **systems and procedures** to be able to take partnerships through their lifecycle from initial identification through prospective value assessment, due diligence and sign-off, implementation, monitoring, reviewing and learning, along with **supportive instruments** - both legal and HR. Organisations must have **skilled staff** with the right mindset, relationship and trust-building skills and technical partnering knowledge. And finally, they must be underpinned by a **pro-partnering culture** that is outward-looking and by nature seeks to collaborate wherever value can be created.

**With all these elements in place, an organisation can become institutionally *Fit for Partnering*.**

## Are you Fit for Partnering?

### 1 LEADERSHIP & STRATEGY

- Full partnering strategy, aligned with / integrated into organisational strategy including:
  - Clearly defined vision and rationale for partnering, key potential partners and types of collaboration that will create most value
  - Unique value proposition of the organisation as a partner
- Commitment from Board / Executive Leadership
- Sufficient budget committed
- Strategy and commitment fully communicated across, and accepted by, the organisation

### 2 SYSTEMS & PROCESSES

- Strong external comms including "Partnering with Us" documentation and accessible external liaison personnel
- Partnering policy and clearly defined internal rules, and procedures across full lifecycle of partnerships including:
  - Systematic approach to mapping / identifying potential partnership
  - Cost and value assessment of potential partnerships; due diligence of partners
  - Pro-partnering legal agreements and sign-off procedures
  - Tracking, monitoring, relationship, and knowledge management systems

### 3 SKILLS & SUPPORT

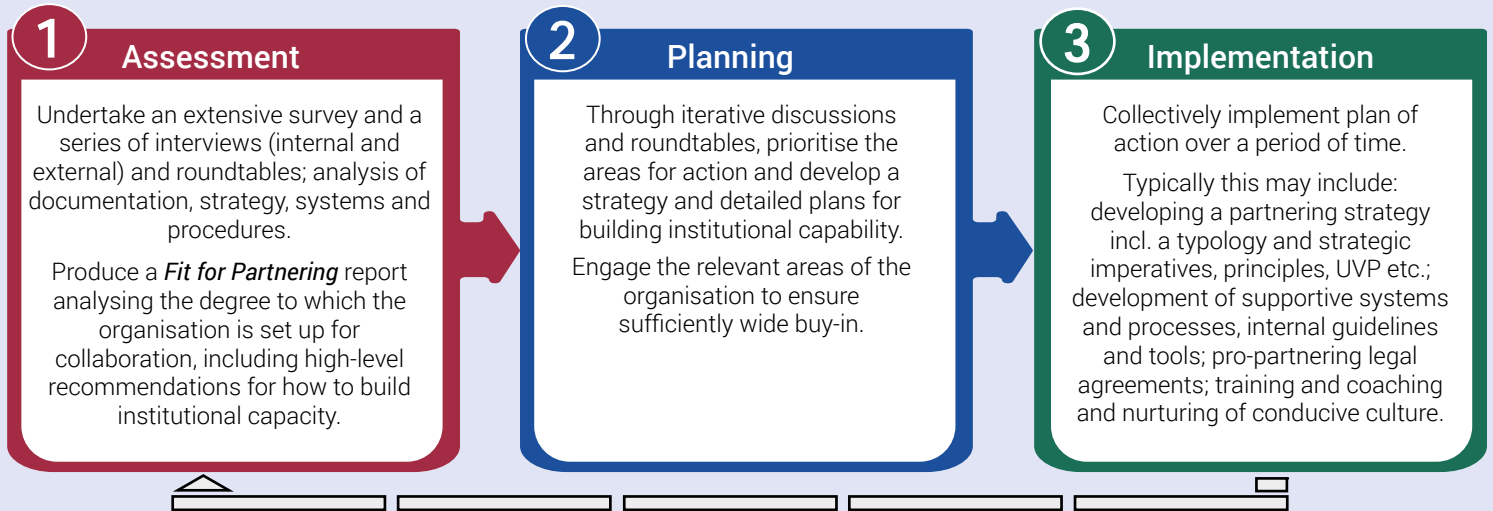
- Staff have sufficient: negotiation and relationship / trust-building skills; understanding of other sectors; partnering mindset; and technical knowledge of effective partnerships (incorporated into HR competency framework)
- Staff have sufficient time allocated and are incentivised e.g. through KPIs
- Tools and guidelines for partnering available
- Direct support available from experienced partnership specialists
- Mechanisms in place to capture and disseminate experiences of partnering (e.g. a community of practice)

### 4 PARTNERING CULTURE

- A humility over what the organisation can achieve alone and an inclination to reach out and collaborate to achieve greater impact
- An creative approach to creating value and finding solutions
- A drive for innovation and the willingness to take (measured) risks
- A commitment to enter into partnerships on the basis of equity, transparency and mutual benefit
- An ability to give up autonomy in decision-making and work for the benefit of the partnership as a whole
- Tenacity, drive and courage

## Typical process

While TPI supports organisations with a range of ad hoc strategy, process and capacity development support, a complete, holistic *Fit for Partnering* process typically includes:



## Examples



TPI wrote WFP's corporate partnering strategy and undertook a full *Fit for Partnering* assessment. Over a period of several years, TPI has worked with WFP helping to develop their tools and guidance for partnering, directly supporting partnerships, building staff capacity (including through training of trainers)



**Pan American Health Organization**

TPI worked with PAHO to support its engagement with companies. It helped PAHO to clarify its case for engagement, recommend the necessary internal financial and personnel structuring and develop a set of processes, due diligence criteria and tools to support its collaboration. It also ran a series of trainings to build PAHO staff's skills in partnering and played a critical role in developing PAHO's Forum for Action on Chronic Disease.



With Unicef wishing to transform from pure fundraising to more strategic collaboration with business, TPI undertook a full assessment of the potential opportunity and of Unicef's *Fitness for Partnering*. TPI's report was the basis for Unicef's private sector engagement strategy, and its recommendations for structuring and building capacity were accepted and implemented. Over many years TPI has continued to work with Unicef on staff capacity building, developing processes, and currently around creating tools for assessing the value of their collaborations.



TPI worked with Counterpart International to think through its approach to working with business. TPI developed Counterpart's corporate engagement policy, along with a complete partner selection and due diligence procedure to allow it to be confident and systematic in its partnering approach.



TPI undertook *Fit for Partnering* assessments for both IFAD and FAO and developed their partnering strategies. Among a range of activities, with IFAD TPI developed approaches to categorise and assess their partnerships and with FAO, TPI developed tools to support M&E and strategic value assessment.