

OECD netFWD peer reviews of multi-stakeholder partnerships

Concept note

1. RATIONALE

Partnerships between governments, foundations, private companies and civil society organisations are being widely promoted as a comprehensive approach to address complex economic, social and environmental challenges, including the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Some foundations have a long history of working with governments and other actors to solve development challenges. For others, multi-stakeholder partnerships are relatively new. In all cases, partnerships are hard to get right. It is vitally important to learn from what has worked and what has not. Yet, knowledge about the quality, practices and impact of partnering initiatives tends to be fragmented, relatively superficial and often not easily accessible to foundations. Existing evaluations of partnerships often focus solely on final results. Other dimensions – such as the efficiency and added value of a partnering approach compared to more conventional single-sector approaches – are less frequently analysed.

Against this background, the **OECD Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD)** offers a safe space and a peer learning tool where foundations can learn and compare their experiences in multi-stakeholder partnerships in a range of policy areas from education to health and youth empowerment. The OECD netFWD believes that sharing experience and good practice through peer reviews is an essential way to improve and mainstream partnering practices and capacities in the philanthropic sector.

The exercise draws on the OECD's unique experience in conducting peer reviews (see Box 1 below), as well as mutual trust and shared confidence among the foundations involved in the OECD netFWD.

Box 1: Peer reviews at the OECD

Peer learning has been a core principle of the OECD since the organisation was created more than 50 years ago. Peer reviews aim to help the country under review improve its policymaking, adopt good practices and comply with established standards and principles. OECD peer reviews cover a wide range of policy areas. See [here](#) examples of OECD peer reviews in the field of economy, development co-operation, regulatory reform and environment.

2. OBJECTIVES AND SCOPE

The OECD netFWD peer review consists in an examination of a foundation's multi-stakeholder partnership in a particular policy area or sector by other foundations working in the same area. For the purpose of the OECD netFWD peer reviews, the term multi-stakeholder partnership is defined as follows: voluntary partnership initiative involving two or more organisations (foundation, government, business, non-profits) that enter into a collaborative arrangement based on (i) shared goals, (ii) shared power and decision making, and (iii) shared or pooling of resources in order to design and carry out a joint project or programme.

The objective of the peer review process is threefold:

- to enable **the foundation under review** to: (i) share its experience and good practice on multi-stakeholder partnership; (ii) learn from other foundations' experience on multi-stakeholder partnership; (iii) receive recommendations on how to improve ongoing partnerships.
- to help **foundations participating in the peer review (i.e. peer reviewers)** to: (i) reflect on the management and delivery of their own multi-stakeholder partnerships; (ii) learn about good practices and standards from other foundations; (iii) learn relevant lessons, avoid common mistakes, save time and money.

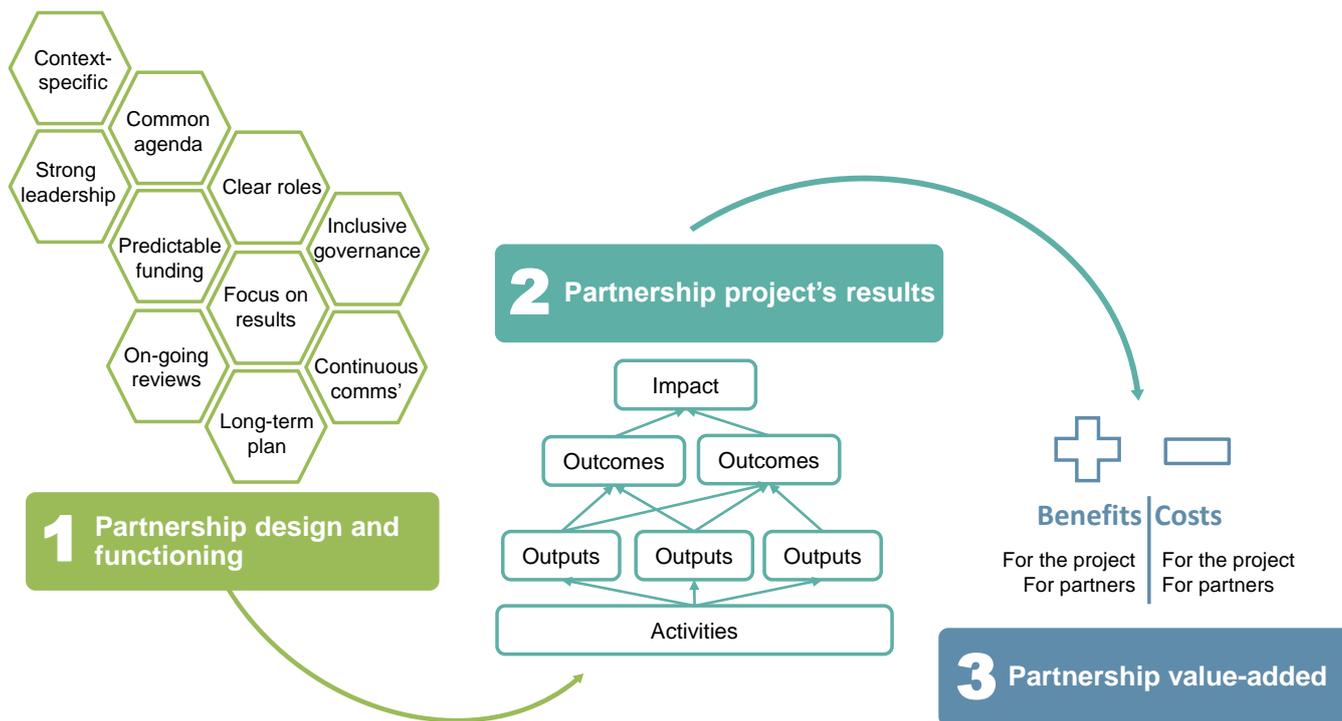
- to build shared knowledge base on effective multi-stakeholder partnerships benefiting **all netFWD members**. The OECD netFWD supports each peer review by providing methodology and analysis, organising meetings and on-site missions and facilitating discussion among participants. The support and guidance provided by the OECD netFWD helps uphold quality standards and maintain continuity as several peer reviews in different policy areas will be carried out in the coming years. The results of those reviews will help build a solid knowledge base on good practice in multi-stakeholder partnerships.

3. METHODOLOGY

The peer review – and resulting recommendations – examine several dimensions of a multi-stakeholder partnership (see the document Analytical Framework):

- Partnership design and functioning:** this part of the peer review analyses how well the partnership has been designed, developed and managed, against ten factors for effective partnerships. Those key success factors have been identified based on existing guidelines and frameworks for effective partnerships, developed by organisations, such as the OECDⁱ, the Partnering Initiativeⁱⁱ or the FSG and its Collective Impact Forumⁱⁱⁱ.
- Partnership project’s results:** this part of the peer review examines whether the project carried out by the partnership has been effective in achieving its development objectives (in specific areas such as education, health, etc.). It also analyses any unintended effects.
- Partnership value-added:** this part of the peer review analyses the balance between costs and benefits to determine whether the partnership approach has delivered value-added – both to the project itself and to individual partner organisations.

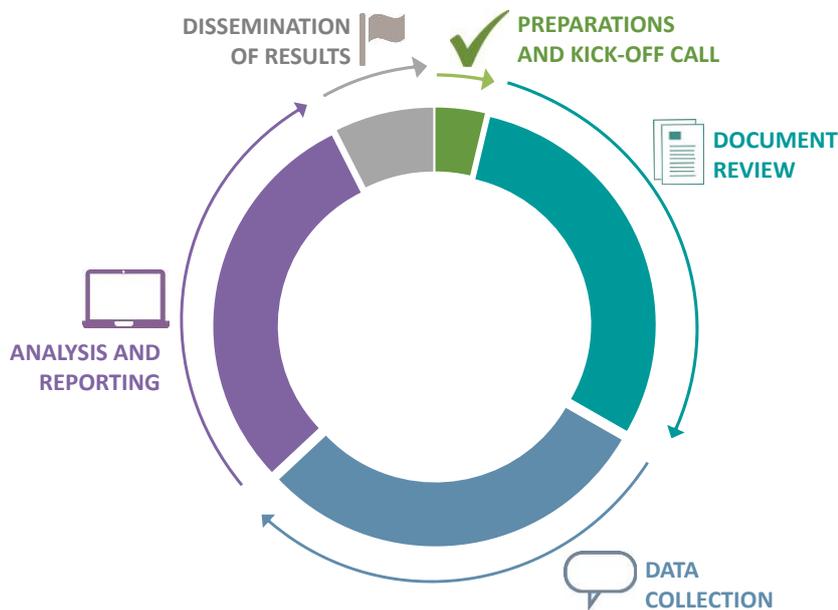
Figure 1: Framework for analysis of a multi-stakeholder partnership



Detailed issues and questions to guide OECD netFWD peer reviews in each of those dimensions are available upon request. This framework and questions are discussed and adapted for each peer review to take into account the specificities of the partnership under review and the needs of the participating foundations. The partnership project’s results can be examined with the conventional methods used by many foundations to evaluate the impact of their projects. Assessment of the partnership design, functioning and value-added demands a specific approach, which is less often employed by foundations and their partners.

4. ORGANISATION OF WORK

The OECD netFWD peer review comprises five main phases over a period of 6-8 months:



Phase 1: Preparations and kick-off call

- The netFWD team identifies foundations interested in participating in the peer review, including a **foundation under review** and **peer reviewers** (i.e. three or four foundations to carry out the review). The netFWD team together with the foundation under review choose **the partnership project** that is going to be examined in the peer review.
- The netFWD team organises a **kick-off call** with all foundations participating in the peer review to discuss and validate the scope, objectives and timeline of the peer review. At this stage, participating foundations also need to agree on a limited number of questions and issues to be examined in the peer review, drawing from the detailed analytical framework provided by the netFWD team (see Annex 1).

Phase 2: Document review

- The netFWD team collects and carries out **preliminary analysis** of the existing data (i.e. partnership agreements, theory of change, implementation plans, monitoring data, existing evaluations, etc.).
- The netFWD team and the foundation under review develop a **detailed approach and data collection plan** (on-site mission and/or survey) to answer the questions identified by the peer reviewers.
- The netFWD team organises a **follow-up call** with the participating foundations to discuss and validate the detailed approach and data collection plan.

Phase 3: Data collection

- The netFWD team, with the support of the foundation under review, organises a three-day **on-site mission** at headquarters and/or in the country where the project carried out by the partnership is implemented. All peer reviewers are expected to participate in the on-site mission. The mission will allow the peer reviewers and netFWD team to meet with selected stakeholders involved in the implementation of the partnership project. The interviews will help better appreciate the partnership's results, functioning and its value-added. At the end of the on-site mission, a debriefing meeting will be organised to share the main insights and lessons learned and identify any potential gaps in the data collection.
- Depending on the number of stakeholders to be reached and the results of the on-site mission, the netFWD team might also design a **survey** and organise **phone interviews** to collect additional data.

Phase 4: Analysis and reporting

- The netFWD team analyses all collected data (quantitative and qualitative data, surveys, and interviews) and formulate the main lessons learned and recommendations.
- A **draft peer review report** is submitted for comments and approval to the peer reviewers and the foundation under review.
- The netFWD team integrates the comments in the document and organises a **follow-up call** to discuss and validate the peer review report.

Phase 5: Dissemination of results

- The netFWD team organises a **dissemination event** where the peer reviewers and the foundation under review can share the main lessons learned with other foundations.

5. FIRST PEER REVIEW IN THE AREA OF QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The first OECD netFWD peer review will focus on multi-stakeholder partnerships in the area of quality education. It will be carried out from September 2017 to March 2018 and involve foundations well known for their cutting-edge work to enhance the quality of education in different parts of the world, including **Ayrton Senna Institute** (Brazil), **Aga Khan Foundation** (Switzerland), **Banorte Foundation** (Mexico), **Fundação Itaú Social** (Brazil) and **Learning Links Foundation** (India).

The peer review will examine the partnership between Fundação Itaú Social, Centro de Estudos e Pesquisas em Educação, Cultura e Ação Comunitária (Cenpec) and the Ministry of Education (MEC), in charge of the programme “Writing the Future”(see the document Writing the Future attached).

Depending on the demand, other peer reviews (in the area of health, youth empowerment, etc.) could be carried out in 2018.

About the OECD netFWD

The OECD Network of Foundations Working for Development (netFWD) is a global network of foundations committed to optimising the impact of philanthropy for development. netFWD spans 5 continents and brings together foundations and associate organisations from over 15 different countries. netFWD’s mission is to support foundations in their efforts to dialogue and partner with governments. Why? We believe that bringing foundations and governments closer together delivers far greater development outcomes. The OECD Development Centre officially launched netFWD in October 2012, recognising the increasing role foundations play in the development arena, the innovative practices emerging from the philanthropic sector and the demand for an effective platform for co-operation and exchange. For more information on netFWD and its members, please see: www.oecd.org/site/netfwd.

The OECD netFWD team remains at your disposal for any further information:

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ⁱ OECD (2015), *Development Co-operation Report 2015 : Making Partnerships Effective Coalitions for Action*, OECD Publishing, Paris. Available here : <http://www.oecd.org/dac/successfactorsforeffectivepost-2015partnerships.htm>

ⁱⁱ Promoting Effective Partnering (PEP) Initiative (2017), *17 Factors for 17 Goals*. Available here: <http://www.effectivepartnering.org/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Kania J. and Kramer M. (2011), “Collective Impact”, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Winter 2011. Available here: https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact