

Creating Partnerships



In collaboration with



A story of collaboration

The partnering resources you are about to look at and hopefully use, have a back story.

In 2015 Weave, (previously The Working Together More Fund) and Trish Hall from Partnership Brokers Association (PBA) recognised collaborating and partnering across organisations required new mindsets, and competencies to achieve results. We collaborated to offer subsidised places for people from the NGO sector to join the Partnership Brokers Training Programme. This intensive professional development is for those who, on behalf of their organisations, are navigating partnering with others: NGOs; government, Iwi Māori, business or civil society.

The **Partnership Brokers Association** is an international professional network of partnering practitioners from diverse sectors and contexts. PBA is committed to building competencies and standard-setting so that those navigating partnering are skilled, principled, and work to the highest standards. We aspire to support multi-stakeholder partnerships so they become truly transformational in their context. In Aotearoa we have practitioners who are Accredited Partnership Brokers, through a PBA process. We also have a community of practice of partnering practitioners who meet regularly to learn from one another.

Over seven years Weave has supported 46 organisations and their people to join the Partnership Brokers training. Strong feedback from these NGOs about their learning and subsequent partnering approaches, has encouraged Weave to build on this collaboration with PBA. In 2020 the Weave turned 10 and for this anniversary gifted small charities an online 3-session partnering workshop which Aotearoa PBA designed and facilitated.

The resources in this Collaboration Hub come from PBA tools, and experiences of Partnership Brokers in Aotearoa.

The collaboration between Weave and Aotearoa PBA continues...

Plan your partnering voyage

The following resources are here for you to begin your partnering.

These come from years of experiences supporting partnerships to be effective informed by the [Partnership Brokers Association](#).

Refer to the Partnership Brokers Association link when you use any of these resources. Find many more [resources](#) on the PBA website.

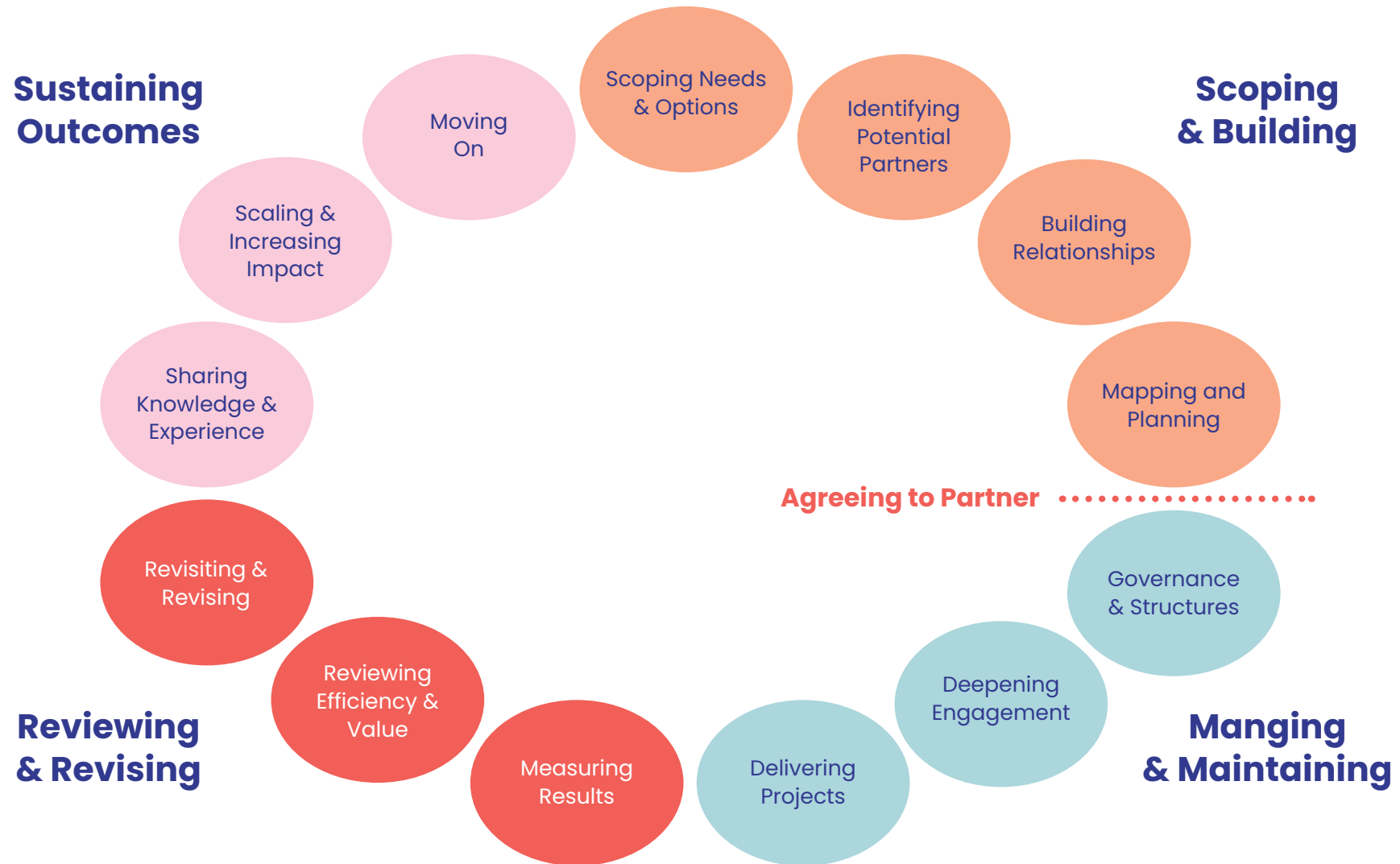
The partnering cycle

The partnering cycle

These are the phases and steps that commonly happen in partnerships – but they are never as tidy as this. Every partnership is different depending on its context, history of relationships, its culture and its focus. Each step in the process of partnering needs to respond to the particular interests and needs of partners. The emphasis is on co-designing the process steps that work for partners. Its likely that a partnership will circle back to one of the steps it decides needs more attention.

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

The partnering cycle



The partnering cycle – it's dynamic

Remember this is a dynamic process:

Every partnership is different in its context, history and culture.

This cycle gives you a broad sense of steps to take – but the steps are never as ordered or tidy as this. It's likely you will circle back to earlier steps to deepen and improve your partnering.

When the time is right, review what the partnership is achieving and how it's working, then go back and deepen relationships, adapt the scope and agreements.

Partnership: A definition

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

Definition: The Oxford Dictionary

Does your organisation have a definition for partnerships?

If so, what is it?

If not, does it need one? What would it be?

Effective partnerships have:

- Shared understanding of the word partnership and a willingness to share risks and benefits
- A shared purpose as well as recognition for each partner's interests in partnering
- A values-based principled approach to their relationships
- Attention to partnering processes
- Co-created design, solutions, shared decision-making and partnership leadership
- Contribute resources and commit to shared accountability

These take work and time – begin with courage.

Why do we want to partner with others?

Discuss your range of 'whys'. Reasons might include your version of these plus others:

- We don't have the skill or experience to alone solve big, complex issues.
We want to bring what we do best to a solution with others.
- Access to more resources (expertise, knowledge, skills, networks as well as money).
- To have greater reach, scale or impacts.
- Aspire to have stronger credibility.
- Build our reputation.
- Others have expectations of us and our work.

What are our risks or concerns in partnering?

Examples:

- It will take time to build relationships and get action.
- We will lose some control and autonomy on the partnership's work.
- Reputational risk – if the partnership isn't effective.
- Differing systems, priorities, agendas and timetables of partners.
- Turnover of key players and subsequent loss of momentum.
- We have strong preferences in how we work with issues, we might have to do things differently.

What other risks or concerns does your organisation have about partnering?

What could be a broad, compelling goal of the partnership?

- What is a compelling goal you hope will be a focus for partnering?
- Why is this of interest to your organisation?
- Who else might also have an interest in this focus?

Tip: Go to potential partners with openness on what and how, rather than a fixed outcome you want them to join. Together partners can co-create the shared vision and outcome.

Building relationships with potential partners

Do your homework

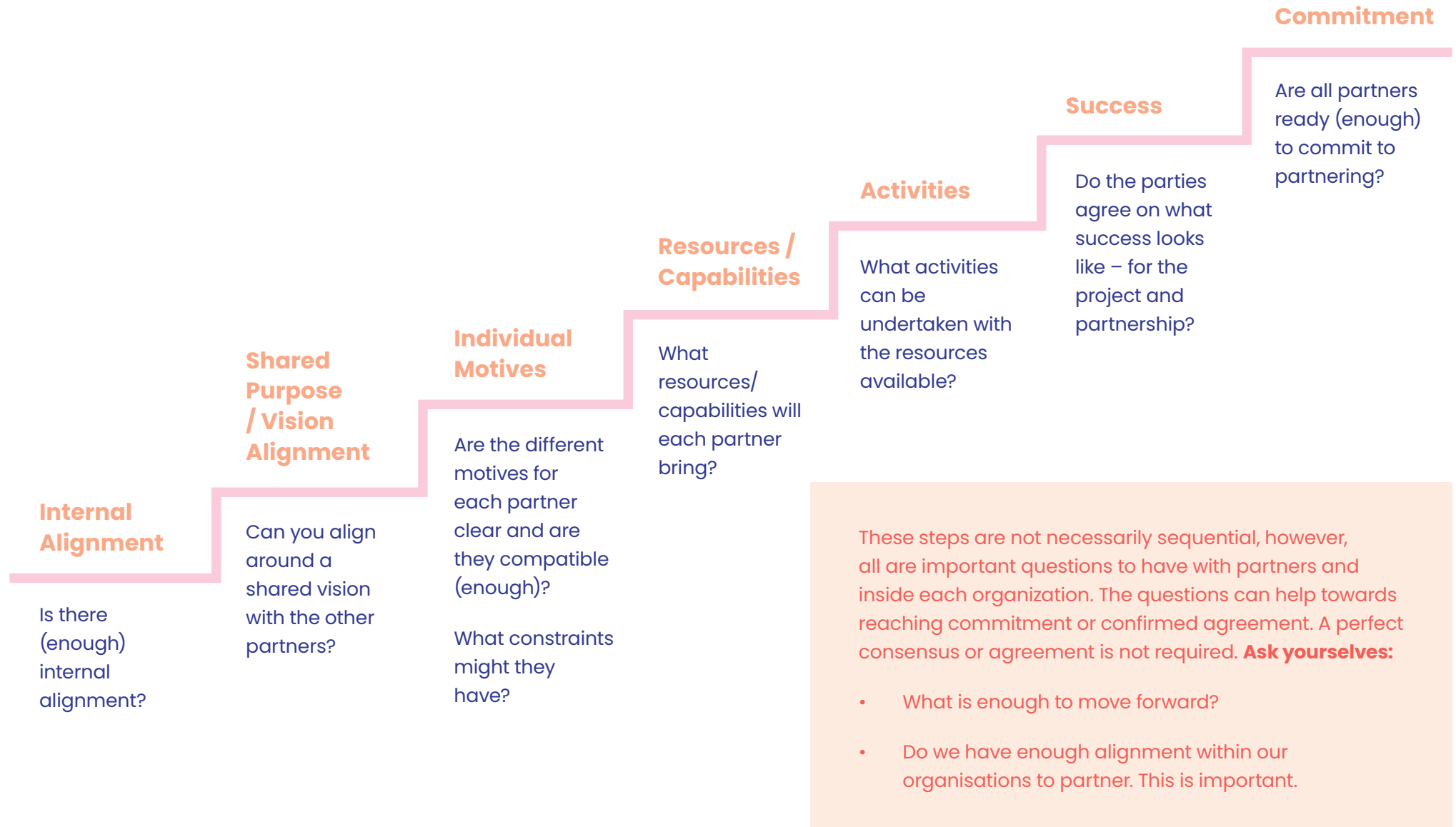
- Understand the potential partners' values, context and what is important to them.
Research potential partners online, though keep an open-mind as not all will be accurate or up to date.
- Have informal get togethers or invite partners to visit your organisation.
- Build connections both personally and between the organisations.
- Be curious about 'them'. Notice your assumptions and be open to having these challenged.
- Test out the ideas from your preparation with them, when the time is right.
- Look to longer term relationships rather than a short-term request.

Iwi Māori relationships and partnering

Here is a selection of valuable resources that will guide your organisation's relationships and partnering with hapū, iwi, Māori:

- Ngā Rerenga o Te Tiriti, [here](#) provides guidance, inspiration and questions for organisations engaging with Te Tiriti and Iwi Māori. It includes examples of organisations' insights on their experiences.
- The 5 Wai's (not why's) of [Māori Engagement](#). Atawhai Tibble (Tokorangi, Halcombe, Ngāti Porou) wrote these tips and questions for his public sector colleagues. He has gone on to present and develop these for organisations.
- Inspiring Communities' resource can be found [here](#). This draws on and summarises the above 2 resources, and adds principles of engaging from guidance given to government agencies.
- See the guidance to [Crown agencies in building relationships](#)
- Philanthropy New Zealand's [resource](#), Ki Te Hoe, is for both funders and community organisations supporting Māori aspirations.

Seven steps to reaching agreement



Contributions and resources

Together think broadly about what contributions each partner brings: tangible and intangible – for example mana.

It is easy to make assumptions about what partners can bring. Check your assumptions, and ask partners what they see as your organisation's potential contributions.

Look at [The Partnering Toolbook](#) particularly page 14, for a way you can map out the contributions each partner brings.

Managing and maintaining the partnership

Questions for managing and maintaining the partnership

- What are the appropriate governance arrangements for us?
- Are partners able to bring their resource contributions? What will help?
- How can we support one another to build buy-in and navigate barriers?
- How does each partner see the simple and complex challenges?
- Are we being courageous in our planning and doing?
- How do we build partnering capacity – individually and in our organisations?
- Are we giving attention to both the **what** and the **how** of our partnering?
- To whom and how will we communicate about our partnership?

Reviewing and revising the partnership

Do regular 'health checks' with the partnership

Co-create how partners will review both how you are working as partners and what the partnerships projects are creating.

Remember:

- Partners know the partnership best and so a review or health check is best designed by them with their full and frank participation.
- Create opportunities for new ideas and 'stepping up'. You may go back to earlier steps in the partnering to redesign and improve.
- Explore what added value partners are experiencing and the unexpected benefits or costs.

**More partnering resources
and opportunities to
strengthen skills**

Partnering resources – more ideas and support

- **The Partnering Toolbook** is a useful, practical guide to getting partnerships started and working well. Tons of tools, ways to approach challenges and tips.
- Look at the critical part played by **brokers** or **navigators** in partnerships. They are guides, process managers, and behind-the-scenes leaders who can enhance the effectiveness of partnering. Who is doing these roles in your partnership?
- **Talking the Walk** is a communications manual for partnership practitioners to enable them to develop techniques to improve the partners' communications – both inside, and beyond, the partnership.
- **Inspiring Communities** has a rich collection of resources, tips, and stories especially for those organisations who are place-based and community-led or want to be. Take a look through the range of offerings.

These resources can be downloaded for free.

Strengthen your capabilities for partnering

Here are some options to strengthen your skills, mindsets and tools for partnering:

In Aotearoa the [Partnership Brokers Association](#) offers regular training opportunities for those who are supporting partnerships to build, develop and evolve. Programmes are for an open, cross-sector group of participants, or can be commissioned and tailored for your organisation and partners. For the latest in-person and online opportunities in Aotearoa email: training@partnershipbrokers.org

If you are [Brokering Partnerships Remotely](#) – that is partnering mostly online and at a distance – then you will find this online certificate course in the Oceania and SE Asia time zone useful.

You may learn best on-the-job or you may be in a challenging partnering situation, then [1-2-1 Professional Support](#) for your practice can be an immediate way to get support and build your capabilities. You can choose a Practice Partner to work with and the number of sessions with them.

Once you have foundational skills and experience, you could become an Accredited Partnership Broker. The Partnership Brokers Association's [accreditation process](#) is unique.

If placed-based, community-led collaboration is where you want to develop then see [Inspiring Communities](#) for their range of training and coaching.



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