Partnership Enhancement Tool

The Partnership Enhancement Tool provides a **framework of analysis** of a partnership. It can be used as a partnership health check, or as the basis for a facilitated review among partners. Good feedback sessions are often lively and vigorous and can involve both acknowledgement and celebration of success *as well as* exploration of disagreements or challenging issues. The latter types of feedback sessions may sometimes feel difficult, but they can be all the more rewarding since they are more likely to lead to constructive changes and stronger partnerships.

For partner feedback sessions to be both generative and effective, it is recommended to follow through a seven-step model:

1) Determine a methodology for approaching the results. For example, do partners want to look first at the aspects where the partnership shows strength, or at those showing the greatest divergence of opinion? Or perhaps those where there is consensus on the need for change?

2) Using this Partnership Enhancement Tool, jointly talk through each partnering aspect and the positive experiences or the challenges partners may have around it according to the agreed methodology

3) Aim to fully understand your cross-organizational perspectives or other sources of diversity

4) Talk through how this aspect of partnering could be either further enhanced or meaningfully improved to the satisfaction of all partners

5) Determine what actions should be continued/undertaken and prioritized

6) Make sure action gets implemented

7) Have a follow-up to review whether the partnership has achieved its desired enhancement or improvement

This tool **highlights common issues** that might arise around various aspects of partnering, **lists useful potential questions** around those aspects and **suggests possible actions points** partners may choose to take. Partners can put this tool on the table when they engage in partnering feedback sessions, working directly from its recommendations to guide them.

PHASE / Element	Examples of Common Issues	Useful Potential Questions	Possible Action Points
SET UP AND OPERATIONS			
Representation Appropriate representation is provided when each relevant stakeholder organization is actively present and participating in the partnership – with the person participating having sufficient authority to both represent and make decisions for her/his organization *and* also having appropriate competencies (knowledge, skills, experience) to engage in active discussion around the topic of food fortification. Appropriate representation is also about representatives from the different organizations having regular enough contact with each other to allow relationships to be built between partners. In addition, the role of representative can be shared by more than one individual from each partner organization.	• Relevant stakeholder organizations are not present or their views are not represented well • Representation is delegated to someone lacking sufficient authority to represent her/his organization • Relevant representative lacks sufficient competencies (knowledge, skills, experience) to engage in active discussions • Representatives do not have enough regular contact between meetings to allow relationships to be built between partners. • Representatives keep changing and are ill-informed about the partnership	• How can our representative(s) better serve the partnership? • How can we make better use of the people, organizations and skills that we have? • What additional people, organizations or skills do we need? • How can we find these skills, people or organizations? • Who else might be asked to represent the partner organization (perhaps for a specific purpose, role or task)?	• Conduct an (external) assessment of the organizations that should be participating in the partnership • Invite additional representatives to join for specific tasks where they have competencies • Nominate one main representative from each organization who can ensure consistency • Build deeper engagement from each partner organization by involving a range of other people • Develop better 'hand-over' procedures to help ensure continuity.

Sufficiency of resources If resources collectively contributed to the partnership are sufficient, the partnership will be well equipped to address the tasks at hand and implement the work that has been agreed on.	The partnership has insufficient access to: • General skills, e.g. communication and • organizational skills • Technical skills • Partnering and other relevant experience • Important information / knowledge • Important networks or spheres of influence • Facilities, e.g. office & meeting space, equipment • Logistics, e.g. transport, distribution, etc. • Financial contributions • Other resources The partnership has ineffective ways of accessing the resources available	• Are the resources we have in place sufficient for what we want to achieve? • What do we need to improve our resource base? • What more could we provide between us? • What would improve our collective performance if we had (more) access to it? • Can we mobilize any missing resources without needing more money? • Who is best placed to lead on mobilizing new resources? • How can we improve the way we resource our partnership or project?	• Conduct a 'resource mapping' exercise: Assess openly together what resources are needed, which of those are present - and what is lacking • Brainstorm possible ways of mobilizing resources from within the partnership and then from external sources • For greater technical expertise: invite a technical expert from the outside • For more funds: apply for additional grants • Build partnering experience by arranging a workshop with a partnership expert
Roles & responsibilities If roles and responsibilities are clearly defined and well distributed, then the partnership is making optimal use of each partner's unique skills, perspectives and resources, and partners understand and accept the rationale for the division of labour between the partners and deliver accordingly.	• Roles and responsibilities are not clearly defined • Roles and responsibilities do not clearly state deliverables and timeframes • The distribution of roles and responsibilities does not make effective use of partners' perspectives, skills, experience and resources. • Changes to roles and responsibilities are not made when necessary or are made arbitrarily or without consensus	• In what areas are we unclear about who is doing what? • Do current people/organizations deliver on their tasks well and on time? • Could we make any changes to the distribution of roles, tasks and responsibilities that would improve how we deliver? • Does anyone feel that their role in the partnership needs to change? Why? How can this role be better assigned? • When tasks are decided and distributed, how can we ensure that they are given to the people/organizations with the appropriate knowledge, skills and resources, or access to them?	**Step 1** - Specify: • What roles and responsibilities are needed? • How do you define them? **Step 2** - Conduct a Current State Analysis: • What roles and responsibilities currently exist? • How are they defined? • How are they distributed? • How are they fulfilled? Effectively? Ineffectively? **Step 3** – Do a SWOT analysis to define the **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats of the current distribution of roles & responsibilities **Step 4** – Based on those insights, assess together what to improve - and how to do that
Decision-making If there is a sound decision-making process established in a partnership, this will be	• The process for making decisions is not inclusive • The process for making decisions is (often) not built on consensus	• What is obstructive about the way we currently make decisions? • Does the current way we make decisions	• Conduct a Current State Analysis of your current decision-making process (using the questions on the left): How is it

reflected through inclusiveness of the decision making process for areas of strategic importance: All voices will have been heard before decisions are taken. Decisions are based as often as possible on the consent of at least the majority of all partners. Decisions taken result in a collective sense of positive momentum and progress. (Partners however can be empowered to make decisions within their assigned areas of responsibility.)	• The process for making decisions is not clear and transparent • The process for making decisions is not effective	exclude the opinions or consensus of some people? • Are the right people involved in all the relevant decision-making processes? • How could we make decisions more inclusively? More transparently? More effectively? • What would need to change to make this happen?	undertaken? • Examine decision making processes in other partnerships • Establish a sound, improved process for decision-making - based on hearing all voices, being responsive to concerns, and ensuring decisions taken are backed up by consent from at least the majority of partners
Leadership If a partnership has sound leadership, this will manifest itself in one (or several) individual(s) articulating well the partnership's goal, providing strategic guidance, motivating and inspiring all participating parties towards good partnering and high achievement, and empowering and enabling all participating parties towards full involvement and effective delivery. Good leaders will also encourage sufficient dialogue and will manage differences of opinion well.	• Goals are not well enough articulated • More strategic guidance is needed • Partners need to be more motivated and inspired towards the common goal • Partners need to feel more empowered and enabled • There is insufficient dialogue • Differences of opinion are not managed effectively • The common purpose is not articulated strongly enough externally • There is a lack of confidence in the way the partnership is being led	• What leadership roles are currently being provided? • What is good about that? • What seems to be lacking? • What could be improved? How? • What type of leadership is needed – now and in the future? • What leadership roles need to be strengthened or modified accordingly? • Do different people need to assume the leadership role or aspects of it? • Who could be best placed to perform those roles?	• Read through the questions on the left and explore those together • Establish what type of leadership is needed at this point in time and in the future • Address emerging issues openly with each other, with a view to serving the needs of the partnership • Plan and implement improvements • Think about (some of you) participating in an external leadership training • Think about engaging a leadership coach or mentor to your partnership
Meeting processes If a partnership has a good meeting process established for all partner meetings, partners can give input to agendas and meeting logistics and meetings will be timely and effective, with a well-prepared agenda and a sense of structure and pace. Additionally, good partnership meetings are chaired to encourage participation from all partners and reinforce a sense of equity in that all partners have the opportunity to contribute to the meeting proceedings.	• Meetings are not happening with appropriate frequency • The setting of agendas and arrangement of meeting logistics exclude some partners, thus preventing full participation and ownership • Meetings are not structured enough with a relevant and focused agenda • Meetings are not managed in an efficient way • Meetings are not managed in a fair, inclusive way • Meetings are not documented appropriately/clearly • Meeting minutes are not circulated appropriately • Meetings are not followed up by action (next steps with timelines and reviewed delivery) • The way the partnership secretariat is functioning	• What works well in our meeting process? • In what ways could we improve the way we run meetings? • How could we make sure that we are making good use of people's time when they come to meetings? • How could agenda setting be more inclusive and effective to better serve the meetings? • How could record keeping be more effective to better serve our purpose?	• Document your current meeting processes : • How do you run your meetings? • How do you agree your deliverables? Then look at : • What works well in your meeting process? • What could be improved? How? Test your improvement suggestions in your next meetings, sticking to what you have agreed and asking one person in the room to observe whether you are all doing that and to remind you in case you fall back into 'old habits' If helpful, ask a professional external facilitator to come in, observe your meeting

	interferes with a sense of balance in the partnership		process and recommend improvements Such a facilitator can also run one or two meetings for you, for you to learn from her/his example about good process
Work processes If partners have established good work processes for their partnership, this will manifest itself in a clear mutual understanding of deliverables, accountabilities and timeframes, timely contributions from all relevant parties and effective joint documentation and delivery. Partners also regularly review their work processes and the potential optimization of those with each other.	• Deliverables and timeframes are unclear • Individuals don't show accountability for their deliverables: they under deliver or deliver late • Process for managing grievances is ineffective • Process for receiving/distributing funding is ineffective • Communication and documentation process is ineffective (please also see issues under 'Communication') • Monitoring and Reporting process is ineffective • Process for reviewing work practices among partners is ineffective	• What works well in our processes? • Where do we have delays or inefficiencies? Where do we get 'stuck'? • What could be improved? How? • How can we help each other do this?	• Document your current work processes: • What are they? • Process flow charts can be helpful (you can find easy examples on the Internet) • *How* do people contribute to their deliverables? • Look at the questions to the left and explore those together, potentially writing up a SWOT to define the **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats of your current work processes • Based on insights gained, decide on improvements and implement those • Review your work processes and their potential optimization with each other regularly, at least once a year
RELATIONSHIP AMONG PARTNERS			
Equity If there is equity / a good balance of power in a partnership, partners will most probably experience that partners value each other for the contribution that each organization makes to the partnership, understanding that each party is needed for the partnership to achieve their objectives. There will be a sense of mutual respect, despite potential divergences in terms of size or the resources and/or influence each partner brings to the table. The balance of power does not feel uncomfortable.	• Sectoral stereotypes are preventing effective collaboration • Cultural behaviours are preventing effective collaboration • Past issues are affecting the dynamics in the present • The imbalance in power makes some partners feel that their perspective is not respected or accepted as valid and important • The imbalance in power affects the way partners contribute	• Are there partners who sometimes feel that their perspective is not considered valid? That they are in a 'less than equal' position? • What makes them feel this way? • What would equity / a good balance of power look like in your partnership? Can you paint the picture with each other? • What would need to change for a better balance of power? • What can you do together to change the current situation? • How can you get there from where you are now? Next steps? Help needed?	If it is difficult to have that conversation, bring in a competent external facilitator to help each partner • feel heard and understood • voice their views and opinions in a safe, non-threatening environment • make sure differences of opinion are fully explored and resolved If necessary, a competent external facilitator can work independently with relevant parties to make sure each organization develops its own sense of authority
Communication and Transparency When communication works well from the outset, all participants concerned understand what they are doing and why, have timely access to all important and relevant	• There is a lack of clarity around joint objectives at the start of the process, and beyond • There is a lack of clarity around roles, responsibilities, deliverables and timeframes	• In what areas do any of us lack clarity? • What aspects of our communication could we improve? How? • What aspects of our documentation could we	• Document the process of how communication happens, is documented and gets circulated (e.g. in a process flow chart – examples can be found on the

		improve? How?	Internet)
information, communication is documented and records are circulated to all. Partners feel comfortable having open conversations about all aspects and issues concerning both the partnership *and* joint project delivery. All partners can contribute and be asked/consulted by partners for their opinion. Partners feel able to talk to each other about both their individual and shared partnership goals/drivers and about the quality of their collaboration. Partners are able to discuss together their concerns, assumptions and constraints.	• There is no agreed process for how people will communicate • Communication (emails, telephone contact, meetings, documentation) is not frequent enough • Communication is not timely • Communication is not inclusive • Communication is not transparent • Communication is not documented • Information is not accessible • Communication is ineffective • Documentation is not well enough prepared • Documentation is not timely • Documentation is not accessible or not distributed sufficiently well • Documentation does not support partners in making decisions • Communication about difficult subjects does not happen • Communication about the quality of co-operation does not happen • Partners are not transparent about their assumptions, goals, needs, drivers and constraints • Partners do not seem to understand each other • Partners do not communicate positively about the partnership externally	• What assumptions are we each making about timeframes, other partner's needs and expectations, project/initiative ownership, resource contribution, etc.? • Have we each communicated our needs, pressures and expectations clearly enough for other partners to understand? • Do we have a clear understanding of the other partner organizations' needs, pressures/ constraints and expectations? • Have we communicated what each of our organizations need from the other partners to successfully continue in this partnership?	• Conduct a SWOT analysis, identifying **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats of your current communication and documentation process • Look at what already works well with that and what could be improved • Explore what is currently not being said or communicated – and what risks might arise from that • If talking openly to each other feels difficult, agree to call in a professional external facilitator • Put improvements into action and follow up with a review after six months
Trust & teamwork If partners have a good basis of trust and teamwork, there is a sense of sufficient responsiveness, flexibility and support. Partners can rely on each other to complete mutually assigned tasks well and on time, helping each other out as and when needed. Partners can also talk to each other openly when problems arise over difficult issues. There will be a sense that partners have a consideration for each other's interests and will be willing to change what they do if necessary, to help meet each other's individual goals.	• There is a lack of trust in the partnership - relationships do not feel good • There are no attempts made to build trust in the partnership • Partners do not consider each other's points of view • Partners do not consider each other's interests Partners are uncertain of each other's motivations • Partners cannot rely on each other to complete agreed tasks • Partners do not offer to help each other when there is a problem • Partners do not feel part of a team	Trust: • Do we feel we trust each other? Why? Why not? • What would trust between us look and feel like? Can we describe it to each other? • What would help us trust more? • How can we get there from where we are now? What can we do together to change the current situation? Teamwork: • Do we feel we work well as a team? Why? Why	• Look at the questions on the left together and talk those through • Conduct trust-building exercises • Conduct team-building exercises • Explore everybody's team role (e.g. Belbin – www.belbin.com) • If having these conversations feels too difficult, an external facilitator can assist you with any of the above - or work in pairs with particular parties that might have difficulties with each other

	• Partners do not help each other get value from the cooperation • Partners do not solve problems together • There are sectoral barriers that get in the way of partners working well together	not? • What would good teamwork look like? (Paint the picture) • How can we get there from where we are now? What can we do together to change the current situation? • Can we be more responsive to each other's needs? How?	
Commitment If all participating parties are fully committed to the partnership, partners may experience this commitment in practice through good contribution of resources, regular and active presence at meetings, and active contribution to the workload, finishing tasks well and on time. Commitment generally expresses itself as an attitude of caring about both the project *and* the partnership, and of wanting to do everything possible and necessary to contribute to the success of either.	• There is a lack of commitment by some or all partners • Partners do not attend meetings • Partners do not contribute at meetings • Partners do not contribute to drafting of documents or do not contribute on time • Partners fail to deliver on their responsibilities • Partners do not seem to have the support of their organizations	• How is a lack of commitment currently manifesting? • What are the reasons behind this lack of commitment or types of behavior? • How do partners currently feel about the partnership? • Do they feel that they can reach their individual goals? • What would have to change in the partnership for them to feel more engaged and committed? • Is that realistic? • How can we make that happen?	• Explore the questions on the left together • Identify the causes of potentials problems and attempt to resolve them • If several partners are lacking commitment to the partnership, you may want to go back to the 'Start' position and discuss mutual values, needs and expectations of the partnership • Facilitate a workshop to re-engage the partnership. You may want to ask in an external facilitator to assist you with this
ADDED VALUE & PARTNERSHIP SUSTAINABILITY			
Added value to sustainable development If all partners experience that their partnership provides added value to sustainable development, they experience that they are achieving together what none of them could have done alone – having a real impact on stakeholders, society, public policy	• Partners do not feel that they are achieving more as a collective than they would do alone • Key players / stakeholders are not engaged • The partnership is not managing to implement a project/initiative through a timely and coordinated approach • The partnership is not managing to avoid duplication of effort and resources • The partnership is not managing to create an appropriate and effective solution to malnutrition • The partnership is not managing to achieve additional reach or scale • The partnership is not managing to build greater commitment to the issue of malnutrition • The partnership is not managing to improve understanding and access between organizations (breaking down barriers)	• What is the value of working together to achieve our goals? • Is our partnership 'fit for its purpose'? • How could we engage key stakeholders differently? • How could we achieve our goals differently? • How could we better reach and include marginalized groups? • How could we create better/more effective solutions to malnutrition?	• Conduct an analysis of the value of the partnership - e.g. a SWOT analysis, defining **S**trengths and **W**eaknesses, **O**pportunities and **T**hreats of your current approach • To decide on improvement, look particularly at the questions on the left and explore those together • Talk through: What could be improved? How could that be done? • Set action points and follow through on them • Have a review after six months to see whether there has been improvement • If helpful, engage an external consultant to review the partnership's value creation process with you

Added value to partner organizations If all participating parties in a partnership experience contentment and value to their own organization, this might express itself as partners seeing both the goals of the partnership *and* their individual organizational goals fulfilled. Partners are likely to experience a clear benefit from participating in the partnership, such as increased own institutional learning, cross-sector support, network relationships, and/or reputation gain.	• Partners are dissatisfied with aspects of the partnership set-up and operations • Partners are not satisfied with their role in the partnership • Partners are dissatisfied with the relationships in the partnership • Partners do not feel that their own needs are being met • The effort and contributions required for participation outweigh the benefits received - there is little or no demonstrable added value from working together • Achieving the partnership objectives involves compromising on individual organizational goals.	• Do we understand each other's individual organizational needs? • Do we each feel our individual organizational goals are being met? • Do we feel we are each benefiting from the partnership? • What partnering elements are partners not satisfied with? • What organizational benefit would each partner need to experience? What would that look like? Paint the picture with each other • What needs to change to bring about satisfaction or contentment? • Can we work towards that together? How?	• Use this monitoring process to review how each partner is feeling about their involvement in the partnership • Using the questions on the left, identify the particular elements individual partners are not satisfied with • Talk about what is possible to change – and how that can be done • As a partnership, commit again to your joint partnership goals, your individual goals and your sustainable development goals
Partnership Sustainability If a partnership is sustainable, this might be based on partners experiencing that both the partnership *and* the joint project are implemented well and that they meet both the overall partnership goals and their individual organizational goals, thus providing both societal and organizational benefit and value. This then leads to a willingness to continue working together and to continue contributing resources to the partnership for as long as the partnership is necessary to develop or deliver sustainable development projects. Please note: Partnerships should not be sustained for their own sake, but only as long as they are needed.	• There is a lack of commitment from a critical mass of partners • The plans for achieving the partnership's goals are inadequate • The implementation of the partnership's plans is inadequate • There are insufficient resources to implement the partners' plans or contributions from each organization are not sustainable • The relationships between partners are weak • Partner organizations are not individually getting value from involvement • The work of the partnership is not supported internally by partner organizations outside of the representative at the table - the work of the partnership is not being embedded into the practices of participating partners • The work of the partnership sits outside the core business of some of the partners. • The partnership no longer has a function	• How do we feel the project is progressing? Is our partnership still needed to fulfill its purpose? • How do individual partners experience the partnership and their role in it – do they perceive it as sustainable? • What particular aspects of this partnership and project might we want to sustain? • Are our plans for achieving the partnership's goals adequate? • Is our implementation of plans adequate? • For the future, what would the partnership need to look like for us to perceive it worthy to sustain? Paint the picture with each other	• Look at the questions on the left and explore those together • Discuss whether the partnership is still needed from a sustainable development perspective • Discuss whether there are any issues that might affect whether partners continue their involvement • Talk through with each other how individual organizational goals could be met better, for partners to feel that they benefit also individually • Discuss what might happen after the end of the project – and what continuity you might want to create