

## Creating a Partnership Memorandum of Understanding

A memorandum of understanding (MOU) serves to capture the spirit of a partnership and focuses on ways to accomplish the common mission and outcomes of partners. MOUs give guidance to partners in good times and bad, and serve the higher purpose of reminding everyone that the partnership was founded on trust, collaboration and cooperation in the service of a greater good.

MOUs can be as informal as an explicit conversation and a handshake or as prescribed as a legal and binding contract between partners. Whatever form your MOU takes, vet your MOU against the following criteria to ensure your partnership has included all it needs to withstand challenges that arise.

Governance of the Partnership		
Yes/No	Does your MOU have....	Notes
	Partner eligibility clearly defined?	
	Roles within the partnership plainly articulated, especially in regards to overlapping technical expertise?	
	Responsibilities of partners explicitly outlined?	
	Organizational structure clearly defined?	
	Decision making processes defined?	
	Responsibilities of partners explicitly outlined?	

Management of the Partnership		
Yes/No	Does your MOU address....	Notes
	How the senior leadership (individual or team) will be selected?	
	Job description and expectations for this leadership?	
	Clear responsibilities for leadership to deliver and be held accountable for by partners?	

Determining Mission and Vision		
Yes/No	Does your MOU include....	Notes
	How the partnership's long-term vision will be determined and by whom?	
	How a collaborative strategy will be created to realize that long-term vision and by whom?	
	How long-term decisions having impact on the entire partnership will be decided and by whom?	

Principles of the Partnership		
Yes/No	Does your MOU speak to....	Notes
	Developing an agreed upon code of ethics for the partnership?	
	What the consequences of violating that code of ethics could mean for partners?	

Work Allocation for Partners		
Yes/No	Does your MOU reflect....	Notes
	An agreed upon process for apportioning work among partners to ensure equity, transparency and maximum partnership impact?	

Partnership Communication		
Yes/No	Does your MOU ensure....	Notes
	That key partnership meetings are scheduled regularly with clear expectations of attendance and participation?	
	The consequences of not attending or supporting the attendance of key partnership meetings?	
	That communication expectations and strategies with donors and stakeholders and among partner organizations are clearly articulated?	

Monitoring and Evaluating Partnership Performance		
Yes/No	Does your MOU indicate....	Notes
	The process for monitoring and evaluating the partnership's performance?	
	The measures of success for the partnership?	
	Who will be doing the monitoring?	
	What the procedure will be for addressing any performance issues that arise?	

Handling Authorship, Intellectual Property Rights and Ownership		
Yes/No	Does your MOU clearly state....	Notes
	The agreed upon protocol for managing intellectual property rights, authorship and ownership for partners' home organizations and/or the partnership overall?	
	The consequences of violating the agreed upon intellectual property rights or ownership understanding by any one partner?	

Handling of Partnership Finances		
Yes/No	Does your MOU deal with....	Notes
	How partners will shoulder the fiduciary responsibility of keeping transparent finances and report to donors and stakeholders on the judicious use of funds?	
	The consequences of alliance partners abusing the finances accorded to them?	

Handling Intra-Partnership Conflict		
Yes/No	Does your MOU highlight....	Notes
	An agreed upon protocol for productively and effectively addressing intra-alliance conflicts between staff and partners?	
	Using the guiding ethics and principles of this partnership to reinforce that protocol?	
	The consequences of not adhering to the protocol repeatedly?	