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# Partnerships for Sustainability

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*Advisers to the Nation on Science, Engineering, and Medicine*

National Academy of Sciences

National Academy of Engineering

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## Partnerships -- Post- WSSD, 2002

- **Proposed to be a standard way of “doing business” for sustainable development**
- **Link actors from different spheres: social, economic, environmental, political**
- **Novel organizational relationships**
- **Driven by common need**
- **Consistent with prior Roundtable work on Linking Knowledge to Action**

- **Consultations with others at Commission on Sustainable Development sessions in 2007, 2008**
- **Wide interest, but few systematic analyses of partnerships for sustainability – whether effective or not**

## ORGANIZED OURSELVES

- Rejected sectoral approach
- Developed partnerships typology
- Based upon:
  - Operational approach and
  - Expected sustainability outcome

# TYPOLOGY

1. Action-oriented and formed to deliver a good/service critical to sustainability
2. Action-oriented and focused on conservation/restoration in a particular region
3. Research-based efforts to spur innovation in a particular sector
4. Disseminating science-based knowledge for sustainable impact
5. Building communities of practice around issues of sustainability

## SELECTED CASE STUDIES

- **Agua Para Todos (Bolivia)**
- **Common Code for the Coffee Community (Africa/Asia/ L. America)**
- **East Coast Fever Vaccine Development (East/Central Africa)**
- **Farm to Fork Initiative (U.S.)**
- **Global Water Challenge (Africa/Central America/Asia)**
- **Green Chemistry Institute (U.S.)**
- **Green Power Market Development Group (U.S./Europe)**
- **Multilateral Initiative on Malaria (Africa)**
- **Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency Partnership (Worldwide)**
- **Sustainable Forest Products Global Alliance (Africa/Asia/ L. America)**
- **Sustainable Silicon Valley (California)**

## WHAT WE FOUND (1)

**Partnerships ARE well-suited to sustainability challenges**

- **complementary knowledge**
- **shared risks**
- **peer group pressure to perform**
- **collective ability to mobilize resources**
- **time to work out solutions**

## WHAT WE FOUND (2)

**Partnerships work better when...**

- **Partners are not divided into “funders” and “implementers”**
- **Private sector partners are almost always a “must”**
- **There is trust among partners**
- **Goals are clearly defined, metrics are monitored**
- **A third party acts as facilitative agent**



# MAJOR PARTNERSHIP CHALLENGES

- Maintaining steady flow of resources
- Engaging national governments – especially when useful for scaling up, re-regulating
- Competition from other partnerships
- Metrics for success

## **NEXT STEPS FOR ROUNDTABLE**

**Academies' publication out soon**

**Participation in CSD, 2009**

**Consultation with those who funded  
activity – for their thoughts as to next  
steps (UN Foundation, Mars,  
Syngenta Foundation)**

## OTHER AVENUES?

- Applying “partnership lens” in other Roundtable activities
- Developing guidelines for better reporting on partnerships for sustainability – in conjunction with UN
- Be proactive in sharing publication with groups addressing sustainability issues
- ???
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**Thanks for your  
ideas!**

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