“Accomplish more together than apart”

The UN-Habitat Partner Strategy

2016-2019

The need to kick-start thinking on a new way of working with partners
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A. Introduction

The principle of partnerships was fully acknowledged and anchored into the UN-Habitat mandate at the Second United Nations Conference on Housing and Human Settlements (Habitat II) held in Istanbul, Turkey in 1996. The 5-year review of Habitat II reconfirmed that partnerships determine the success or failure of sustainable urbanization efforts at all levels.

There is a global consensus on the importance of partnerships towards achieving sustainable development. The Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness, the Accra Agreement, and Bussan Declaration all emphasise partnerships. The UN system acknowledges partnerships as essential for sustainable development, equality, peace and security. All recently agreed international commitments including the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development (SDGs), Sendai Framework for disaster risk reduction, the Paris climate change agreement, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda for financing development and humanitarian action (AAAA) and the New Urban Agenda have created an impetus for partnerships.

Partnerships are instrumental to efforts by UN-Habitat to raise the profile of urbanization, and to provide support to Member States as they respond to the challenges of urbanization and human settlements development. Partnerships are also necessary for resource mobilization, expansion of UN-Habitat programmes and in-depth impact, and to leverage resources through joint programming, thus increasing effectiveness, multi-country programmes, and participation in One UN. UN-Habitat is known to establish thematic networks and to build coalitions of partners in specific areas including land, legislation, urban planning, energy, transport, water, youth, gender, housing and climate change.

The strategy seeks to establish partnership arrangements to ensure effective and efficient delivery of sustainable urban development policies and programmes, participation of critical actors, access to information and the voices of vulnerable populations and the urban poor to be heard. The strategy takes into account new types of partners and technologies, harnesses capacity of partners to support advocacy and implementation, promotes a holistic approach, and strengthens resource mobilization and coordination within the UN system.

The multi-disciplinary nature of urbanization calls for a holistic approach with multi stakeholders working together on both general and specific issues and making cross-sectoral linkages at all levels. This partnership strategy therefore provides an overarching guide to UN-Habitat staff and partners. It supports the implementation of the agency’s Strategic Plan 2014-2019, and the above recently agreed international commitments. The strategy will also support implementation of the New Urban Agenda.

Additionally, the strategy respectively responds to recommendations of the Office for Internal Oversight and Services (OIOS) evaluation of UN-Habitat in 2015, and the UN Joint Inspection Unit’s review of the management of implementing partners in the United Nations System Organizations (2013). It will also guide on the engagement of partners by all Branches, regional and liaison offices as well as national offices of UN-Habitat.
B. Purpose

The purpose of this partnership strategy is to promote a holistic approach to the design and delivery of sustainable urban development policies and programmes through efficient, effective, inclusive and sustainable strategic partnerships at global, regional, national and local levels.

It specifically aims to:

1. Significantly amplify stakeholders’ voices, participation and access to information on SUD policies and programmes, especially during implementation of the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2014-2019, SDG 11 and urban related SDGs, the New Urban Agenda and other relevant internationally agreed commitments.

2. Foster inclusion, collaboration, capacity building and contribution of a wide range of partners in SUD activities, streamline partners’ management, support resource mobilisation, upscale and deepen the impact of UN-Habitat interventions at all levels.

3. Strengthen partnerships between national and local governments with non-state actors and other stakeholders, especially people in vulnerable situations in the pursuit of sustainable urban development.

4. Enhance UN interagency coordination and cooperation in the area of sustainable urban development at global, regional, national and local levels.

5. Strengthen UN-Habitat’s partnerships with the private sector to scale up, deepen impact and enhance sustainability of local urban development initiatives.

C. Scope

This partnership strategy promotes a holistic approach to partnerships for sustainable urban development across sectors and issues at global, regional, national, sub-national and local levels. Emphasis is placed on utilization of a range of approaches that increase partners’ voices and ensure partners participate in and benefit from normative and operational programmes. People and communities are at the center of effective participation in SUD activities, and the Peoples Process is a key pillar of this partner strategy. The strategy builds on existing good practices including the use of multi stakeholder partnerships.

For purposes of this partnership strategy, partners include old and new partners, specifically governments, cities and local authorities, civil society organisations, business and industry/private sector, women, youth and children organisations, the scientific community including academia, researchers and professionals, foundations, financial institutions and development banks, trade unions, intergovernmental bodies and entities, grassroots organisations (including slum dwellers associations, and organisations working in informal economy), philanthropists, UN agencies, media, people with disabilities, indigenous people, eminent persons, and groups of people in vulnerable situations.

The primary partners will be those organisations with adequate human and financial resources, experience in cooperating with other partners and, have the basic competences within their areas of expertise to influence decisions, execute and deliver programmes, projects and activities, and
get results with or without UN-Habitat support. Capacity building will be offered to key partners that lack the capacity to engage adequately in advocacy, and the delivery of normative and operational work, especially at the national and local level.

The following sections provide underlying principles, an analysis of current partnerships, lessons learned, and a business case for partnerships. This is followed by actions to address the identified gaps, and to expand partnerships for sustainable urban development at all levels.

**D. Underlying principles of partners’ engagement**

The following values and beliefs will guide UN-Habitat partnerships:

1. Ensure dynamic and flexible partnerships with modalities for partners to influence UN-Habitat work and to leave no one behind, work with both old and new partners including non-traditional organisations, and allow strategic separation with some partners.

2. Accommodate different forms of stakeholder participation and engagement including multi stakeholder issued based partnerships, cross sectoral partnerships, south-south cooperation, north-south cooperation, city to city cooperation, and triangular partnerships, partnerships with individuals and ambassadors, public / private partnerships, and cooperation between specific partner categories such as professionals and grassroots, etc.

3. Partnerships are voluntary, mutual, equal, transparent, and accountable, bearing in mind diversity and geographical coverage including organisations operating at international, regional, national and local levels.

4. Advocacy, awareness creation, dialogue, knowledge management, innovation, and capacity building of critical actors are foundational approaches to partnership building and expansion.

5. Special attention will be given to cross-cutting issues including gender equality and women empowerment, human rights, climate change, and youth, and the need to address poverty, as well as people with disabilities, migrants, elderly, refugees and others in vulnerable situations.

6. This strategy is complemented by relevant UN-Habitat partner strategies including: Standard Operating Procedures for implementing partners, the Global Land Tool Network strategy, private sector strategy, resource mobilization strategy, knowledge management strategy, risk assessment policy, and communication strategy. The strategy also takes into account the guidelines for preparation of legal agreements, and Rules 61-66 of the Rules of Procedure of the UN-Habitat Governing Council which spells out partners’ engagement and accreditation procedures.
E. Review of current UN-Habitat partnership arrangements
Since 1996 at Habitat II, UN-Habitat partner engagement has significantly evolved. UN-Habitat works with several partners, quite often through networks and coalitions at all levels. UN-Habitat has established alliances, both general and specific issue-based multi stakeholders’ networks to enhance partners’ participation in the design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation of normative and operational programmes. For example, support to the Urban SDG Campaign Group, the Global Taskforce on Local Governments and engagement with Friends of Cities and Member States inter alia contributed towards adoption of SDG 11-- Make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable and other urban related SDGs.

Support for Local Governments
In recognition of the key role played by cities and local governments in sustainable urban and human settlements development, UN-Habitat has gone the extra mile to support cities and local governments’ participation in policy-making, programme design and implementation, monitoring and evaluation. To this end, in 1999, UN-Habitat and the World Bank established the Cities Alliance primarily to support local authorities during implementation of the Habitat Agenda, hence its two primary objectives on cities without slums and support for city development strategies. UN-Habitat also established the UN Advisory Group on Local Authorities (UNACLA) in 1999 in a bid to strengthen the interface between local authorities and the UN System at policy level.

UN-Habitat offers strong support to the United Cities and Local Governments (UCLG) and its regional entities as cities and local authorities are key partners of UN-Habitat. UN-Habitat continues to support the Global Taskforce on Local Governments established to ensure active participation of local governments in the Post 2015 development agenda negotiations, and the localization of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Establishment of Multi Stakeholder Issue-based Networks
UN-Habitat has created several multi-stakeholder issue-based networks as vehicles to allow partner’s participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of normative and operational programmes. Key networks include: the Global Water Operators Partnership (GWOPA), the Global Land Tool Network (GLTN), The Global Energy Network (GENUS), the Global Safer Cities Network, Cities and Climate Change Initiative, and Habitat UNi (previously Habitat Partner Universities). More recently the Youth Advisory Board and Advisory Group on Gender Equality, Urban Planning Labs, Urban Lex, City Resilience Profiling Programme, and alliance of organisations in support of National Urban Policies were established.

For most of the above networks, governments, civil society, UN agencies, professional organisations, academia and research institutions, local governments, grassroots organisations, the private sector, women and youth organisations work together on a given issue, be it land, energy, climate change, youth, women and gender equality, transport, water and sanitation, etc. These networks have various governance structures and partners are members of advisory boards and steering committees. However, most of these networks operate independently without much connection with other networks and UN-Habitat irrespective of the linkages of the issues.
Partners’ participation in UN-Habitat policy-making organs
The 2003 UN-Habitat Governing Council Rules of Procedures 61-66 provides for participation of non-members of the Governing Council as Observers at the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs. These include: States not members of the Governing Council, other UN bodies and specialized agencies, entities, intergovernmental organisations and other entities, local authorities, other Habitat Agenda Partners, and nongovernmental organisations. Non state actors upon invitation of the Presiding Officer of the body concerned and approval of that body can make oral statements on matters within the scope of their activities.

Prior to that, in 2001, the Governing Council agreed to have at least a day during the Governing Council Sessions dedicated to a dialogue between Member States and non-members of the Governing Council on the special theme of the Governing Council. This is perhaps the most direct way that partners can influence the official goals, policies, structure and processes of UN-Habitat. These dialogues are interactive and much appreciated by both governments and non-state actors.

However, non-state actors have not fully utilized the provisions for making oral and/or written statements on agenda items under discussion by the Governing Council, which are within their areas of competence. Much more remains to be done to ensure partners contribute to the review of implementation of the Work Programme and budget, and the new urban agenda.

Habitat Global Advocacy Platforms for Multi-stakeholder participation
The World Urban Forum (WUF) and the World Urban Campaign (WUC) were respectively launched in 2002 and 2010 as vehicles for partner engagement. WUF which is held every two years has become the world premier conference on sustainable urban development. It is a meeting where knowledge, innovation, policies, and best practices are shared, lessons are learned and partnerships are created through dialogues, networking and training events, parallel sessions and exhibitions. At WUF national governments, non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and the UN system work together to effectively implement the objectives for SUD.

At the regional level, UN-Habitat fully participates as a partner in the Asia Pacific Urban Forum (APUF) which is held once in four to five years. APUF is led by the United Nations Economic and Social Commission for Asia and Pacific Regions (ESCAP). Other regions are yet to initiate urban forums.

Member states are encouraged to hold national urban forums to allow dialogues and debate on cities and human settlements involving both state and non-state actors. Indeed some countries have held national urban forums especially as part of the national preparations for Habitat III. However these are not regular and are not offered by all countries.

The World Urban Campaign now with membership of 136 partners and members is a key advocacy instrument for promoting urbanization and human settlements issues and solutions through multi stakeholder networks and constituencies. In April 2015, the WUC launched a General Assembly of Partners (GAP) as a specific platform for non-governmental partners to participate effectively in the preparatory process for the Habitat III and the Conference itself.
The WUC has published “The City We Need”, a consensus document consisting of principles, drivers of change and solutions for developing cities that are inclusive, equitable, resilient, economically vibrant, safe and healthy, as well as cities with an identity that respect their culture and history.

**Knowledge Management Platforms**
The Urban Gateway is a social media website - a global online community to promote knowledge exchange, collaboration and networking on urban issues. The platform was developed as the major recommendation of the Knowledge Management Strategy. It was endorsed by internal and external stakeholders including partners at the World Urban Forum in 2010 who identified the need for a knowledge exchange platform for stakeholders working in the area of sustainable urbanization. The Gateway is a platform for partners and by partners, UN-Habitat hosts the platform and undertakes quality assurance of the content – but once registered, partners have the freedom to publish content in their networks or the wider platform. The Gateway promotes better knowledge and information about partners which is important in understanding where the agency is making an impact and what partnerships can be forged to advance the goal of sustainable urbanization.

**National Habitat Committees**
At the national level UN-Habitat continues to encourage governments to establish or revive National Habitat Committees in preparation for Habitat III and beyond in support of the New Urban Agenda.

**Partners and Beneficiary Participation in Technical Cooperation**
Through the *Peoples’ Process* an approach which puts people and communities at the center of post disaster and post conflict recovery, UN-Habitat has made strides in getting beneficiaries, community leaders, policy-makers, service providers and technical people to work together to build back better. Through social mobilization, community action planning and formation of Community Development Councils (CDC) people and communities including women, men and youth access information, have a voice in decision-making, and take control of their own development. The People’s Process has been applied in several countries including Afghanistan, Indonesia, Maldives, Namibia, Pakistan, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Zambia.

UN-Habitat has developed Regional Strategies which also put emphasis on partnerships. UN-Habitat has supported some countries to develop *Habitat Country Programme Documents (HCPD)* as frameworks for sustainable urban development. HCPDs are a result of a consultation process which involves relevant government departments and institutions, cities and local governments, UN agencies, civil society and other stakeholders to determine priority areas for action.

**Donors and Implementing partners**
Donors and Implementing partners are instrumental in assisting UN-Habitat to deliver its normative and operational programmes at global, regional, national and local level through funding, joint collaboration and oversight. Since 2007, UN-Habitat has signed well over 2700 agreements with donors and diverse implementing partners operating at different levels. These partners include governments, local authorities, civil society, researchers and academia, professionals, etc. Figures 1-4 below provides an analysis of these partnerships.

Figure 1: Cumulative legal agreements signed by year 2007 - 2015

![Cumulative legal agreements signed by year 2007 - 2015](image)

Source: UN-Habitat Legal data base

Figure 2: The agency signed agreements with 888 partners between 2013 and 2015

![The agency signed agreements with 888 partners between 2013 and 2015](image)
Figure 3: Key partners of the 888 signed Agreements

Source: UN-Habitat Legal data base

Figure 4: The graph below shows the top 25 out of 2700 organizations based on the number of agreements they signed with UN-Habitat 2007-2015.

Source: UN-Habitat Legal data base
Engagement with the UN System

As focal point for cities and human settlements within the UN system, UN-Habitat works closely with various UN agencies, funds and programmes at global, regional, national and local level on both normative and operational programmes at all levels. UN-Habitat monitors and reports on the coordinated implementation of the Habitat Agenda, engages in the Chief Executive Board (CEB) and its three main arms – the United Nations Development Group (UNDG), the High Level Committee for Programmes (HLCP) and the High Level Committee for Management (HLCM). Under the auspices of the CEB and HLCP UN-Habitat coordinated the UN system preparation of a paper on Urbanisation and Sustainable Urban Development – A UN system contribution to Habitat III. The CEB also adopted a statement on Habitat III. UN-Habitat will continue to lead the UN system on SUD in support of implementation of the new urban agenda.

UN-Habitat at varying degrees is engaged in UNDG and the UN Regional Coordination Mechanisms in support of national and regional development priorities as respectively determined by Governments and regional intergovernmental bodies. UN-Habitat is also involved in the One UN country programmes, UNCTs and UNDAF in some countries, albeit with challenges arising from being a non-resident agency. UN-Habitat also undertakes joint programmes with other UN agencies. A UN interagency framework has been developed to strengthen interagency collaboration in SUD and implementation of the new urban agenda.
Cooperation with Development Banks and Financial Institutions

UN-Habitat has worked with a number of development banks on both normative and operational programmes at global, regional and national level. Development banks are instrumental in supporting resilience and climate change adaptation, infrastructure development, - especially for water, sanitation, transport and mobility. In this partnership UN-Habitat supports capacity building, provides normative tools on policy and institutional strengthening, and mobilises multi-stakeholders to engage in the respective sectors. UN-Habitat also collaborates with development banks in areas of land, housing finance, and knowledge management. The World Bank, Asia Development Bank, Africa Development Bank, European Reconstruction Bank, Inter-American Development Bank, etc. will continue to be key partners during implementation of the New Urban Agenda. Some of these banks have advanced urban programmes and strategies for UN-Habitat to learn from, while others need to do more urban thinking in order to adequately support urbanization and human settlements programmes. UN-Habitat can facilitate these banks to do so.

F. Lessons Learned

The following are some lessons learned informed by independent evaluation reports, OIOS audits (2015) and the Joint Inspection Unit evaluation of implementing partners (2014), analysis of strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT analysis)\(^1\), and other relevant reports.

1. The above review of current UN-Habitat partnerships clearly illustrates that the success of UN-Habitat work largely depends on partnerships with multi-stakeholders including state and non-state actors. On the one hand, UN-Habitat is able to understand the needs of partners in order to appropriately target assistance. On the other hand, UN-Habitat work can be expanded and deepened by working with strategic partners including the private sector in delivering results.

2. Partnerships are vital to ensure policy and political leadership, strategy development and advocacy. Partnerships are important for policy and programme design and delivery, monitoring and evaluation. They are also necessary for knowledge management and innovation; capacity building, and resource mobilization.

3. Multi stakeholder partnerships encourage innovation, leverage and the sharing of resources (human and financial), risks, tools, joint programming, learning, replication and sustainability. Partnerships promote synergy, pulling of resources, strengths and values of participating organisations, while addressing fears and assumptions. In diversity there is unity for SUD. So partnerships are good to expand UN-Habitat’s reach as a leader and partner of choice in SUD.

4. Establishment of various networks has given many partners an opportunity to access information and get their voices heard, for in-depth engagement and contribution to specific issues and programmes, since some partners may have limited resources. However, a number of networks have the potential to take on a life of their own with

\(^1\) The SWOT analysis is available upon request.
limited UN-Habitat influence. There are no guidelines on network formation, management and exit strategies given the changing priorities and environment.

5. In some countries there are some critical actors to the promotion of SUD who are not yet sufficiently on board. For example, Ministries of Finance, Planning and Economic development, and intergovernmental bodies at regional and sub-regional levels, all of which are crucial in determining regional and national development priorities and budgets and need to mainstream SUD in their respective policies and programmes.

6. There is need for both issue-based multi-stakeholder partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages in order to promote a holistic approach to Sustainable Urban Development. Advocacy for sustainable urban development for example, is better done across-sectors involving diverse actors giving the same message.

7. The success gained at the global level in integrating cities and human settlements issues in the 2030 agenda for sustainable development is yet to be attained at the regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national and local level. There isn’t much coalescing among partners around sustainable urban development at regional and national level, and much more remains to be done.

8. The role of parliamentarians and respective legislative assemblies, as well as the private sector, philanthropists, ambassadors for sustainable urban development, and non-traditional sponsors at all levels has not been fully exploited.

9. UN interagency coordination needs to be strengthened at global, regional and national level with respect to both normative and operational programmes. First, some agencies have urban policies and others don’t. Secondly, because UN-Habitat is a non-resident agency in most countries, it is not playing a full role in the UNDG, UNCT, and UNDAF processes at all levels. Yet some Resident Coordinators are not sufficiently aware of urbanization and human settlements issues to render necessary support. Thirdly the UN-Habitat Liaison Offices are quite often overwhelmed with the demands on their time to cover all strategic partnerships.

10. Most of UN-Habitat Branches, Regional Offices, and Liaison Offices have individual specific partnership information data bases, websites, etc. This makes management of partner’s information difficult. UN-Habitat should be more systematic and coherent to improve internal and external coordination, management, identification and prioritization of new and strategic partners.

11. Although a number of organisations boast of the new politics of partnerships where non-state actors agree to collaborate with government departments and institutions at national and local level, there are still some instances where civil society are in conflict with governments. This can hinder positive collaboration.

12. UN-Habitat partners should take advantage of the provisions for engagement in policy-making and oversight provided in the UN-Habitat Governing Council Rules of Procedure.
in order to actively engage in the UN-Habitat Governing Council Sessions beyond the partner’s dialogue.

13. Partners should significantly improve advocacy for sustainable urban development to ensure its prioritization in regional, national and local level development plans and programmes. This should be coupled with enhanced capacity development for key partners by UN-Habitat and other development partners.

14. A clear strategy for private sector engagement in advocacy and implementation of the new urban agenda is needed with clarity of UN-Habitat’s role as facilitator of public private partnerships.

G. The Business case for partnerships
Partnerships add value to the work of UN-Habitat in every respect. Multi-stakeholder approaches to sustainable development with both horizontal and vertical linkages contribute to empowerment of partners, leverage of resources, expansion and deepening of interventions. Partnerships enhance synergies drawing on each organization’s strengths and comparative advantage; shared risks, better impacts and benefits for all.

If a wide range of partners - public, private sector, financial institutions, civil society (big and small organisations) grassroots organisations, bilateral and multilateral institutions, national, sub-national and local governments work together with UN-Habitat, the people and communities, they can have better influence, reach large populations and societies, and cover more countries and regions. The work is scalable at shared costs. Furthermore, UN-Habitat can get organisations and institutions that work independent of each other to talk and collaborate on specific issues. This contributes to avoidance of duplication and waste of resources.

Multi stakeholder partnerships enhance cooperation between state and non-state actors. They complement the conventional approaches, and acknowledge the relevance of public private partnerships.

UN-Habitat works with partners at all levels. If the capacity of some partners is limited, UN-Habitat contributes towards capacity building, especially at the national and local level. Partnerships allow people and communities, women, youth, children, the poor, disabled people, and others in vulnerable situations to have a voice and to access information on SUD. The Peoples’ Process enables communities and citizens to have a say in their own development.

H. Moving Forward and the Approach
The achievement of the Medium Term Strategic Plan 2014-2019, the urban related goals of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, and the new urban agenda is contingent upon successful partnerships building between state and non-state actors at all levels. This strategy emphasizes structured mechanisms and platforms for cooperation and consultation that are open
to all. Partnerships with a vision, fosters ownership, are equitable, action/task oriented, focused, and strategic, that limit conflict and distortions which stifle progress and build on good practices.

The intention is to increase the number of strategic and multi-stakeholder partnerships in order to raise the profile of urbanisation at all levels, and to increase UN-Habitat outreach, deepen its impact, efficiency and effective design and delivery of normative and operational programmes. With this the number of countries, communities and people promoting sustainable urban development or benefitting from UN-Habitat support is increased. Partnership engagement will take advantage of new communication and information technologies, and new types of partners including bloggers, in order to respond to urbanization and human settlements challenges including income inequality, information, gender equality and age gaps.

In line with the UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2014-2019, this partnership strategy focuses on initiating, facilitating, engaging, and managing strategic partnerships with the aim of driving global, regional, national and local level ownership for achievement of a shared vision for inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable cities and human settlements for all. This ownership can only yield the desired results if there is mutual trust, respect, unity in diversity, integrity, transparency, and accountability by all parties concerned. Additionally, this partner strategy contributes to the positioning of UN-Habitat as a leader and partner of choice in sustainable urban development.

I. Assessing partnerships
It is important to ensure that partnerships work for everyone. This strategy stresses personal relationships vested in the staff that spearheads partnerships with a clear understanding, values, and beliefs in collaboration, as key to building effective and efficient partnerships. This is to be supported by business processes, structures and strategies. In some cases capacity for partnerships building will be addressed.

Strategic partnerships between UN-Habitat and other partners will require: mutual agreement of the need for partnerships; common vision and objectives; open communication and sharing of information; trust and respect; well-defined working arrangements and governance structure; and monitoring, measurement and learning. Prior to initiating and formalizing partnerships an assessment of each organization’s mandates, comparative advantage, strengths, weaknesses, and how it responds to cross cutting issues of gender equality and women empowerment, human rights, youth and climate change will be carried out. The criteria for partners’ participation and engagement will be harmonized.

J. Types of partnerships and expected roles
UN-Habitat engages with several partner categories now numbering 14 based on stakeholders engaged on the preparations for Habitat III through the General Assembly of Partners which is part of the World Urban Campaign. These include new partner categories such as philanthropists and media. This partnership strategy also places emphasis on identification and engagement of eminent persons and ambassadors of sustainable urban development to support implementation the Medium Strategic Plan 2014-2019, relevant 2030 Agenda SDGs and targets and the new urban agenda. See Figure 5 below on partner types and roles.
Figure 5 Partner types and roles

- **SUD Transformative Partnerships**
  - **Strategists, Policy and political leadership**
  - **Advocacy**
  - **Resource mobilization**
  - **Implementing Partners**
  - **Monitoring and Evaluation**
  - **Donors**
  - **Executing Agencies**

**Partners and Roles**

- **Knowledge and innovation**
  - Governments, Private sector, Cities and local authorities, Foundations, Philanthropists, Development Banks, Alliances, etc.

- **Donors**
  - Governments, Private sector, Cities and local governments, UN Agencies, Foundations, Philanthropists, Development Banks, Alliances, etc.

- **Executing Agencies**
  - Cities, Local Authorities, Governments, Non-state actors, UN Agencies

- **Implementing Partners**
  - Governments, Private sector, Cities and local governments, UN Agencies, Foundations, Development Banks

- **Monitoring and Evaluation**
  - Governments, CSOs, Local Govt. Professionals, Women, youth, disabled associations, slum dwellers, communities, and UN agencies etc.

- **Resource mobilization**
  - All Partners

- **Advocacy**
  - Member States, Coalitions and Alliances, Eminent persons, Heads of State, UN representatives, Parliamentarians, Regional and sub-regional government institutions, Heads of agencies and organisations in public and private sector

- **Knowledge and innovation**
  - Habitat UNIs, ICTs, Youth, Women, Public and private innovation, centres, Scientific Community, CSOs

- **SUD Transformative Partnerships**
  - All Partners
The following are functional types of UN-Habitat strategic partners:

1. **Policy and political leadership.** They decide upon UN-Habitat policies, strategic framework, and work programmes, and play an oversight role to monitor implementation. These include Member states of the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs, General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council. These three organs will play a key role in monitoring the implementation of the new urban agenda.

2. **Advocacy partners** are instrumental in raising the profile of SUD at all levels. These have the ability to persuade others to see urbanization as a tool for sustainable development. All partners including national and local governments, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, etc. can be SUD advocates, but some organisations have inadequate capacity for advocacy, especially at national and local level and require support in order to contribute effectively.

3. **Outstanding people with influence and respect** and can be relied upon to assist to change the hearts and minds of decision-makers and catalyze increased action on sustainable urbanization and human settlements development at all levels. These are eminent persons within and outside government including celebrities, community leaders, high ranking officials, etc.

4. **Partners in the field of knowledge, innovation and information management** that strengthen the work on SUD provide the evidence needed for policy and decision-making. Through advocacy, dialogue and technical advice they can help to move the urban agenda forward, and support creation of an enabling environment for SUD be it policies, rules and regulations. These include academia, researchers, grassroots organisations, and the scientific community including those working in the areas of information, communication and technologies both in public and private sector institutions.

5. **Implementing partners** that support UN-Habitat to deliver its mandate, programmes and projects, and to upscale various initiatives. These include a variety of partners who bring to the table *inter alia* resources, knowledge and in-kind contributions.

6. **Policy and decision-makers, technocrats and community leaders in public and private organisations** who determine development and investment priorities and budgets for a country, city and local authorities, and for other organisations. These include: parliamentarians at national, sub-regional, and regional levels, mayors and town clerks, Senior Government Officials and middle-level managers (from both traditional and non-traditional Ministries including the Ministries of Finance and Economic Planning, and National Banks), Executives of public and private organisations, civil society, community – based organisations, etc.
7. Donors interested in SUD, poverty alleviation, investment in innovative practices, and building partnerships with a range of development actors and multi-lateral agencies. These include both traditional and non-traditional donors – at global, regional and national level including private sector, philanthropists, development banks, etc.

8. Professional and non-professional in the field of urbanization and human settlements such as the building industry, owners, tenants, urban planners, architects, housing finance, land and housing experts, water, sanitation, energy, and transport experts and operators, slum dwellers, etc. who live the experience and make significant contributions to the field.

9. The UN system with its organs, development, humanitarian, peace and security policies and programmes. The UNDG processes from the global to the regional and national level offers partnerships opportunities through Regional coordination mechanisms, UNCTs, UNDAFs and the One UN agenda.

K. The role of External Relations Division (ERD)
The role of ERD within UN-Habitat is to:

1. Lead and coordinate partner mobilization, engagement in advocacy, policy and programme design and delivery; and monitor partners’ participation across the agency including through development of transformative packages.

2. Lead on UN interagency coordination and report on UN system engagement in SUD at all levels.

3. Serve as UN-Habitat focal point for partnerships and government relations, and advise senior management, the Governing Council and its subsidiary organs on partner relations, and facilitate partners’ accreditation to UN-Habitat Governing Council Sessions.

4. Promote strengthening partnerships between state and non-state actors at global, regional, national, sub-national and local levels.

5. Enhance multi stakeholder partnerships and cross-sectoral linkages at all levels through sharing of information, knowledge, innovations, initiation of new strategic partnerships, peer to peer learning, south-south cooperation, north-south cooperation, city-to-city cooperation and triangular partnerships.

6. Encourage partners’ access to information and participation in SUD normative and operational programmes at all levels, with specific attention to the voices of urban poor, women, youth, elderly, people with disabilities and people in vulnerable situations.

7. Support oversight, transparency and accountability for partnership participation by the Governing Council in collaboration with non-state actors.
L. Duration of partnerships

Partnership arrangements vary in duration – short term, medium term and long term. For many implementing partners, collaboration is to take place in a specific period of time based on the life of the project or programme. This type of arrangement allows for identification of new partners in different countries and regions. Some partnerships transition from short term to longer term beyond the project, but the majority don’t.

Strategic partnerships can last for longer into medium and long term periods. However, guidelines on partnership disengagement will be provided to allow smooth transition or to stop partnerships that fail to deliver results.

M. Critical Areas for Action

Adoption of the new urban agenda will necessitate a review of the current UN-Habitat Strategic Plan 2014-2019, the Regional Strategic Plans, and Habitat Country Programme Documents to ensure alignment with the new urban agenda as well as relevant SDGs. This will be a collaborative effort involving multi stakeholders, communities and key beneficiaries. UN-Habitat will explore innovative ways of partner identification and participation. The deployment of adequate personnel with necessary skills will be a key to the success of this strategy. Next are areas for action:

1. People and communities will be at the center of SUD initiatives and their effective participation will be encouraged. At the local level, partnerships will build on the people’s process, and ensure access to information and participation of citizens, communities and their leaders as key partners. The peoples’ process, as an approach will be documented or updated for adaptation and up-scaling in other regions of the world by relevant UN-Habitat programmes.

2. Support for multi stakeholder participation in policy, programme design and oversight

A holistic approach to SUD will be adopted in this regard. Issue based multi stakeholders and cross sectoral partnerships will be promoted in order to enhance partners’ participation and voice in policy and programme design and oversight, knowledge management and innovation, advocacy at all levels though:

(a) A review of existing UN-Habitat networks will be carried out to assess efficiency, effectiveness and impact, and lessons learnt will inform the development of guidelines for network formation and governance with clarity on the roles of partners and UN-Habitat.

(b) Multi stakeholder SUD working groups to be established at the local, national, regional and global levels to facilitate policy and programme dialogues, and participation in the design, implementation and monitoring of UN-Habitat normative and operational programmes. All Major Groups, stakeholders and other Habitat Agenda Partners, including GAP partner categories, will be represented on the Working Groups. National Working Groups/Focal Points will be established with representation from cities, municipalities and regions. Two representatives of
National Working Groups will form the Regional Working Groups, but a balance of Major Groups, stakeholders and other Habitat Agenda Partners should be maintained at all times to ensure no interest group is left behind. Each region will then nominate three representatives to the Steering Committee of Global Major Groups, Stakeholder and other Habitat Agenda Partners including GAP members.

Through the above structures will contribute towards strengthening partnership coordination and collaboration amongst all relevant national and local government departments and institutions, on the one hand, and Member States and local governments with the people, communities, and non-governmental organisations, UN agencies, friends of cities and human settlements, development partners, and the media on the other, especially in countries where UN-Habitat has a portfolio of programmes and projects including development of National Urban Policies. Existing National Habitat Committees will be strengthened in this regard.

(c) *Meetings of Major Groups, Stakeholders, and other Habitat Agenda Partners will be held in conjunction with regional and global SUD ministerial meetings including GC Sessions (global), and Meetings of Ministers of Housing and Urban Development in Latin America and the Caribbean, Asia/Pacific, and African regions, respectively known as MINUVI, APMUCHUD, HUD Subcommittee of AU STC8, the Arab League Meeting for Ministers of Housing and Urban Development (Regional); and national Inter Ministerial Meetings on SUD (national) to ensure effective contribution to policy and programme debates, reviews and assessments of implementation of the new urban agenda.*

(d) At the Global level, Major Groups, Stakeholder, and other Habitat Agenda Partners will meet whenever possible, with the Presiding Officer of the Governing Council, and the UN-Habitat Executive Director on policy and programme issues. Information, communication and new technologies including social media will be used to allow key partners to participate, even if it means holding virtual meetings.

(e) *Improve consultation and accountability of organisations accredited to Habitat II, Habitat III and GC Sessions.* Partners accredited to Habitat II and III and to the GC Sessions will be able to report on their engagement in SUD. Partners’ dialogues with the Committee of Permanent Representatives and its working committees on implementation of the new urban agenda will be instituted.

3. *Capacity building for and dialogues with partners as well as documentation of good practices*

   (a) Capacity building for civil society and those in vulnerable situations will be undertaken to enhance capacity to engage in policy dialogues and programme delivery, particularly in developing countries.
Equally important is the need to dialogue with parliamentarians and other legislators at the local and or subnational level to create awareness to SUD issues so they can serve as advocates and supporters of SUD as they make decisions on regional, sub-regional, national, sub-national and local policies, programmes, and budgets, legislations, etc. at the national level and in their constituencies.

Good practices on partnership coordination and engagement at all levels will be documented, peer to peer learning, city-to-city and south-south cooperation promoted.

4. UN interagency coordination on sustainable urban development and collaboration between the UN systems and intergovernmental bodies, amongst relevant departments and institutions of regional intergovernmental organisations, development banks, donors, and other key partners will be strengthened. To facilitate this:
   (a) UN interagency coordination SUD working groups will be established at global, regional and national level in support of UNDG processes, Regional Coordination mechanisms, UNCTs and UNDAFs.
   (b) Improve partnership intelligence
       UN-Habitat will increase partnership intelligence to take advantages of partnership opportunities at all levels arising from follow-up to the recent internationally and regionally agreed commitments including: the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, AAAA, the Paris Climate Change Agreement, Sendai Framework, and the New Urban Agenda, as well as the outcomes of the World Humanitarian Summit and World Summit on Migration and Refugees.

5. There will be increased collaboration with Regional development banks, financial institutions, and Intergovernmental bodies such as the Inter American Commission, the Caribbean Community Secretariat, European Union, African Union and its sub-regional Economic Commissions, ASEAN, SAARC, the Pacific Commission etc. in order to ensure SUD issues are aligned to regional development priorities. Using the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development, especially the urban related SDGs and target, the new urban agenda and other international agreed commitments, UN-Habitat will support these regional bodies as they implement and monitor these agreements.

6. Business and Industry or the private sector including banks, insurance and finance companies at all levels will be encouraged to contribute more in addressing SUD challenges, especially through advocacy and support for implementation of the new urban agenda. The National Private Sector Associations, Industries and Manufacturers’ Associations, the Building and Construction Industry, will be invited to participate in regional, national and local level SUD Coordinating Committees. They will be involved in policy debates, advocacy activities, and implementation and innovative. Public, private partnerships will be encouraged. Philanthropists, Media Houses, and key business personalities will be part of the conversations. The private sector strategy will be revised to strengthen the private sector engagement in advocacy and implementation of the new
urban agenda, and with clarity of UN-Habitat’s role as facilitator of public private partnerships.

7. *Multi stakeholder partnerships on knowledge, innovation and best practices* on SUD will be significantly improved taking into account advancement in technology. UN-Habitat will enhance existing multi-stakeholder advocacy platforms especially WUF and WUC at all levels to ensure partner participation in the promotion of SUD and share information on implementation of the New Urban Agenda. UN-Habitat and its partners will participate and/or support the work of the SDG taskforce on science and technology. Awards and competitions in science and technology with cost effective solutions to respond to SUD challenges will be promoted. UN-Habitat will partner with UN agencies, universities, and other institutions of higher learning to support Member States efforts to increase urban planners and students of urban studies, especially in developing countries.

8. *UN-Habitat will expand strategic partnerships with major global and regional initiatives such as the World Economic Forum, the International Monetary Fund, Regional and national economic institutes*, as well as university departments of economics in order to engage on urbanization as a tool for development. Secondly, to hold dialogues on urban planning and design, urban economies, urban legislation and governance as essential elements of local, national and regional integration and development.

9. *Institutional Arrangements for Partnership Coordination and Support at global, regional and country level.*

   (a) An internal and external partnership support structure will be established to allow multi stakeholder partnerships to coalesce around SUD policies and programmes from conceptualization through to design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation.

   (b) Coordination within UN-Habitat Branches, Regional and Liaison Offices will be enhanced. Both old and new actors will be encouraged to participate. ERD will be restructured and facilitated to effectively and efficiently support multi stakeholder issue-based partnerships, cross-sectoral linkages and UN interagency coordination.

   (c) Internally a system of focal points will be established with representation of all Branches, regional offices and Liaison Offices, as well as country offices whenever possible. The rules of engagement will be clear with internal partnership agreements and a governance structure established. An internal Steering Committee on partnerships will be formed to provide policy advice and guidance. ERD will report on partnerships to the Senior Management Board and the Committee of Permanent Representatives at least once a year.
An integrated partner information management system (PIMS) to serve as a one stop center on UN-Habitat partners’ information will be established for both internal and external uses. This system will allow partner registration, creation of profiles, applications for accreditation to GC Sessions and, and requests for engagements in UN-Habitat processes and programmes. The PIMS will facilitate identification of strategic partners and potential implementing partners. Using this system partners accredited to Governing Council Sessions would be able to report on their implementation of the new urban agenda through regular periodic reports.

N. Monitoring and Evaluation of the Partners Strategy
Monitoring will be carried out periodically by Senior Management, the Committee of Permanent Representatives and the Governing Council. An annual report will be prepared. A mid-term review will take place at mid-2018, and the final evaluation in 2019 since the strategy is aligned with the Medium Strategic Plan 2014-2019. Partners’ and UN-Habitat staff will participate in these evaluations at all times.

O. Risks and assumptions
Following are risks and assumptions that are that might affect implementation of this strategy and need mitigation.

1. There is a possibility of doing just more of the same things without expanding partners and deepening UN-Habitat impact. To mitigate this, both partners and UN-Habitat staff must be prepared to think outside of the box, embrace new ways and forms of partnerships and commit to continuous monitoring and evaluation of existing and new partnerships.

2. Perception of UN Habitat’s relationships with certain groups may adversely affect the implementation of this strategy at the local, national and global level, including perceived support of certain groups and not others, perpetuated by lack of transparency and accountability for partner selection. Increased transparency, including around partnership vetting, selection and support will mitigate this risk.

3. Lack of quality vetting of partners, and corruption can negatively affect UN-Habitat’s relationships with partners and project / programme implementation. Careful vetting through established criteria and ongoing monitoring and evaluation, with the willingness to terminate un-strategic partnerships will mitigate this risk.

4. Lack of systematic reporting and follow up could adversely affect the implementation of this strategy. Ongoing communication with partners and effective coordination of contacts and information-sharing will mitigate this risk.
### P. Partnership Action Implementation Framework

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<th>ACTION AREA</th>
<th>TYPE OF PARTNERSHIPS</th>
<th>ACTIONS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Advocacy and outreach</td>
<td>UN-Habitat, Governments, NGOs, Local authorities,</td>
<td>- Popularization of the New Urban Agenda in global, regional and national forums, including with local communities and key stakeholders through schools, trade unions, community and grassroots activists, thematic civil society networks etc. in order to create awareness and ensure effective involvement in the implementation process at all levels*;</td>
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<td>Ambassadors All Partners**</td>
<td>- Strengthen capacities, including jointly with other UN agencies, of civil society organizations, media and other strategic influencers for evidence-based advocacy and policy influence on SUD at regional and national levels, including through print, electronic and social media;</td>
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<td>- Strengthen local authorities’ advocacy initiatives in the UN system, regional and national fora;</td>
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<td>- Establish ‘UN-Habitat Ambassador’ programme through identification and partnership-building with suitable persons acting as ambassadors of SUD at the global and regional levels;</td>
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<td>- Enhance impact of outreach and advocacy platforms (WUF, WUC, regional and national urban forums)</td>
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<td>- Strengthen policy engagement among civil society, parliamentarians, national and local governments and private sector, as well as UN agencies</td>
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<td>Policy and Programme design, and Resource mobilization</td>
<td>UN-Habitat, Governments, Local Authorities, Civil Society, Academia,</td>
<td>- Ensure UN-Habitat programming protocol and practice effectively addresses and provides budget for partnership-building and strengthening;</td>
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<td>- Mobilize resources to facilitate multi-stakeholder engagement in key SUD processes at various levels;</td>
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<td>- Facilitate creation of an enabling environment to support implementation of the New Urban Agenda at various levels;</td>
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|                      | Research, UN system. All Partners                                                    | Urban agenda through adoption of relevant regulatory framework by UN-Habitat Governing Council sessions, ECOSOC and GA:  
- Support dialogues between UN-Habitat Governing Council and its subsidiary organs and other partners in order to provide effective policy-based leadership and strategic planning;  
- Facilitate partner consultation and dialogue to identify global, regional, national and local level priorities and ensure effective incorporation of SUD into regional and national development frameworks and similar SUD-relevant frameworks such as regional UNDG, RCM, UNCTS and UNDAFs. |
|                      | UN-Habitat, Governments, Local Authorities, Academia, Researchers, NGOs All Partners | - Develop capacity of national and local government, and other partners to prepare national and local level implementation plans of the New Urban Agenda and monitor effective implementation;  
- Establish and maintain relationships with non-governmental organizations, as appropriate through capacity building, in order to develop implementation plans of action for the New Urban Agenda, including through GAP and other associations;  
- Increase effectiveness of private sector partnership strategy through strategic review and implementation of resulting recommendations;  
- Utilize the Multi-Partner-Implementation Initiative to attract and facilitate diverse partner engagement in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda.  
- Review existing UN-Habitat networks to assess efficiency, effectiveness and impact, and clarify the roles of partners and UN-Habitat.  
- Improve documentation and sharing of good practices on partner participation and voices in follow-up and implementation of the New Urban Agenda, urban SDGs and the Medium Term Strategic Plan.  
- Partners to facilitate collaboration between researchers, academics, NGOs and grassroots organizations especially slum dwellers and informal sector. |
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| Monitoring and Reporting        | All Partners.            | - Coordination of periodic reporting of Medium Strategic Plans, the New Urban Agenda by governments, intergovernmental bodies, UN system and non-governmental organizations to ECOSOC and GA.  
- Facilitation of citizens and NGO reporting on implementation of the New Urban Agenda through report cards.  
- Conduct capacity building initiatives on Sustainable Urban Development for citizens and NGOs for the reporting structure.  
- Establishment of partnership platforms to share on the New Urban Agenda by all partners.  
- Enhance documentation of good practices in Sustainable Urban Development. |
| Institutional Mechanisms        | UN agencies, funds and programmes  
- Inter-agency Coordination.    | - Coordinate the development and adoption of a UN system wide policy on SUD.  
- Strengthen SUD activities in UNDG processes at global, regional and national level through dialogue with key actors including UN Resident Coordinators.  
- Initiate frequent SUD related dialogues with UN Resident Coordinators.  
- Produce a UN system newsletter and biennial reports on SUD with the UN system.  
- Facilitate coordinated reporting in the implementation of the New Urban Agenda by the UN system.  
- Develop UN system wide Action plan on implementation of the New Urban Agenda with indicators and baseline information.  
- Encourage effective and streamlined participation of the UN system on issues related to SUD.  
- Offer support to the UN-Habitat GC sessions, and participation of NGOs and citizens in regional and global level sessions that aim to assess progress on implementation of the New Urban Agenda, and make observations and recommendations at various GC, ECOSOC and GA sessions.  
- Support joint and multi country SUD programming at regional and national level.  
- Promote incorporation of SUD into National development policies and programmes. |
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional Arrangements</td>
<td>UN system Multi-stakeholders</td>
<td>- Establish UN system SUD working Group at global, regional and national level. The working group should meet periodically to review implementation of the NUA and UN system wide Action Plan.</td>
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<td>- Establish partners SUD working groups at all levels* to make inputs into policy and programme design, monitoring and reporting.</td>
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<td>- Improve partner information management system and promote interaction between partners and UN-Habitat programmes and offices.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Institutional Framework and Guidelines</td>
<td>UN-Habitat, Governments, Partners, UN agencies</td>
<td>- The External Relations Division (as a lead of Partnership Coordination) to identify and work with focal points from branches, regional and liaison offices for multi-stakeholders and inter-agency coordination.</td>
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<td>- Establish National inter-ministerial Working Groups on Sustainable Urban Development to promote a holistic approach in countries with National Urban policies.</td>
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<td>- Develop a Public Private Partnership Framework on Sustainable Urban Development.</td>
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<td>- Prepare a partners’ engagement guide which will also include minimum standards of working with UN-Habitat and guidelines for network formation as well as separation.</td>
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<td>- Support regional and country level partnership strategy development and implementation.</td>
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* Global, regional, national and local.

** This include Parliamentarians, National Governments, Local authorities, intergovernmental bodies at regional and sub-regional level, UN agencies, funds and programmes, UNDG, CEB, Non-Governmental Organizations, Academia, Researchers, Professionals, Civil Society, Women, Youth and disabled people.
Q. Conclusion

It is expected that this partners’ strategy will help the agency to promote an integrated approach to sustainable urban development, leave no one behind, improve efficiency and effectiveness, and achieve more with less. The success of implementation of this strategy will depend on the support provided by Senior Management, UN-Habitat staff and the cooperation of all partners.

The corporate strategy will be accompanied by regional and country level strategies. The accreditation system and the reporting process will be reviewed and recommendations tabled at the next session of the UN-Habitat Governing Council in 2017 through a resolution. Furthermore, the current private sector strategy will be updated, and a public private sector framework developed. Last, but not least UN interagency coordination on SUD will be strengthened and supported by the inter-agency coordination framework. Through effective partnerships SUD profile will be raised at all levels with more national development plans incorporating urbanization as a key government priority. UN-Habitat impact will be deepened and expanded, and improvement in peoples’ lives will be achieved.

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ii Building Partnerships, 2001,
Assessing strategic partnerships, Strategic Partnering Taskforce, May 2003, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Canada