

Working with partners: Strategies and Costs

Working with others has obvious visible costs that include the resources required to implement the work. However, working with others, i.e. “partnering”, also has **hidden costs** that must be factored into the overall strategy cost in order for implementation of that strategy to be ultimately successful. Depending on the strategy and on the partnering situation at hand, these costs can vary greatly. **Proper management of partnerships require that you budget appropriately for these hidden costs.** Do not overlook them, since experience tells us that not planning for them costs us much more in the long run – and it costs us not only relationships but actual conservation results.

To support the strategies’ designing and costing we are providing:

1. General Guidelines for Selection of Partner Organization and
2. Guidelines for costing out the partnership

CAUTION: *Cost estimates contained in this document are ballpark estimates made for one time and place. Please treat them as very basic guidelines to develop cost estimate appropriate for your region and situation.*

General Guidelines for Selection of Partner Organization

Partnering with the right organization or group will highly influence the success of implementation of conservation strategies. We may not have all the information we need to select the key partners for the strategies we are designing however, we can exercise our best judgement in anticipating who our partners will be. To do this:

- Have a **very clear idea** of what is intended with the strategy and strategic activities. This clarity will guide the selection of the right organization (s) with which to work. Please do not just list organizations, try to be at least 75% sure that a given organization could be a suitable partner if negotiated properly.
- Keep in mind that **some strategies may require a combination of skill sets**, and therefore potentially a combination of partner organizations.
- If certainty about who to partner with does not exist please indicate that a partner(s) need(s) to be scoped and selected, and include adequate resources in the overall cost of the strategy for the selection of that partner. See below for estimated range of costs.

Below is a set of questions to help guide your thinking on the selection of partners. Do not assume that the partners you already know or have worked with are the best fit to execute a given strategy.

Do you have a partner organization that you are **75% sure** could be a suitable and capable partner to help execute the strategy?

Yes

No

Have you worked with this organization before?

Budget enough money for **SCOPING** (See step 1); and some money for **CAPACITY BUILDING**

Yes

No

Has the experience been positive (conservation results achieved, administrative requisites complied with, and relationship was productive and transparent)?

Is the organization well recognized in the field related to the **strategic activity**?

Don't know

No

Reconsider your choice. Clarify why you are choosing this organization over one that perhaps is more recognized. If selected, budget enough money for **CAPACITY BUILDING**.

Yes

Yes

No

Evaluate why it was not positive and reconsider your choice. Clarify why you are choosing this organization. If selected, budget enough money for **CAPACITY BUILDING**.

Does this organization have an adequate **number of staff with the right skills and knowledge** to carry out the strategic activity (programmatic capacity)?

Does the organization have adequate **administrative capacity** (ability to manage funds and report, efficiently)?

Yes

No

Don't know

Yes

No

Don't know

Include this partner organization in your strategy. Budget enough money for **DUE DILLIGENCE COSTS** and for **CAPACITY BUILDING**.

Budget money for an **ASSESSMENT**

Include this partner organization in your strategy. Budget enough money for **DUE DILLIGENCE COSTS** and for **CAPACITY BUILDING**.

Budget enough money at least for an **INSTITUTIONAL SELF ASSESSMENT**

Evaluate investing in capacity building vs. searching for other organization with more appropriate skills and knowledge. If selected, budet enough money for **CAPACITY BUILDING**.

Budget enough money for **INSTITUTIONAL SELF ASSESSMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING**

Guidelines for Costing Out the Partnership

Following are ranges of costs for numerous activities required for a strategy supported by partnership(s) to succeed.

COSTS RANGES FOR PROPER PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Steps	Objective	Comments	Costs	Covers:
1) Partner Scoping:	Identifies the possible government agencies, corporations, nonprofits, community groups, multi-laterals, etc. which can contribute to biodiversity health and threat abatement strategies.	<p>There will be strategies that require us to partner with new organizations, organizations that we may know nothing or little about, or even organizations that we have yet to identify. If this is the case, the recommendation is to invest time and money in proper scoping of those organizations before strategy implementation.</p> <p>The regional partnership team has several methods for conducting scoping and selection. Before strategy implementation begins, these methods for scoping can be assessed and implementation can be carried out. .</p>	<p>Cost Range for scoping/selecting the best fit organization with which to partner:</p> <p>US\$ 5,000 –\$10,000</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff time: Estimate the # of staff weeks) to do the scoping, including money to visit and get to know the area and organizations. <p>Note: The costs could be lower or greater depending on the size of the geography and possible partners that need to be scoped and country you are working in.</p>
2) Partner Selection Due Diligence	Identifies risks and management concerns at the front end of the partnership that may influence the decision of whether and how to partner. Due diligence include conservation, legal, financial and institutional aspects.	<p>Conservation, legal, financial and institutional due diligence is required by most organizations before they enter into a partnership, and before funds change hands.</p> <p>The recommendation is to include in the budget the resources needed to complete partners' Due Dilligence.</p>	<p>US \$1,000 – \$3,000</p>	<p>Although much of this activities might be done from the general office, our experience is that at least one trip has to be budgeted for review and get all the information complete and on time.</p>

	Objective	Comments and recommendations	Costs (per year)
a) Capacity Building Costs	Partner's institutional strengthening (Organizational and technical needs)	<p>Ensure that you have selected a partner organization with the best existing profile/capacity for what needs to get done. This may not always be the current or best known partners. Even the best choice may need some technical assistance to strengthen certain skills. Therefore, it is crucial to factor in capacity building costs to the overall cost of the strategy implementation.</p> <p>Capacity-building for any partner should be designed around the baseline results of an institutional capacity self assessment. This tool, designed by TNC, is widely tested and proven in TNC's partnership work.</p> <p>Potentially costs could be greater the first year and decrease in the next two years, but this is not a rule of thumb since capacity building depends much on the stage of development of the organization and the capacity that needs to be built and when it needs to be built.</p> <p>Note: Costs depend on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How much and how long it will take for the partner to be strengthened. ▪ Size of the organization: Possible number of people involved. ▪ Country: Services are more expensive in some geographies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Institutional self assessment and design of capacity building plan (1 every 2 years at least) \$3,500 - 8,000 ▪ Attending training workshops \$4,000 – \$10,000 ▪ Paying for a technical training service \$3,000 – \$10,000 ▪ South-south exchanges (optional) \$2,500 - \$7,500 ▪ Purchase of admin equipment (if required) \$3,000 - \$20,000
b) Partnership/institutional development specialist cost for new geography	To support all partnership issues.	<p>If we are entering a totally new geography without staff infrastructure, and/or significantly expanding the number of organizations that we may be working with, it is highly recommended to hire staff to work on partner scoping and selection, and subsequent development and management of the relationships.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1FTE to conduct partnership development and management (includes benefits) \$45,000--- \$70,000 ▪ Budget to operate \$15,000 – \$50,000
c) Staff to cultivate atypical partner organization s cost	To have full time staff with the skills to help us open the door in atypical sectors (private sector and for profit businesses, municipalities, poverty alleviation groups, rural development groups, social justice organizations, etc.)	<p>Many strategies will require that we begin engaging with atypical partners – in other words, organizations in the private sector and for profit businesses, municipalities, poverty alleviation groups, rural development groups, social justice organizations, etc..</p> <p>Carefully consider the proposed strategy and evaluate if it will require “atypical” partnerships and therefore also require a new set of skills among our staff. If it does, factor the cost of this staff into the cost of the strategy. Keep in mind that the skill sets that are required to work with the private for profit sector are not the same as those that are required to work with poverty alleviation, social justice or community conservation. Therefore, depending on the strategy and type of partners needed it might be necessary to consider more than one staff.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 1 FTE to open doors to atypical partners \$45,000--- \$75,000 ▪ Budget to operate \$15,000 – \$50,000