

## The First Mile Toolkit

As a participant in a newly launched global health project, you are about to begin the exciting yet sometimes daunting First Mile. As pointed out in Chapter 5, the First Mile of a partnership is characterized by optimism and a sense of possibility, but it can also be intimidating. To make the task a little less overwhelming, we have provided you with a toolkit.

In the following pages are tools that can help the partners accomplish the important tasks of this stage:

- Choose the right membership
- Develop a shared goal
- Select the appropriate structure
- Shape a strategy
- Clarify organizational roles

In addition to these “elements” of the First Mile, two additional tools are provided that deal with ground rules for interaction and topics to include in the charter.

## FIRST MILE: The Main Menu

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<i>Element</i>	<i>Tools</i>
Membership	Stakeholder analysis for potential member organizations
	Stakeholder analysis for potential individual members
Shared goal	Worksheet for developing goal, vision, and mission statements
Structure	Worksheet for decision-making protocol
Strategy	Strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis
	Opportunity matrix
	Strategy worksheet
	Questions for determining key activities
Roles	Questions to determine organizational roles
	Additional tools
	Ground rules for interaction
	Topics to include in charter

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### STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS FOR POTENTIAL MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

As stated in Chapter 6, once a core team has defined key stakeholder groups, it must consider which groups are needed as members and which should participate in such forums as conferences, advisory teams, or community gatherings. It may be necessary to gain a thorough understanding of each organization before deciding how it could positively contribute to the collaboration. This can be accomplished through an analysis of each organization's agenda, potential contributions (human, financial, or technical resources), potential constraints, and possible problems it may present as a member organization.

<i>Organization</i>	<i>Organizational agenda</i>	<i>What can they contribute?</i>	<i>What are their constraints?</i>	<i>What problems can we anticipate?</i>

1. *Organizations.* As a group, identify every organization that will affect or be affected by your initiative. List these organizations in the first column.
2. *Organizational agenda.* Ask volunteers to research each organization's vision and mission as well as its current projects. How well do the organization's activities and goals coincide with those of the partnership?
3. *Contributions.* As a group, discuss the next three columns, starting with contributions. What can the organization contribute? This could entail many things, such as financial or staff resources, field workers, political influence, and so on. When completing this column, it is also helpful to specify what phase of the project is relevant to each stakeholder and their potential contributions.
4. *Constraints.* In what ways is this organization constrained? Constraints could be legal, economic, political, technical, or geographic in nature, to name a few possibilities. Also, are there any partner constraints? For example, conflicts of interest may prevent some organizations from working together.
5. *Problems to anticipate.* By identifying problems that could arise while working with each organization, the core team can consider possible solutions in advance, in order to avoid a time- and resource-consuming clash of opinions. For example, is the organization known for a style of management that could cause problems in the partnership.

## STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS FOR POTENTIAL INDIVIDUAL MEMBERS

This analysis of potential individual members can be accomplished through a discussion of various personal characteristics: influence and authority, experience and skills, personal agenda, and indicators of teamwork.

Stakeholder	Influence and authority	Experience and skills (technical, problem-solving)	Personal agenda/reasons for joining the team	Indicators of teamwork/positive outlook

1. *Stakeholders.* Get the group together to brainstorm and identify every potential member, and list them in the first column.
2. *Influence and authority.* What connections does this person have (within his or her organization) to high-level leadership and/or to external stakeholders who are important to the project's success? How much influence does the person have in different populations/groups that will be instrumental in project development and implementation?
3. *Experience and skills.* What past projects and initiatives has this person been involved with? What skills did he or she demonstrate in these programs (for example, technical, problem-solving, networking, and so on)?
4. *Personal agenda.* Why would this person want to join the team? If the person comes from a large organization, why is he or she the best representative for this partnership, as opposed to someone else from the same organization?
5. *Indicators of teamwork.* Does this person have experience in working with teams? If so, were those initiatives successful?

WORKSHEET FOR DEVELOPING GOAL, VISION, AND MISSION STATEMENTS

When starting a partnership, with many different agendas coming together, reaching consensus can be difficult. Agreeing on a clear goal, vision, and mission in the beginning helps lay the foundation for consensus on other issues. Developing the goal, vision, and mission statements should be an exercise in *real collaboration*, with all member organizations represented in the discussion. The following worksheet contains spaces that can be filled in during the process of developing the partnership goal, vision, and mission statements. The notes that follow this table give suggestions for how, when, and by whom each space can be filled in.

	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>Mission</i>
Definitions	What is the partnership’s target outcome? The goal should be focused and clear, addressing <i>affected populations, timeframe, and measurements of success</i> , and members need to have a shared understanding of its meaning.	What change will be seen in the world if the partnership achieves the goal?	What is the purpose of the partnership?
Preempting Planning	Facilitator:	Facilitator:	Facilitator:
	Timetable:	Timetable:	Timetable:
	Examples:	Examples:	Examples:
	Discussion questions:	Discussion questions:	Discussion questions:

	<i>Goal</i>	<i>Vision</i>	<i>Mission</i>
Group discussion	Brainstorm elements:	Brainstorm elements:	Brainstorm elements:
	Agree on key elements:	Agree on key elements:	Agree on key elements:
	Draft possible statements:	Possible statements:	Possible statements:
Fine-tuning	First draft:	First draft:	First draft:
	Partner comments:	Partner comments:	Partner comments:
	Second draft:	Second draft:	Second draft:
	Partner comments:	Partner comments:	Partner comments:
Final statements	Final:	Final:	Final:

1. *Definitions.* The convener or another partner(s) with good facilitation skills needs to prepare for the meeting in advance. To help your team get started, circulate the definitions of goal, vision, and mission to all partners and encourage them to think about what they want the partnership's goal, vision, and mission to be.
2. *Premeeting planning.* Before the partners meet, the convener may also want to prepare the following:

- *Timetable.* The convener should determine a reasonable timetable for the process. Time should also be allowed for partners to provide feedback before the group discussion takes place. Once that discussion takes place and all group members contribute their opinions, drafts will have to be written by the convener/core group and circulated to the other partners for comments.
  - *Examples.* The convener should gather examples of statements from other partnerships to demonstrate the differences between goal, vision, and mission. These example statements can ignite a lively discussion between the partners as they decide what elements they do or do not want to incorporate in their own statements.
  - *Discussion questions.* The convener/core group should generate a set of discussion questions to move the process along. These questions should focus on the importance of collaboration and why these partners have decided to join together. For example, to launch a discussion of the goal, the convener might ask, “How will working together help us achieve a goal we cannot meet alone?”
3. *Group discussion.* The group discussion should involve all partners, and the end result should be a list of key elements to be included in the goal, vision, and mission statements. If the partnership is large, small groups for discussion can assure that every partner participates. The following steps may be helpful:
- *Brainstorm elements.* Using the example statements and discussion questions, partners can brainstorm the elements to include in the partnership’s goal, vision, and mission. It is important at this stage to show respect for all suggestions.
  - *Agree on key elements.* For this step, partners can go through all of the elements listed during the brainstorming session and decide which of them are truly vital to the partnership. This step will likely provoke differences of opinion, but working through these differences can lead to a greater sense of understanding and trust among the partners.
  - *Possible statements.* The partners can then draft their ideas of what the partnership’s goal, vision, and mission should be.

Depending on the number of partners, these possible statements can be drafted by each small group or each individual. The convener should emphasize that “perfect” wording is not the main concern in this step; each small group or individual partner should focus on including all key elements in a coherent statement. These possibilities can then be reported to the larger group to find synergies, eliminate duplication, and allow for the larger group’s reaction to the different possibilities.

4. *Fine-tuning.* After the group discussion has taken place, the convener/core group should consider every possible statement that was turned in by the partners. Based on the key elements included in these statements, the convener/core group should draft statements and gather feedback from the partners until a consensus is reached. This stage of the process can include several drafts. It may be helpful for the convener to keep track of the drafts through these steps:
  - *Draft.* Write the drafts into the worksheet to document the evolution of the partnership’s goal, vision, and mission.
  - *Partner comments.* Include the feedback received from every partner in these spaces. This will help to produce the next draft. (If several drafts are needed, the worksheet can be expanded.)
5. *Final statements.* At this point consensus should be growing among the partners about the goal, vision, and mission statements. Circulate the final statements to the partners and congratulate yourself and your team for successfully completing this essential task.

## WORKSHEET FOR DECISION-MAKING PROTOCOL

In Chapter 6 we described several key elements to laying the foundation for close collaboration: membership, shared goal, structure, strategy, and organizational roles. Once these key elements are established, some partnerships find it helpful to develop a decision-making protocol that defines the level of authority needed to make different types of decisions. This worksheet can be useful for guiding a discussion of this protocol. For each type of decision that may arise in the workings of the partnership, agree on what level of consensus must be reached to make that decision.



	<i>Full partnership</i>	<i>Majority of partnership</i>	<i>Single partner to whom most relevant (specify)</i>	<i>Delegate to (specify)</i>	<i>Broad stakeholder input</i>
Type of decision					
New members					
Officers					
Procedural rules					
Budget approval					
Expenditures					
Charter approval					
Policy development					
Advocacy statements					

## SWOT ANALYSIS

Completing an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) is an important step in optimizing the strengths and minimizing the weaknesses of your partnership. Work through the SWOT analysis to spark discussions of possibilities the partnership should consider (refer to the elements of the “Stakeholder Analysis for Potential Individual Members” completed earlier to help identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats).

EXAMPLE OF SWOT ANALYSIS

	<i>Helpful</i>	<i>Harmful</i>
Internal	<p><i>Strengths</i></p> <p>A strong research component of the partnership allows for flexibility in a changing environment.</p> <p>Solid relationships with political figures in the country will help the partnership's efforts to gain political support.</p>	<p><i>Weaknesses</i></p> <p>The partnership's funding sources are ever-changing and precarious.</p> <p>The partnership lacks adequate technical support.</p>
	<p><i>Opportunities</i></p> <p>The issues the partnership seeks to resolve have been stated as a priority for a potential funder.</p> <p>The country's government has committed to greatly increase health-sector funding.</p>	<p><i>Threats</i></p> <p>The political landscape seems to be on the verge of transition.</p> <p>Citizens of the country are suspicious of health workers from outside countries.</p>

*Strengths.* What are the attributes of your partnership that will help to achieve your mission? Think in terms of resource availability, established relationships/contacts, donation capabilities, and so on.

*Weaknesses.* What are the attributes of your partnership that could hurt your chances of achieving your mission? Focus on the partnership's attributes that might lead to failures and losses or hinder the partnership's adaptive capabilities.

*Opportunities.* What are some *external* conditions that will help your partnership to achieve its mission? Look at the local, regional, and global environment to brainstorm opportunities. Have any recent changes occurred in technology, government, policy, and so on, that present opportunities to advance your initiatives?

*Threats.* What are some *external* conditions that could keep your partnership from achieving its mission? For threats, again consider the local,

regional, and global landscape to identify potential threats. For example, is there a competing cause, a similar initiative that has received little support in the past, or political instability?

**OPPORTUNITY MATRIX**

One result of the “SWOT Analysis” is a list of opportunities. The “Opportunity Matrix” provides a format for prioritizing these opportunities, based on two considerations: value and cost/degree of difficulty. Opportunities that fall within the lower end of the “Cost/degree of difficulty” spectrum as well as the higher end of the “Value” spectrum are generally more desirable opportunities to pursue. Conversely, opportunities that fall within the higher end of the “Cost/degree of difficulty” spectrum as well as the lower end of the “Value” spectrum are less desirable opportunities to pursue.

*Value.* What is the relative importance of the activity to the partnership’s mission?

*Cost/degree of difficulty.* Is this activity particularly costly or difficult to sustain?

		<i>Cost/degree of difficulty</i>	
		<i>Low</i>	<i>High</i>
<i>Value</i>	<i>High</i>	These are going to be your <i>most</i> appealing opportunities.	Are these opportunities worth their associated <i>costs</i> ?
	<i>Low</i>	Are these opportunities <i>valuable</i> enough to pursue?	These are going to be your <i>least</i> appealing opportunities.

## STRATEGY WORKSHEET

Once the significant strengths, weaknesses, threats, and opportunities are identified, it is possible to establish a strategy statement for how the collaboration will go about accomplishing its shared goal. The overall strategy does not need to include the details of specific activities; instead, it should lay out the overall approach. *While developing this strategy, it is important to keep in mind how the collaboration can capitalize on its greatest opportunities and manage its potential threats.*

<i>Goal</i>	<i>Strategy for reaching the goal</i>	<i>Major milestones</i>

This exercise may lead to a one-sentence statement of strategy or two or three strategic initiatives. By discussing these topics, the group can move from the big-picture context to key activities for carrying out the strategy (or strategies) and resources.

## QUESTIONS FOR DETERMINING KEY ACTIVITIES

Once the overall strategy for the collaboration is clearly defined, it is possible to break down the strategy into specific activities. When identifying specific activities, four important elements should be considered:

1. What will the timeframe be for this activity (activities should include funding activities)?
2. Who will hold the responsibility for this activity (for example, how can individuals leverage their personal strengths)?
3. What resources and support will be necessary for this activity to be carried out?
4. How will the progress of this activity be measured?

<i>Key activity</i>	<i>Timeframe</i>	<i>Person/ organization responsible</i>	<i>Resources/ support needed</i>	<i>Measurement of progress</i>

### QUESTIONS FOR DETERMINING ORGANIZATIONAL ROLES

Before the First Mile is completed, each partner should have a good idea of what his or her organization is going to *contribute* to the partnership, as well as how the partnership will *benefit*. This tool encourages partners to clarify that commitment. Once this worksheet is filled out by a representative of each member organization, a list can be compiled and distributed to the entire partnership to avoid confusion in the future. If any partners disagree with the roles described, the partners can hold a group discussion, using this worksheet as a guide for discussion.

<i>My organization's role</i>	<i>How my organization will benefit</i>	<i>How the partnership will benefit and advance toward the goal</i>

1. *My organization's role.* What will my organization's primary role be within the partnership (for example, fundraising, technical support, policy advice, and so on)?
2. *How my organization will benefit.* How will my organization benefit by carrying out this role within the partnership (for example, the goals of the partnership mirror the goals of my organization, allow my organization to make in-country political contacts, and so on)?
3. *How the partnership will benefit.* How will the partnership benefit if my organization carries out this role (increased resources, increased technical capabilities, media attention, and so on)?

## GROUND RULES FOR INTERACTION

<i>Area</i>	<i>Examples of specific ground rules</i>
Basic courtesies	Members will turn off cell phones during meetings.  When a person enters a meeting, the convener will briefly summarize the points covered.
Problem solving and decision making	Members will brainstorm ideas before debate begins.  The convener will summarize when a consensus appears to have been reached.
Frequency/method of internal communication	The convener will set up biweekly conference calls and quarterly face-to-face meetings.
Frequency/method of external communication	Monthly forums will be set up with the external stakeholders.
Accountability	At the end of meetings the convener will summarize action steps, the persons responsible for each action, and the timing for his or her reports on progress.
Conflict resolution	The convener or other designated member will work directly with those involved in conflict within twenty-four hours of its emergence to help resolve the issues.
The convener's role in meetings	The convener will develop an agenda two weeks before a meeting and circulate it for input.  During meetings the convener will encourage participation by every partner.

Partnerships bring together a diverse group of stakeholders with different perspectives and experiences. By agreeing on ground rules for interaction at the first meeting, the group can begin to establish an open environment, set the stage for meaningful discussion, and help lay the groundwork for resolving conflicts. This process of developing ground rules can help members set a pattern of respect and cooperation. The format below can be used to guide a discussion and develop a list of agreed-upon ground rules:

Basic courtesies

Problem solving and decision making

Frequency/method of internal communication

Frequency/method of external communication

Accountability

Conflict resolution

The convener's role in meetings

Depending on the size of the group and the level of discussion, this exercise will take thirty minutes or more. The following steps will help the convener to guide the discussion.

1. Introduce the exercise by giving examples of ground rules and describing how they will help the partners work together productively.
2. To speed the process and encourage participation, consider agreeing up front that when someone suggests a ground rule, it will be accepted unless opposition is expressed. In other words, silence on the part of the group means "we agree," and the item becomes one of the ground rules.
3. Ask for suggested ground rules and record each on a flip chart. (The worksheet here is a guide for the issues that need to be addressed in developing the ground rules.)
4. Once the group agrees to a set of ground rules it can support and live by, post the ground rules on the wall.
5. Explain that any of the participants can bring attention to how the group is straying from the agreed-upon rules.

## TOPICS TO INCLUDE IN THE CHARTER

Developing a formal charter is a useful step for any partnership because it clarifies the critical elements of the partnership's work. The worksheet below can be filled out by the convener following discussions of the earlier tools in this "First Mile Toolkit." After drafting the partnership's charter, the convener will need to circulate it, hold a group discussion, and refine it until all partners are committed to it.

### *Project mission and milestones*

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Rationale for project:

Goal and timeframe:

Projected outcome, deliverables, and cost:

Key activities:

Measurements/milestones:

Constraints/limits:

### *Governance and decision path*

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Decision path/responsibility for decision making and management:

Timing of key decisions:

### *Responsibilities of core member organizations*

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Core member  
organization:

Resources committed:

Timeframe:

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*Sponsor/funding commitments*

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Sponsor:

Resources committed:

Timeframe:

*Stakeholders*

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Key stakeholders:

Stakeholder concerns:

Target recipients/clients:

Needs of recipients/clients:

Strategy for communicating with stakeholders:

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**SUPPLEMENTARY READING FOR FIRST MILE TOOLS**

**General**

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