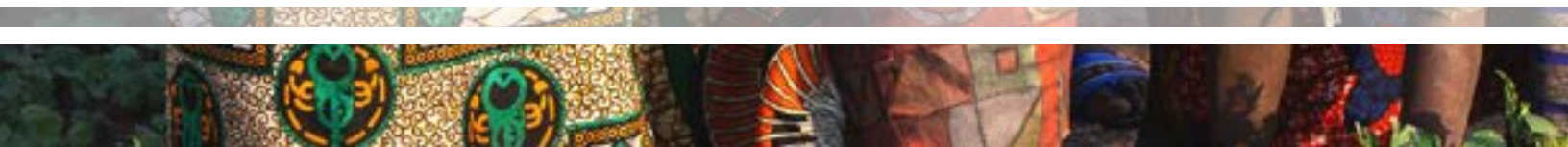




# DELIVERING IMPACT THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

Our approach to program partnerships



# THE IMPORTANCE OF PARTNERSHIPS

Nutrition International's Global Strategy and Investment Case (2018 – 2024) promote nutrition as the foundation of good health, educational attainment, women's empowerment, and human capital. In order to achieve the vision set in these guiding documents, we seek and cultivate new and existing partnerships that advance our mandate and goals, especially around the health and nutrition of women, children, and adolescent girls. Through such partnerships, we also strive to contribute to Goal 17 of the Sustainable Development Goals: strengthen and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development.

Nutrition International's current operating model is to work mainly with government and state actors in the health and nutrition sector to build and strengthen the overall capacity of the health system. Developing and sustaining meaningful partnerships takes time and resources but, if done well, the synergy created between the two organizations can result in increased impact for those who need it most. We recognize that partnerships will only be successful if they are based on shared goals, common values, and clear principles.

Nutrition International seeks to work with partners who can deliver nutrition-sensitive interventions in the fields of education, water and sanitation, sexual and reproductive health, social protection, and agriculture. We also look for partnerships with organizations that can help to identify and break down gender barriers to good nutrition, such as women-led and women's rights organizations at the grassroots and global levels.

## We partner to:

- Improve quality and availability of existing health programs and services
- Increase our geographical reach
- Leverage resources to support greater economies of scale
- Improve understanding of the geographical contexts in which we conduct programming
- Improve the technical and functional capacities of our staff
- Support capacity development of our partners for long-term organizational sustainability
- Enhance Nutrition International's learning process

**This brief articulates Nutrition International's approach to identifying and working with partners to help us achieve our overarching goal of transforming the lives of one billion vulnerable people, especially women, adolescent girls, and children by improving their nutritional status. We view partnerships with national and global nutrition actors as key for sustainably improving policies, programs, and resources for nutrition.**

# OUR PARTNERSHIP PRINCIPLES

Our partnership approach is based on six interrelated principles that form the foundation of healthy and successful partnerships. They are:

## OUR VISION

Nutrition International is committed to seeking partnerships that achieve maximum global impact through leveraging resources, expertise, platforms, and systems that improve program quality, increase reach, and promote sustainability of health and nutrition interventions.

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### Shared partnership vision and values<sup>1</sup>

While recognizing and accepting differences, each partner should share a similar partnership vision and organizational values that can contribute to the relationship.

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### Clear expectations

Clarity of goals, objectives and responsibilities must exist to foster the effective accomplishment of tasks and efficient use of resources.

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### Trust, transparency, and accountability

We engage partners in open and participatory dialogue to ensure appropriate levels of consultation to build trust. We promote information sharing and adherence to agreed-upon processes and standards of communication to promote transparency and enhance accountability.

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### Respect, equity and diversity

We acknowledge and leverage the strengths each partner brings to achieve common goals and objectives in an environment of mutual respect. We also believe that organizational independence and perspectives should be upheld to promote equal chance for decision-making. We embrace openness to, and tolerance of, differences based on gender, beliefs, cultures, race, and religion. We apply non-discriminatory practices and will work with those who do likewise.

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### Commitment to learning and knowledge sharing

We believe that learning and knowledge sharing are transformative and promote continuous commitment to such so that others around the world can benefit.

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<sup>1</sup> Nutrition International's organizational values are:

**People First:** We respect the rights of the communities we serve and put the needs of the world's most vulnerable ahead of the agendas of the world's most powerful.

**Humble Authority:** We demonstrate leadership through listening and collaboration, offering expertise without ego.

**Agility:** Our breadth & depth of technical expertise, combined with our flexible approach, allow us to take action on a range of nutrition challenges.

**Inspired Determination:** We look beyond what has already been done and pursue better, faster ways to get what works to those who urgently need it.



# OUR STAKEHOLDERS

Over the years, Nutrition International has worked with a wide range of stakeholders (implementing NGOs, individual consultants, groups, companies etc.) – many of which were called ‘partners.’ Through the process of developing this document, guided by our vision and principles for partnership, we are now better positioned to define and categorize our relationships. However, the way we categorize stakeholders is not limited to the current type of relationship and is not mutually exclusive. This means that a stakeholder can fall into one or more categories if there are multiple points of engagement at a given point in time – and that the relationships can change over time.

- **Partners:** These are organizations that Nutrition International works with for project implementation, knowledge creation, technical assistance, and/or innovation. A partnership is defined as a relationship that is based on shared principles, includes a process to co-design an agreed-upon scope of work, and may facilitate the exchange of technical and human resources.

In all cases, a partnership is bound by a formal commitment between both parties towards shared aims and accountability for results that is outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding or a partnership agreement that may or may not include a financial exchange.

- **Collaborators/Allies:** These are stakeholders that Nutrition International works informally with through multi-sectoral platforms, technical working groups and fora at the global, regional, or country level where we share information, conduct joint activities, and work together around shared advocacy. Such collaborations or alliances can be thematically or issue-based and may revolve around specific campaigns in which Nutrition International sees strategic value in participating (fundraising, leadership or positioning, opportunistic or other purposes). These can be formal or informal, revolve around a common intention, and our commitment is generally not legally binding.

- **Sub-contractors:** These are stakeholders that have a relationship with Nutrition International with full defined scope of work or general terms, for which the conditions are fully defined by Nutrition International and are reflected in contracts.

Examples include:

- individual or organizational consultants
  - administrative service providers - supporting Nutrition International's program implementation
  - suppliers and vendors - providers of goods and services
- **Donors:** Donors are not considered as partners as our relationships with them are fully defined based on their priorities, specifications, and terms and conditions. However, in exceptional cases, a donor may decide to work with Nutrition International as a partner, based on the definition above.





## OUR PARTNERSHIP FRAMEWORK CYCLE

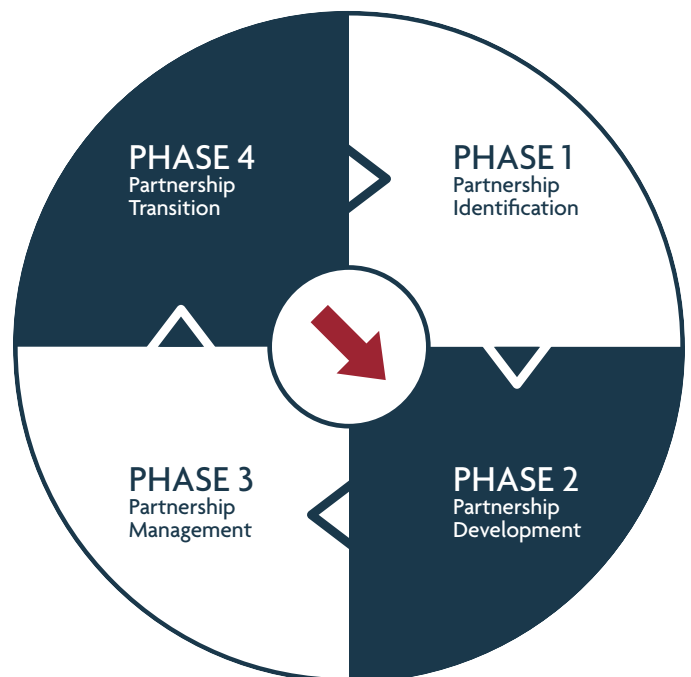
Partnerships can result in optimum use of resources, greater recognition, improved growth, and expansion of programs. Partnerships are not static but rather, evolving based on the changing needs and dynamics of the partners, the operating environment and, often, Nutrition International's priorities and programs.

Our Partnership Framework guides our approach for managing and strengthening relationships. The foundation of partnerships is based on our principles. We believe that these principles are the core to identifying, developing, managing, and transitioning partnerships.

The Partnership Cycle as illustrated has four interconnected phases: Partnership Identification, Partnership Development, Partnership Management and Partnership Transition. In many instances, Nutrition International has continued working with the same partners after a project or program has ended, extended, or been redesigned, which

infers that the partnership cycle from the partnership development phase onwards needs to be followed if such a decision is made.

For an effective partnership, time and resources need to be invested in relationship at each phase in the cycle.



## PARTNERSHIP PHASE DESCRIPTION

### Partnership Identification

During this phase, we identify suitable, potential partners to work with for the implementation of a project intervention or program goal, and then select the appropriate partner.

Selecting a partner is only one step in the partnership cycle, yet it is often forgotten that defining and reflecting on why and how partners work together are the building blocks to a successful partnership.

Successful partnerships begin with the understanding that there will never be a perfect partner, and of why Nutrition International would like to work in partnership.

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### Partnership Development

During this phase, we develop the partnership and determine how to effectively manage a program/project together. Once the partner has been selected, it is important to lay the foundation of the partnership by taking the time to build the relationship. This solid foundation of complicity will be especially useful when faced with challenges, differences of opinion or needing to lay trust in the other.

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### Partnership Management

During this phase, we review how the relationship is working (and not only on what is being done) and ensure that required adjustments are made in a timely manner. Ongoing interactions and assessments of the partnership enables partners to learn, adapt, verify misunderstandings or perceptions, and continue to improve its effectiveness and efficiency.

Partnership review questions:

- Are there better ways of working together?
- Are we achieving our partnership goals?
- Are we learning from each other and applying the learnings to our way of working?
- Are we modifying ways of working based on new information or context?
- Are we resolving conflicts or challenges in a timely manner?
- Are we showing appreciation and recognition to each other?

## PARTNERSHIP PHASE DESCRIPTION

### Partnership Management (continued)

- Are we connecting at different levels (global, regional, country, local) to strengthen our relationship?
- Are we communicating and sharing information effectively (between meetings)?
- Are we recognizing and leveraging each other's capacities, strengths, interests?
- Are we increasing our impact, leverage, coverage, gender equality?

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### Partnership Transition

During this phase, we make decisions regarding the changing context of the partnership including: the achievement of outcomes, opportunities for continued formal collaboration, the quality of the partnership, available funding, and changing priorities. Partners may decide to end or continue the partnership. No matter the reason for ending the partnership, it is important to reflect on the shared accomplishments, lessons learned and set the foundation for future collaboration. A formal close out of the partnership is usually appreciated but often forgotten in a partnership cycle.

Transitioning of a partner are categorized into three outcomes:

- Termination
- Redesign or extend
- Close the program/project



As the scale of our reach and ambitions continue to grow, Nutrition International will continue to seek partners to amplify impact, expand footprints and support our mission to improve the nutritional and health status of billions of the world's most vulnerable populations, especially women and children. We will continue to use our successes and lessons learned in managing our partnerships to ensure mutual benefits and sustainable growth.





## ABOUT NUTRITION INTERNATIONAL

Founded in 1992, Nutrition International is a global organization dedicated to delivering proven nutrition interventions to those who need them most. Working in partnership with countries, donors and implementers, our experts conduct cutting-edge nutrition research, support critical policy formulation, and integrate nutrition into broader development programs. In more than 60 countries, primarily in Asia and Africa, Nutrition International nourishes people to nourish life

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