



Government
Communication
Service

Planning and Delivering Effective Communications Partnership Strategies

Standards and Guidance

CIVIL SERVICE REFORM

Contents

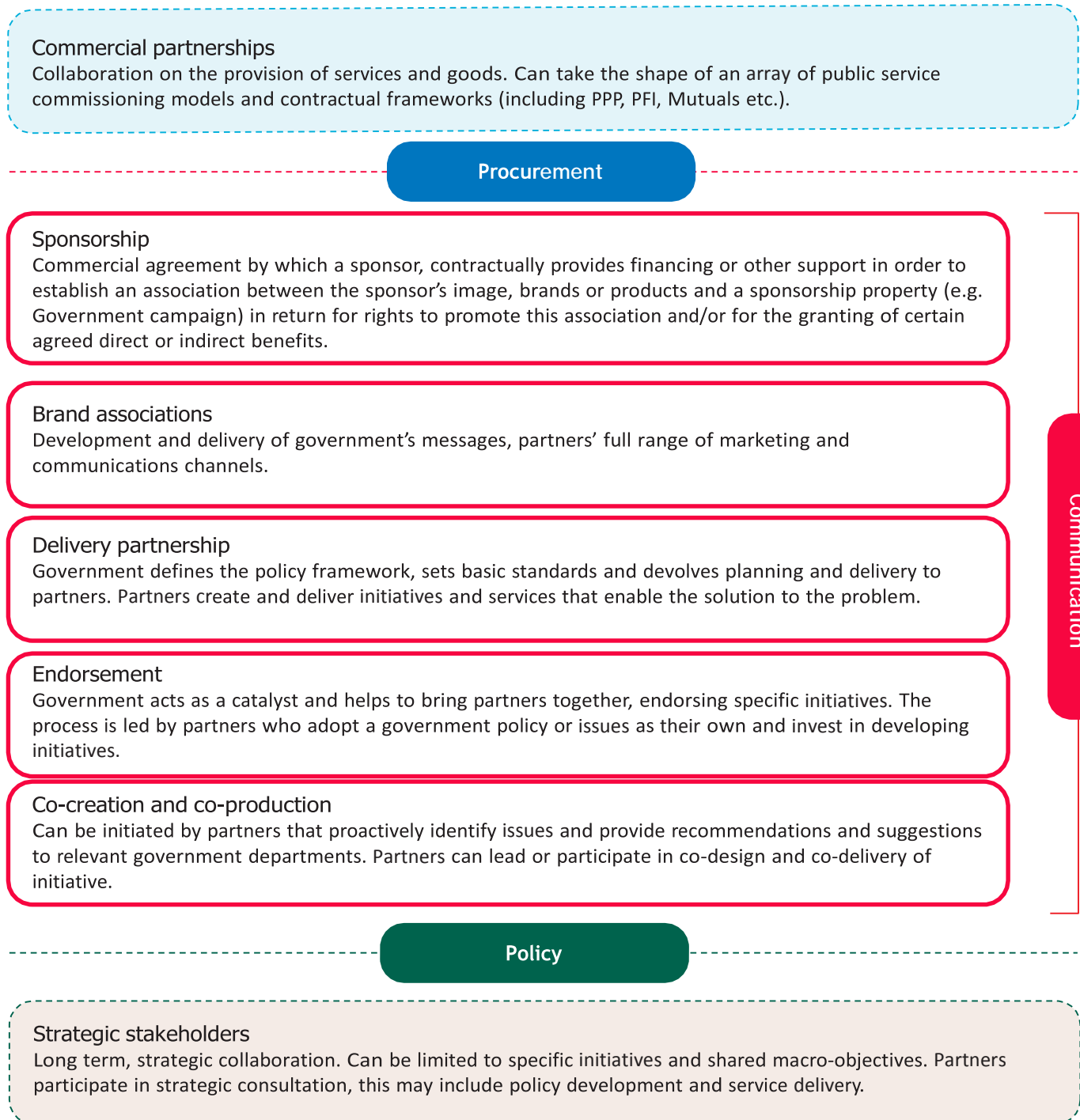
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1. Background

The way in which government works in partnership with external organisations has changed significantly in recent years. This document offers guidance on how to establish successful partnerships. The primary focus of this guidance is on partnerships in relation to communications activity. However the basic principles suggested here can be applied across other forms of partnership, bearing in mind the requirement to seek specific specialist advice on areas such as private finance initiatives, mutuals and joint ventures, see **Annex** for further information.

The table below outlines the different types of partnership that government enters into.

1.1: Common partnership models for government



2. Why undertake communications partnerships?

At the outset we need to explore whether a partnership approach to communications activity is appropriate as this may not always be the case. It's important to identify the strategic role that partners will play, the ways in which they would add value and how this will be measured. If this isn't clear, then a partnership may not be appropriate.

Whatever form partnerships take they must always support a clearly defined and robust strategy.

Elements to consider include:

- Effectiveness: external support can help government to interact more effectively with citizens by harnessing the influence and trusted voice of intermediaries – optimising resources and maximising potential reach
- Empowerment: allowing citizens and communities to participate in designing and delivering public good initiatives
- Shared responsibility: partners and individuals share with government the responsibility for delivering public good
- Relationship with our audiences: we can benefit from existing bonds between partners and communities. Partners often offer a far more accessible and trusted source of information, advice and support
- Specific knowledge: partners can have a direct understanding of specific communities or local circumstances.

As the term suggests, partnerships are two-way relationships – a partnership must demonstrate tangible value to both the partner organisation and government. Government departments should provide appropriate opportunities for organisations to associate themselves with our activities in return for their support.

3. Propriety and relevant regulation

Objectivity and fairness

At all times civil servants must act in accordance with the Civil Service Code. When entering into any partnership, you must act with integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality. Always act under the assumption that both your actions and the perception of those actions will come under scrutiny. Any perceived breach of best practice will erode people's confidence in the organisations you represent and the issues you are communicating.

It's your responsibility to ensure that there is no justifiable cause for complaint – from the public, the media or the business community. If it won't stand up to parliamentary and public scrutiny, you shouldn't be doing it.

You should seek potential partners in an open and even handed way, and you should be transparent and entirely impartial when conducting negotiations.

Never enter into a partnership that could provide (or be perceived as offering) a partner an unfair competitive advantage. See **Annex** for further details on managing public assets and State Aid, aspects of which are relevant to this issue of competitive advantage.

Departments should always aim to prevent any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, favoured treatment – implied or otherwise – or endorsement by the government of commercial products or services.

If a potential partner is already involved in significant commercial negotiations with the government organisation, you should not enter into a separate partnership with them. And in protecting yourself from this, you should always ensure that organisations disclose any such activity or relevant sponsorship agreements before any negotiations commence.

Donations, sponsorship or contributions from partners must be disclosed within a department's annual report and must be treated as gifts. For further help on this subject please see **Annex** and [HM Treasury \(HMT\) guidance Managing Public Money](#).

Partnership managers should always ensure that the relationship between the department and partner is appropriate and that relevant officials are informed of any new partnerships.

Where questions of propriety and ethics are raised you should first seek clarification within the department – usually at the senior management level. It may also be advisable to seek further guidance from the Cabinet Office Government Communication Centre's Strategy team and the [Government Communication Service \(GCS\) team](#).

Please see **Annex** for further references to relevant regulatory frameworks and supplementary guidance.

Product placement

As well as having a responsibility for the way in which partners are chosen, you must also ensure that partners understand and respect their responsibilities once selected. It's important that they don't use government initiatives as a platform for a direct sales channel. The only exception to this rule is where this is to encourage the purchase of products or services that relate to specific health or welfare issues – condoms, smoke alarms and the like.

In such cases, it's vital that all relevant competing providers of the product or service are given equal opportunity to be involved in the campaign. This might be achieved through a transparent procurement exercise, or by openly inviting organisations to participate in the campaign through recognised trade bodies.

Exclusivity

Sector exclusivity is an important and sensitive area, and can only be granted after careful consideration and in specific situations for a set timeframe. Such exclusivity can only apply when it will enhance the collaboration and deliver significant additional benefits. Departments must ensure that they are not limiting the scope or reach that a multiplicity of partners would deliver. In the event that such exclusivity is proposed, this should be supported by a business case that will need senior management and ministerial sign off.

Government logos and symbols

Government logos and symbols remain Crown property, and it's important that any such branding is only ever used by non-government bodies in agreed partnership situations.

Ministers and officials

Partnerships should not imply or suggest any obligation upon individual ministers or civil servants. There must be no suggestion that partners are being given privileged access to ministers or senior officials in return for cash or benefits.

Ministers can attend relevant campaign events and approved quotes may be supplied for use in partners' press releases and information materials, as long as they are relevant to the campaign. However, these things should never be guaranteed or included in any partnership agreement.

4. Partnerships in practice

Choosing the most appropriate type of partnership model to adopt will depend on the context and circumstance. Key factors that may influence the choice include:

- Availability of resources and funds
- Strategic priorities
- Desired level of direct involvement
- Risk mitigation.

The following table gives a more detailed description of the common partnership models.

4.1: Common partnership models, definitions and roles

		Lead	Involve	Inform
<p>Sponsorship Commercial agreements by which a sponsor contractually provides financing or other support in order to establish an association between the sponsor’s image, brands or products and a sponsorship property (e.g. Government campaign) in return for rights to promote the association and/or for the granting of certain agreed direct or indirect benefits.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Right-holder retains full control of brand property/central theme/activity • Legally binding contractual agreement • Transparent value exchange • Limited number of partners with tiered packages. 	<p>Comms & Marketing</p> <p>Service Delivery</p>	<p>Policy</p> <p>Finance & Legal</p>	
<p>Brand associations Development and delivery of government’s messages, use of partners’ full range of marketing and communications channels.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government retains central coordination of theme, brand property and activity • Investment of some kind from both parties with mutually exchanged benefits • Partner brands are specifically targeted and highly relevant to the topic involved/audiences. 	<p>Comms & Marketing</p> <p>Service Delivery</p>	<p>Policy</p> <p>Finance & Legal</p>	
<p>Delivery partnership Government defines policy framework, sets basic standards and devolves planning and delivery to partners. Partners create and deliver initiatives and services that enable the solution to the problem.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government retains central coordination of theme • Delivery strategy, partnership governance structure, brand property etc are partners-driven • Can involve a number of pilots and various delivery mechanisms • Successful models can be adapted according to specific circumstances, needs and audiences and replicated. 	<p>Comms & Marketing</p> <p>Service Delivery</p>	<p>Policy</p> <p>Finance & Legal</p>	
<p>Endorsement Government acts as a catalyst and helps to bring partners together, and endorsing approach and initiatives. The process is led by partners who adopt a government policy or issues as their own and invest in developing solutions and initiatives.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government retains coordination of main themes and a facilitation role but development and delivery are partners-driven • Partners own and champion the policy/issue, influence the public and private etc to better effect, normalise behaviours and promote mass participation/adoption etc • Can involve a number of pilots and various delivery mechanisms • Successful models can be adapted according to specific circumstances/needs/audiences and replicated. 	<p>Comms & Marketing</p> <p>Service Delivery</p>	<p>Policy</p> <p>Finance & Legal</p>	
<p>Co-creation and co-production Can be initiated by partners that proactively identify issue and provide recommendations and suggestions to relevant government departments. Partners can lead or participate in co-design and co-delivery of initiative.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Government and key stakeholders collaborate to identify issues and together develop solutions. They co-own and co-manage themes, brand property and activities • Partners are involved in the policy making process and work with departments to develop strategy and delivery mechanisms • New delivery bodies can be created for the implementation of the initiative. 	<p>Comms & Marketing</p> <p>Service Delivery</p>	<p>Policy</p> <p>Finance & Legal</p>	

Communications partnerships aren't simply a function of marketing. For them to be successful and effective it's vital to coordinate activity with other areas of the business – policy, finance, legal and service delivery.

Cross departmental collaboration is essential to maximise opportunities, avoid duplication and deliver activity that clearly delivers on cross-government policy and reflects government priorities.

In addition, those seeking to deliver communications partnerships should note that the Cabinet Office Partnership Team develops and delivers the Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister's priority policy initiatives in partnership with business, and also manages key business policy relationships on behalf of Cabinet Office and No.10. They can be contacted at partnerships-team@cabinetoffice.gov.uk

5. Partnership selection

Principles of transparency and impartiality need to underpin any partner selection process. To aid this process, it's important that any information about partnership opportunities is made public. This may take the form of publishing full details of opportunities or it may simply be an open call for partnership proposals across a range of appropriate channels.

It's not necessary to keep the public abreast of any on-going negotiations or exploratory meetings with potential partners. However, in the interests of transparency you should always keep records of the selection and negotiation process. This record can be used to inform responses to parliamentary questions, Freedom of Information requests and any challenges that may arise. See **Annex** for further details.

Senior officials are ultimately responsible for approving approaches to potential partners, and it's good practice to share lists of potential partners and selection criteria widely within the department and across other government departments. This may include: appropriate policy teams, a partnership network contact, the Cabinet Office Partnership Team and with private offices in other departments where relevant.

Sometimes an organisation might be approached by more than one department with requests for support. The communications team should consult with colleagues in other departments and agencies to ensure that any crossover is effectively managed avoiding duplication of effort.

Some departments choose to pre-select a number of strategic partners to support the planning and implementation of initiatives. Others choose to establish partnerships on an ad hoc basis as the need arises. Either approach is fine, although in all cases potential partners should be assessed against pre-agreed criteria. These may include:

- Relevance of the sector
- Partner's reputation, corporate values and corporate social responsibility (CSR) track record
- Demographic relevance, reach and synergy with the audience
- Financial record (e.g. is the organisation viable or currently under investigation by, for example, the Competition Commission, HMRC or the Charity Commission)
- Partner's existing relationship with your department or other departments
- Partner's level of engagement and willingness to commit
- Partner's ability to deliver activities within a set timeframe.

It's also important that public opinion towards a partner is monitored on an on-going basis.

It's often worth exploring the corporate objectives and CSR interests of potential partners, who should be approached with a robust proposal that complements these objectives.

By its very nature a great deal of government information can be regarded as the definitive source of expertise on certain subjects, and this is of high value to the media. Departments must fully explore the opportunities for free advertorial, other features and wider dissemination before defaulting to any paid media partnership.

Proactive approaches to potential partners

Often, you'll benefit from working with numerous partners – from both the voluntary and private sectors. To encourage engagement, you might place a prominent notice on your department's website, liaise with industry media or hold open days allowing potential partners to visit. Whichever route you choose, always provide the appropriate contact details that organisations should use in future correspondence, and always be clear on how the follow-up process will work. It is recommended that you keep a contact log to help later in the process. Note that any proposed expenditure above £100,000 should receive approval through the [Cabinet Office, Efficiency and Reform Group \(ERG\)](#) marketing and advertising spending controls before any budget is committed.

Reactive approaches

Sometimes, an organisation may approach departments directly with an offer of support. In these instances, the same principles of transparency and impartiality should guide you when assessing the suitability of such offers.

Where an organisation proactively approaches a department with offers of support that contain unique elements, the intellectual property of these should be considered to be owned by the organisation. In such cases, other organisations may be offered the opportunity to participate, but they cannot be given the opportunity to copy the unique elements.

6. Working with a partner

It's entirely reasonable for partners to expect some form of return for their support, but it's important that any such support – financial or otherwise – is clearly stated upfront.

In some situations once a partner has been selected, it may be necessary for 'seed funding' to be provided for specific activities. For example, government may partially cover the production costs of co-branded activity which a partner has agreed to run. Such funding should only be considered where the returns on investment are expected to be significant. If seed funding is deemed appropriate, it should follow standard budgeting process, and must be approved both by senior officials within the department and by the Cabinet Office's ERG controls.

Approval of activities

All activities undertaken by partners – or indeed their agencies in delivering the partnership – are ultimately the responsibility of the department, and your policy and communications teams should be involved in the approval process where appropriate. This would include the approval of any copy and press releases.

Prizes and incentives

Cash and/or government services (e.g. discount against vehicle tax) must never be used as an incentive or as a campaign prize.

It's perfectly reasonable for partners to donate prizes and incentives for campaigns and in so doing they should be recognised in campaign materials. However, the department cannot take on liability for the quality or performance of any donated prizes or incentives; any complaints relating to the quality of prizes or incentives should be directed to the partner organisation.

Prizes and incentives can be sourced through a partner or purchased from the campaign fund. In either case, no brand recognition is needed. Any such prizes must be appropriate, relevant to the target audience and justifiable as a suitable use of public funds.

See [Annex](#) for further information about competitions and prizes and the [Committee of Advertising Practice \(CAP\) Code](#).

7. Sponsorships

Sponsorship for government generally means an external organisation providing a public body with financial or in-kind support, in return for the right to be associated with one of our initiatives.

A written contract should always support any sponsorship arrangement, detailing each party's obligations and any associated financial or reputational risks. To this end, you should work closely with your procurement and legal teams to help with the planning and negotiation, additional guidance and help can be found in the [Government Procurement Service \(GPS\) Creative Solutions Framework RM988](#). It's important to note that your legal and procurement teams must clear all contracts before they are signed.

As with other forms of partnership, seeking suitable sponsors can be very time consuming, and more often than not this activity requires specific knowledge of the marketplace. You may require the services of a specialist agency to help with this task. The agencies listed in Framework RM988 are adept at partnership marketing. They can help develop rights packages, contact and secure sponsors, evaluate the results and manage the relationship with them. In addition, the agencies will work with relevant regulatory and industry bodies to ensure approval of relevant content.

When selecting a sponsor, it's important to identify and be aware of any possible conflicts of interest, and to avoid these wherever possible. With this in mind, undertake due diligence checks and pay special attention to any restrictions that might be in place on procurement for specific contractors and suppliers.

Before approaching an organisation, you should check whether your department has an existing relationship with them. This can be done through simple internal checks – contact should also be made with relevant departments. A list of partnership network contacts is available on the [GCS website](#).

It is also recommended that a list of potential sponsors is cleared by relevant private offices and that the legal and procurement teams clear all sponsorship contracts.

Once an arrangement is in place, it's your responsibility to ensure that any sponsorship represents value for money for government, and that government's costs are minimised. Our own assets and property rights should be as accurate as possible, and it's important to ensure that the contract is affordable to the department.

Media sponsorships

In certain situations it may be appropriate for government to sponsor external activities or media properties. This might include advertiser funded programming, radio, events and TV sponsorships. Because all of this activity falls under the Commercial Media Buying Framework RM1704, you'll need to liaise with the Government Procurement Service.

Product placement

Product placement opportunities will most commonly involve the inclusion of government messages, services or logos within fictional or non-fictional media. The rules that govern such activity are the responsibility of Ofcom. See **Annex** for further information.

8. Contracts and ownership

Sponsorship is a formal arrangement where the partner contribution can be financial or in-kind, and all sponsorship agreements need to be in writing. Where money is not involved, a simple letter of agreement will suffice; where financial activities are involved, you need to make sure that a full contract is drawn up, with legal input from both sides, before any money is exchanged. Senior officials need to ensure that the appropriate documentation is in place, and that approvals come from people with the relevant delegated authority.

As well as logos any work undertaken by department members are Crown Copyright. And other materials can come into government ownership by transfer or assignment. Beyond that, with the exception of logos, any information or material that features on government websites can be used by third parties free of charge in whatever format they choose, under the Open Government Licence.

Partner produced material is owned by the partner, although if it draws on resources covered by Crown Copyright, you must approve its use. Materials that are co-created are co-owned by the department and the partner, unless another arrangement is actively agreed in writing.

You need to be careful not to promise something that cannot be realised. Full confidentiality should never be offered, as in the interest of transparency details may need to be disclosed under FOI. Also, all contracts are open to access by the National Audit Office (NAO).

The value of in-kind support and pro bono work must be accurately recorded using standard accounting practice. See **Annex** for further details, with specific reference to [HMT guidance Managing Public Money](#). Where a letter of agreement is required, this should clearly detail the objectives of the partnership, how the partner will support the work, termination (see also Exit Strategy) and defamation clauses, timeframes, and any support that the department will give to enable the partnership. It is also best practice to include details of any required evaluation metrics.

Brand licensing

Only government brands that are registered as trademarks can be licensed. Licensing such a brand can offer a useful way of it being used appropriately by third parties – known as licensees. When doing this, it's important that any licensing agreement is detailed and accurate, with clear standards and charging structures where appropriate.

In the event that materials are co-produced, it's important to state in the partnership contract how these should be licensed and how their commercial exploitation would work.

9. Outcome based planning

Plan early. The earlier you plan, the more time you'll have to identify and engage with partners allowing them to provide support in a timely manner. When planning, always plan with outcomes in mind, taking into account identifying stakeholders, audience segmentation and the behaviour change journey.

The following table gives some pointers on what the planning and delivery process might involve. It's not a prescriptive template, rather a useful framework from which to draw.

9.1 Partnership planning and delivery

Phase	1. Understanding and scoping	2. Strategy and proposition development	3. Partners recruitment/ negotiations	4. Agreements and activity planning	5. Delivery	6. Evaluation
Tasks	<p>Define role for communications partnership against policy objectives</p> <p>Audience(s) segmentation and insight</p> <p>Identify other relevant interventions and initiatives</p> <p>Review existing partnerships and relevant learning from previous initiatives</p> <p>Identify and assess role of key stakeholders</p>	<p>Develop vision and concept</p> <p>Develop a partner recruitment strategy and action plan with risk assessment framework</p> <p>Establish partner selection criteria</p> <p>Assess and select appropriate partnership model (see table 1.1)</p> <p>Create evaluation plan</p> <p>Develop partners proposition and identify terms for partnership negotiation</p> <p>Identifying the short/ medium/long term partnership requirements (i.e. what partners will deliver)</p>	<p>Assess existing and potential partners according to criteria</p> <p>Integration of existing departmental relations and stakeholders when appropriate</p> <p>Proactive partner recruitment, e.g. direct approach or call for interest</p> <p>Partnership risk assessment</p>	<p>Negotiate partner activity, partners' specific objectives, KPIs and timeline</p> <p>Negotiate data sourcing sharing for evaluation</p> <p>Liaising with government department and stakeholders, ensuring coordination between government policies and initiatives</p> <p>Formalise agreement with partners</p>	<p>Coordinate delivery of activities against objectives</p> <p>Regular monitoring of strategy and action plan to ensure it is fit for purpose</p> <p>Ensure ongoing learning built into partnership strategy and used to inform future plans</p>	<p>Implement evaluation plan</p> <p>Proactively share knowledge and learning</p>
Deliverables	<p>Map of landscape</p> <p>Role for partnership in policy delivery</p>	<p>Partnership strategy</p> <p>Partner proposition</p> <p>Assets inventory</p>	<p>Key partners and roles defined</p> <p>Commitment to support</p> <p>Fulfilment plan</p>	<p>Adjustment plans</p> <p>Heads of agreement</p> <p>Detailed delivery plan</p> <p>Master action plan</p>	<p>Individual Activity plans</p> <p>Deployment</p>	<p>Evaluation report</p>
Timing – Weeks No:	1–3	3–6	6–10	10+	14+	End of project or every 3 to 6 months

10. Exit strategy

It is recommended, particularly in long-term partnerships, that you maintain a risk matrix and contingency plan. The risks identified upfront should help frame the contract, with break clauses as and when appropriate.

It's important that both parties have enough notice of the end of a campaign, particularly where this will impact significantly on their budget and strategy.

And it's equally important that risks are reviewed regularly, and that a relevant exit strategy is documented and ready to be invoked at any point. You never know when you might need this, and it's important to be ready.

11. Evaluation

Effective evaluation plans are an important part of any partnership, to understand the value that they are adding, and to document any lessons that might be learnt for the future. Evaluation should always look to assess long-term outcomes against the strategic objectives set out in the partnership strategy, while at the same time measuring the short term impact of activities.

Careful thought should go into how best to do this. Help is at hand in the form of the GCS guide [Evaluating Government Communication Service Guidance](#)

It's important to involve partners fully in conducting the evaluation and to agree their role upfront in collecting, providing and analysing data.

Contacts and Further Information

See **Annex** for further clarification and references to relevant regulatory frameworks and supplementary guidance materials.

For propriety queries in respect of communications partnerships, contact the Cabinet Office [GCS propriety team](#), [David Rose](#) and [Alice Glynn](#)

For all other partnership network queries please email [Alice](#).

Annex: Relevant regulatory framework and supplementary guidance materials

The following list of reference material and resources is by no means exhaustive, and has been compiled to provide only a basic flavour of legislation and guidance that may be relevant when entering complex strategic partnerships.

Please note that legislation and guidelines are often amended or overridden.

Civil Service Guidance

[Directory of Civil Service Guidance \(vol. 1 and 2\), Cabinet Office 2010](#)

The Directory collates a range of useful guidance, while the Directory may indicate the key principles, it cannot and does not seek to provide a blueprint for every situation.

[The Civil Service Code \(CSC\) 2010](#)

The CSC sets out the core Civil Service values and the standards of behaviour expected of all civil servants. Integrity, honesty, objectivity and impartiality are crucial when identifying and selecting partners and negotiating collaborations on behalf of departments.

Marketing and Advertising

[Committee of Advertising Practice \(CAP\), Non-broadcast Advertising, Sales Promotion and Direct Marketing, CAP 2010](#)

The CAP code contains detailed guidance in relation to marketing to children, incentivised promotions, and some specific guidance on Health. CAP also provides also specific advice in relation to promotions, competitions' Terms & Conditions and prizes.

[Ofcom Broadcast Codes](#) offer the latest guidance and regulation on Sponsorships and Product Placement.

Ofcom is the independent regulator and competition authority for the UK communications industries. [Section nine of the Broadcast Codes](#) deals with issues of sponsorship and product placement.

Partnerships with education establishments and minors

[Working with Schools – Best Practice Principles, Department for Education and ISBA 2008](#)

A useful checklist to be considered when planning activities targeting or involving education establishments. Guidance covers: educational value and content, branding, school food, consultation and testing, distribution of material and collector schemes.

[Commercial Activities in Schools – Best Practice Principles, Department for Education, ISBA and Consumers Association 2007](#)

Guidance covers generic principles that should be considered when working in partnership with private sector organisations to deliver messages and services or implement activities targeting minors or education establishments. It can be used to assess and develop a wide range of partnership activities, including: sponsored resources such as teaching packs and materials, sponsored activities such as competitions and projects.

Other relevant legislation and guidance

[Public Bodies: A Guide for Departments, Cabinet Office 2006](#)

Before setting up a public initiative, it is important that departments think through all the possible options for the most effective and efficient way of delivering the required service or function. Checklist included in document is a useful reminder of considerations and implications of various options (e.g. co-creation and co-production, third sector-led initiative etc.).

[The Compact, Cabinet Office](#)

The Compact is the agreement which governs relations between the government and civil society organisations (CSOs) in England. The agreement aims to ensure that government and CSOs work effectively in partnership to achieve common goals and outcomes for the benefit of communities.

[Joint venture guidance: a guidance note for public sector bodies forming joint ventures with the private sector \(Part 1 and Part 2\), HM Treasury 2010](#)

This Guidance outlines issues for public sector bodies forming Joint Ventures with partners. Particularly relevant when co-creation and co-delivery of initiatives could result in the establishment of a delivery body with a separate legal status.

Of particular interest:

- Chapter 3: Issues for early consideration
- Chapter 5: Ownership, control and financial reporting
- Chapter 6: Joint venture assets and resources
- Chapter 7: Funding, fees, charges and tax
- Chapter 9: Selection of the private sector partner
- Annex A: Sample of public sector Joint Ventures
- Annex B: Comparative table of main joint venture structures

- Annex C: State Aid
- Annex H: Exit strategies
- Annex J: Factors supporting the use of a joint venture.

[Bribery Act, Ministry of Justice 2010](#)

The Bribery Act provides definitions of active and passive bribery. It may be relevant when procuring sponsors.

In particular, when considering financial (and in-kind) sponsors, departments should consider carefully: sponsorship due diligence; anti-corruption clauses; re-structuring of benefits package; restrictions on the use of sponsorship benefits; contracts with agents and intermediaries.

[Managing Public Money, HMTreasury](#)

This document provides comprehensive guidance on principles and regulation related to managing public finances, financial exploitation of public assets (including pricing and fee structures, valuing assets for sponsorships or licensing purposes). It includes information on competition law, State Aid, disposing of government assets. Also included is advice on how to deal with conflict of interest, factors to consider when working in partnership with other public sector bodies or private sector organisations, Public Private Partnership (PPP), Private Finance Initiative (PFI) etc. Of particular interest: Sections 4, 6 and 7 (and relevant annexes).

[State Aid and De Minimis Regulation, Department for Business, Innovation and Skills \(BIS\)](#)

It is important to ensure that partners do not gain unfair commercial advantage from their association with HM Government. There is no precise definition of what constitutes State Aid. However there is a very clear statement of principle:

“Any aid granted by a Member State or through State resources (funds or in-kind support) in any form whatsoever which distorts or threatens to distort competition by favouring certain undertakings or the production of certain goods shall, in so far as it affects trade between Member States, be incompatible with the common market.”

In practice, State Aid will need to be considered when public authorities provide support to any organisation engaged in economic activities regardless of the legal status of that organisation.

[De Minimis Regulation](#)

De Minimis regulation refers to small amounts of aid that the Commission considers will have no substantial effect on trade and competition.

[Guidance on Competitive Dialogue, HM Treasury 2010](#)

Competitive Dialogue regulation could provide specific indications on partners' selection procedure. Competitive Dialogue could be used as an alternative to procurement. Competitive Dialogue is still a relatively new procedure and following the Competitive Dialogue procedure is not easy. Thorough preparation, planning and communication with potential partners is fundamental. The protection of intellectual property, specifically the risk of bidders' ideas being shared with competitors during the dialogue process is of particular concern therefore needs careful handling.

[PPP, PFI and Mutuals](#)

For information and guidance on central government programmes, the Operational Task Force, PFI Projects Database and PPP/PFI Policy [HM Treasury](#) or contact [Infrastructure UK](#) on 020 7270 5511.

For information and guidance on local and community based public service delivery, contact [Local Partnerships](#) on 020 7296 6777.

[UK Government Licensing Framework \(UKGLF\)](#)

The UKGLF provides a policy and legal overview of crown copyright ownership and protection, the arrangements for licensing the use and re-use of public sector information, both in central government and the wider public sector.

It sets out best practice, standardises the licensing principles for government information, and recommends the Open Government Licence (OGL) as the default licence for public sector information.

The UKGLF and OGL form part of the government's drive to open up access to publicly held information, promoting transparency and enabling wider economic and social gain.

The government encourages the use and re-use of the Information that is available under the OGL, freely and flexibly, with only a few conditions. [Further details about the Open Government Licence Act can be found on the National Archives website.](#)

The responsibility for the management and licensing of copyrights owned by the Crown rests with the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office (HMSO) in her capacity as Queen's Printer and Queen's Printer for Scotland. The Controller is an official at The National Archives. For further information about [Crown Copyright, please refer to the National Archives website.](#)

Any enquiries regarding Crown copyright and the use and re-use of Government information resource should be sent to: psi@nationalarchives.gsi.gov.uk.