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Standardization
Partnering Playbook: Building Strong Relationships Across the Construction Project Delivery Life Cycle

FOR THE COMMANDER:

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Purpose. This engineer pamphlet establishes actionable guidance based on the core partnering principles detailed in Command Policy Notice CECG 34-1-5, which sets a consistent standard for how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers should implement partnering on all construction projects.

Applicability. This pamphlet applies to the delivery of any project administered by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers that plans for, designs, constructs, renovates, refurbishes, demolishes, and/or modifies a structure or infrastructure (herein called a “construction project”). This includes projects executed directly by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers or through a third party, such as a foreign nation or other federal or non-federal partner.

Distribution statement. Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

Proponent and exception authority. The proponent of this pamphlet is the Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Engineering and Construction Division Chief. The proponent has the authority to approve exceptions or waivers to this pamphlet that are consistent with controlling law and regulations. Only the proponent of a publication or form may modify it by officially revising or rescinding it.

*This pamphlet supersedes EP 34-1-1, dated 30 April 2022.

Summary of Change

EP 34-1-1
Partnering Playbook: Building Strong Relationships Across the Construction Project Delivery Life Cycle

This revision, dated 12 September 2024:

- Updates the title to reflect an increased focus on building relationships across the full project delivery life cycle.
- Adds additional content for building relationships across the project delivery life cycle including more focus of partnering during the design phase.
- Simplifies partnering intensity levels from five levels to three levels and a designated mega projects level.
- Reorganizes appendixes and adds additional content on Partnering Plan elements and facilitator standards.
- Incorporates new best practices and case studies.

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Glossary of Terms

Chapter 1
Introduction

1–1. Purpose

This engineer pamphlet establishes actionable guidance based on the core partnering principles detailed in Command Policy Notice CECG 34-1-5, which sets a consistent standard for how the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE) should implement partnering on all construction projects.

1–2. Distribution statement

Approved for public release; distribution is unlimited.

1–3. References

See Appendix A.

1–4. Records management (recordkeeping) requirements

The records management requirement for all record numbers, associated forms, and reports required by this publication are addressed in the Army Records Retention Schedule–Army (RRS-A). Detailed information for all related record numbers is located in the Army Records Information Management System (ARIMS)/RRS-A at https://www.arims.army.mil. If any record numbers, forms, and reports are not current, addressed, and/or published correctly in ARIMS/RRS-A, see DA Pam 25-403 for guidance.

1–5. Associated publications

This section contains no entries.

1–6. Applicability

a. This Partnering Playbook (Playbook) applies to the delivery of any project administered by USACE that plans for, designs, constructs, renovates, refurbishes, demolishes, and/or modifies a structure or infrastructure, hereinafter referred to as a "construction project." This includes projects executed directly by USACE or through a third party such as a foreign nation or other federal or non-federal partner.

b. A construction project begins when it is conceived. In this Playbook, "construction project partnering" and "life cycle partnering" refer to the period from project inception through turnover including the warranty and maintenance period.

c. Although this Playbook is specific to construction project delivery, the concepts detailed are applicable to any project that relies on people and organizations working together to achieve a common objective.

1–7. Background

a. Developed in the late 1980s as a construction industry best practice, USACE became an early adopter and champion of partnering as a means of promoting a more cooperative working relationship among project stakeholders. Partnering was employed as a proactive management approach during construction to reduce the potential for contractor claims and disputes and to avoid unnecessary cost and time growth.

b. While initial partnering efforts focused specifically on alternative dispute resolution, partnering agreements, and total quality management, additional programs and strategies evolved over time to capitalize on the demonstrated value of partnering as a means of driving successful project delivery. These strategies, governed by their own discreet set of formal and informal processes and practices, expanded beyond construction to include other phases of project delivery and other USACE mission areas.

c. Various industry groups, government agencies, private organizations, contractors, and others have written guidance for and studied partnering. The partnering practices outlined in this Playbook build on and adapt construction industry partnering knowledge and experience from the past 30-plus years to establish guidance that aligns with USACE business processes.

Chapter 2
Partnering Fundamentals

2–1. Partnering overview

a. Whether delivering statutory, directed, or assigned Civil Works, Military, Contingency Operations, or Interagency and International missions, USACE's success is contingent on the strength of the relationships built and sustained with stakeholders both inside and outside the organization. This requires a deliberate focus on fostering an environment where strong business relationships are valued and prioritized across the project delivery life cycle as an essential investment that is afforded the appropriate amount of time, energy, and resources.

b. Fostering this type of environment occurs through partnering. For the purposes of this Playbook, partnering is defined as a management philosophy that seeks to maximize the effectiveness of the project team across the life cycle through a relationship-building mindset and structured process for collaboration and teamwork to solve problems, manage risk, drive innovation, resolve issues, and deliver safe, quality projects on time and within budget.

c. At its core, partnering is all about relationships. To be successful, each member of the project team must be personally committed to this philosophy. The extent to which an individual is willing to commit is dependent on the nature of the relationships that are formed and reinforced throughout the project. Relationships based on trust, mutual respect, transparency, and shared values will result in a higher level of commitment. While these types of relationships take focused time and effort to mature, it has been proven they can often make the difference between project success or failure.

d. Partnering is about project teams working together instead of against each other, sharing risks and rewards, and holding each other accountable for meeting their commitments.

e. Partnering can range from more formal kickoff sessions and progress meetings to informal team-building activities and routine interactions. While some of these everyday relationship-building efforts may seem small, they are additive toward a team's success by serving as the foundation for building a collaborative culture.

f. Partnering is not a way to realize financial gain at the expense of others or guarantee a win-win resolution to all conflicts. It is not a method to excuse poor performance by, or shift accountability away from, any individual or organization. Most importantly, it is not a means to change legal agreements between stakeholders, modify contract requirements, or circumvent contract administration authority. These scenarios, including more serious situations such as violations of law, fraud, or related legal matters, should be brought to legal counsel. Improper engagements with partners and stakeholders—especially during the solicitation and contract dispute process—can

jeopardize mission success and potentially lead to personal and/or criminal liability for individuals.

g. Partnering does not empower parties outside the contract administration hierarchy to make obligations or commitments that infringe on, or could be perceived as infringing on, the independent authority of warranted contracting officials. This includes senior leadership at the district, division, and headquarters levels.

(1) Various federal regulations (such as the following) define the limits of actions for non-federal individuals.

(a) Federal Activities Inventory Reform Act of 1998.

(b) Policy Letter 11-01 from the Office of Federal Procurement Policy (OFPP).

(c) Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) Subpart 7.5.

(2) There are certain roles and responsibilities that can only be done by a federal employee. Examples include establishing federal program priorities, budgeting, determining scopes of work and requirements, evaluating contractor performance, and determining how appropriated funds are expended by the federal government. Partnering can lead to unintended violations accidentally or intentionally if these lines are blurred; thus, all parties should be mindful of the regulations.

h. DoD employees must also pay careful attention to their ethical obligations and responsibilities outlined in the Joint Ethics Regulation (DoD 5500.07-R) and FAR Part 3 when engaging partnering. There are strict administrative and criminal penalties for violating these requirements.

(1) Government business should always be conducted in a manner above reproach (except as authorized by statute or regulation), with complete impartiality, and with no preferential treatment (FAR 3.101-1).

(2) Transactions relating to the expenditure of public funds require the highest degree of public trust and an impeccable standard of conduct. Conflicts of interest will be strictly avoided, or even the appearance of a conflict of interest, in government-contractor relationships.

(3) The actions of government personnel and their official conduct must demonstrate no reluctance to making a full public disclosure of their actions. Government employees must always remain professional and be sensitive to appearances created by close relationships between contractor/non-federal and government personnel. Appearances of favoritism or closeness can call into question the integrity of the procurement process.

i. When interacting with contractors and non-federal interests for purposes of partnering, it is important to keep these principles top of mind. In the context of a federal procurement, any potential personal financial or other conflict of interest that arises or

becomes known must be immediately reported to the Contracting Officer. As always, government business in relation to partnering activities and goals must be conducted in a manner that is above reproach, with complete impartiality, and with no preferential treatment.

(1) No non-public or procurement information will be communicated to non-federal entities because it could provide a competitive advantage (or appearance of one) for a future contract action (such as modification) or contract award.

(2) Contractor financial information that is shared during contract administration must be especially protected and only released to parties that have the contractor's written permission to do so.

(3) Do not accept gifts from non-federal entities or contractors who have interests that could be impacted by USACE, even of nominal amounts such as shared rides or light refreshments, because such acceptance can create an appearance of favoritism/endorsement and impair objectivity.

(4) Non-federal entities or contractors cannot receive letters of appreciation, awards, or gifts from government officials; again for reasons of favoritism and endorsement.

j. The following core partnering principles rest on a foundation of compliance with the law, ethics, safety, and the contract.

k. An Agreements Officer, the Contracting Officer, Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO), and/or Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO) have the ultimate independent authority to administer the terms of the contract. This includes resolving disputes, executing changes, and making any decisions that impact contract administration. All stakeholders must be mindful of this delineation, understand their role, and recognize and respect contracting official authority.

2–2. Core partnering principles

USACE's approach to relationship building is predicated on a set of core partnering principles derived from the Command Partnering Philosophy that provide the underlying framework for how the enterprise will think and act with respect to partnering.

a. Routine life cycle partnering. To maximize effectiveness, partnering should be implemented as a routine matter across the entire construction project delivery life cycle from planning and programming through design, construction, and turnover. Each phase presents unique opportunities to implement partnering behaviors and practices that will result in meaningful impacts to project team performance and delivery outcomes for a specific phase and all other downstream phases. Each phase should build on the relationships developed from the previous phase to further strengthen and set conditions for success. Although the focus and scope of this Playbook is on the construction project delivery life cycle, the general principles here for building effective relationships apply during design acquisition as well.

b. Relationship-building mindset.

(1) Setting conditions early for partnering success is critical. Central to this effort is ensuring all individuals who have a "stake" in the program or project have the appropriate frame of mind to drive attitudes and behaviors that positively shape how they think about the project, what actions and approaches they take, and the results they achieve.

(2) This includes putting the project above self-interests, being trustworthy, respectful of others, being fair and reasonable in all dealings, being open and honest in all communications, seeking to understand each side, working as part of a team to solve problems and resolve issues quickly at the lowest level toward project success, being growth-oriented, remaining committed to excellence, and being proactive and prepared.

(3) It is incumbent on USACE leadership at every echelon to take an active role in communicating the tangible benefits of operating with a relationship-building mindset, consistently and continuously demonstrating a core set of relationship values when conducting day-to-day business and holding others accountable for operating at the same standard.

(4) These core relationship-building values are rooted in three interdependent and mutually supportive elements: commitment, communication, and collaboration—the Three C's of successful relationship building—as detailed in Command Policy Notice CECG 34-1-5 and in Figure 2–1.

Figure 2–1. Three C's of a successful relationship-building mindset

(a) Commitment.

1. Trust is the foundational element of all effective relationships. Predicated on integrity, reliability, competency, and transparency, trust creates the safe and secure environment needed to foster open communication and teamwork among the project team and serves as the basis for establishing strategic relationships at the organizational level.

2. Building trust does not happen overnight. Rather, it requires an enduring commitment by all stakeholders to act with a relationship-building mindset and actively participate in the partnering process across the project life cycle. Fundamental to this effort is securing enduring leadership commitment to promote and actively engage in the partnering process.

3. Commitment by leadership at all levels is critical to enable and empower individuals to be good partners by modeling a relationship-building mindset and effective partnering practices, ensuring individuals have the appropriate level of resources and authorities, recognizing and rewarding partnering successes, and proactively identifying and resolving issues or attitudes with the potential to break down partnering effectiveness.

4. Building on a solid foundation of trust and leadership commitment, stakeholders must also commit to a "mission-first" attitude. Reflected in the Soldiers Creed and the Army Civilian Corps Creed, this behavior is about recognizing that team and mission success is more important than individual success. This requires each individual to be mindful of their ego so they can come together as a team with a shared vision to effectively solve problems and develop mutually beneficial solutions that drive successful project delivery outcomes.

Best Practice: Rewarding Partnering Success

East Campus on Fort Meade, Maryland

To recognize and reinforce the project team's commitment to partnering throughout the delivery of a billion-dollar-plus program for the Intelligence Community on Fort Meade's East Campus, USACE and Clark Construction implemented a Quarterly "Star Partner" award.

Nominees were put forward by the field team's peers, which included both government and contractor stakeholders. Selected by the leadership team, recipients were presented their awards during recurring partnering sessions. This acknowledgement helped to strengthen relationships and maintain a high level of cohesiveness and motivation among the project team. As a result, the team applied effective partnering principles and practices to deliver quality facilities safely and on schedule.

(b) Communication.

1. Open and honest communication among all stakeholders is essential to establishing and maintaining the trust needed to collaborate productively. This requires establishing an environment where individuals feel comfortable sharing ideas, offering suggestions, and providing information relevant to construction project success.

2. Active listening is a key part of good communication and should be used to better understand stakeholder values, goals, perspectives, and concerns; continually improve partnering relationships; and quickly resolve issues. Active listening means truly hearing what someone has to say. It involves asking questions and seeking to understand the other person's perspectives to gain clarification.

3. Equally important is fostering shared understanding among the team. Essential to the team's ability to solve complex problems, a shared understanding ensures all members have a common and clear understanding of project-related information, processes, objectives, and expectations. Shared understanding is increasingly important as delivery timelines are under pressure to be reduced, placing a premium on agile decision-making and problem-solving.

4. Establishing a shared understanding begins with demonstrating the value each stakeholder brings to the team. This means showing them that their perspectives, ideas, and contributions matter, by routinely soliciting their input, acknowledging their successes, and including them in the decision-making process.

5. Correspondingly, a shared sense of purpose should be created among the team. This can be achieved by making sure the team is aligned on what problems need to be solved or what decisions need to be made and why, clearly defining each stakeholder's roles and responsibilities so that everyone understands how they fit into the bigger picture, building a common lexicon, and collectively establishing mutually agreeable goals and objectives for which the team holds themselves accountable.

(c) Collaboration.

1. Collaboration improves the way teams work together and solve problems. This is accomplished by promoting a sense of community where knowledge, resources, perspectives, and ideas are shared and where team members can learn from one another, engage in purposeful conversations, productively and creatively resolve conflicts, and help each other complete tasks and meet deadlines.

2. For successful collaboration, teams should work together early in project planning, identifying common goals and agreeing on a set of measures the team will use throughout the project to assess project health. It is important for all parties to understand and respect each other's goals and values while remaining committed to putting project goals first.

3. Tracking realized risks and their potential project impacts as a team is an important collaboration behavior for project success. Implementing shared risk management practices through collaboration tools is an important means of proactively and effectively identifying, assessing, planning for, and mitigating project risk. Collaboration concerning the specific realized risk each party is taking allows the team to better understand the impacts of those risks on the project and its partnering goals. These types of activities build trust through shared understanding and through developing solutions beneficial to all parties.

4. Teams should also seek to resolve issues through collaborative means. When issues arise, input should be elicited from all parties. Every effort should be made to collectively address issues at the lowest level and in a manner that is timely and agreeable to the entire team (considering contractual authority and relationships).

Stakeholders' joint efforts are more powerful than any of the stakeholders working alone because they are based on the collective resources of all stakeholders.

c. Tailored scalable approaches.

(1) It is important to recognize and appreciate the unique nature of the relationships USACE maintains with both internal and external stakeholders. A "cookie cutter" approach to partnering cannot be applied. Teams must take the time to understand each stakeholder by assessing their needs, motivations, strengths, and weaknesses, then shape distinct partnering strategies that help realize the full potential of each stakeholder and the collective team.

(2) For the purposes of partnering, a stakeholder is defined as any entity who can influence the project outcome and/or who is affected by the project outcome. Figure 2–2 details the ecosystem of USACE stakeholders as they align with the four relationship types defined in Command Policy Notice CECG 34-1-5. All stakeholders will be collectively considered part of the project team. The stakeholders who participate in specific partnering activities can be tailored for each individual project.

Figure 2–2. Ecosystem of U.S. Army Corps of Engineers stakeholders

(3) Similar to the unique nature of each stakeholder relationship, each project is also unique in its set of requirements and associated risks. Project teams must take the time at the outset of all phases of delivery (planning, design, and construction) to assess/recalibrate the partnering needs of each project and tailor a requisite approach that scales partnering tools and activities with the appropriate intensity level.

d. Enduring leadership commitment.

(1) It is imperative that leadership at all levels of the project team remain committed to partnering and the partnering process throughout the project duration. Highlighted in Table 2–1, leadership commitment requires active participation through personal engagement in the partnering process; maintaining situational awareness; and ensuring those ultimately responsible for mission, program, and project delivery are

enabled and empowered through the appropriate level of resources, authorities, and tools.

Table 2–1
Relationships – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers leadership roles and responsibilities

	Executive Level	Project Level	Contract Administration
WHO	• Executive Leadership Board	• Project Manager • Resident Engineer • Technical Lead	• Procuring Contracting Officer • Administrative Contracting Officer • Contracting Officer's Representative
ROLE	Encourage, enable, and model effective relationship-building behaviors and practices.	Lead and implement the partnering process.	Administer and modify, when needed, the terms of the contract.
RESPONSIBILITIES	• Model a relationship-building mindset. • Proactively manage relationship at every echelon. • Encourage, support, and hold workforce accountable for implementing effective behaviors and practices. • Empower/enable project level decision-making and issue resolution; assure issues are expeditiously resolved when elevated.	• Apply a relationship-building mindset. • Implement the Partnering Playbook. • Proactively identify and address team dynamic and relationship issues. • Act as a partnering facilitator at lower intensity levels. • Motivate the team around agreed-upon project goals.	• Actively promote positive issue resolution outcomes operating within the terms of the contract.

(2) USACE project-level leadership consists of the USACE Project Manager (PM), Area Engineer or Resident Engineer (RE), PCO/ACO, and Technical Lead who are responsible for working together to lead and implement the partnering effort throughout the project life cycle. Additional project-level leaders may include other in-house USACE staff and external representatives from an architect-engineer (A-E) contractor, a construction contractor, or other government agencies. The main staff responsible for the day-to-day project activities are known as the Project Leadership Team (PLT).

(3) All project-level leaders need to commit to partnering and work to instill partnering values in their respective teams. They need to focus their teams on the common goals of the project and hold individuals accountable when their actions do not put the project first.

(4) This Playbook is not meant to be a contract administration guide; it is a guide for implementing the partnering process within the bounds of the contract.

2–3. Partnering effectiveness

a. Partnering is a proven means of building and sustaining high-performing teams that are unified around a shared objective: successful project delivery. According to the International Partnering Institute (IPI) in 2024, one dollar invested in partnering results in $98 saved. Effective partnering not only leads to success for the current project team but enables future success by focusing on the formulation of mutually beneficial long-term relationships and a culture of continuous improvement.

b. Evidence to support the positive results of partnering has grown over the years. Research conducted by the Construction Industry Institute in the 1990s found that partnered projects reduced total project cost by 10 percent, reduced overall project duration by 20 percent, reduced lost-time accidents by 83 percent, reduced rework by 50 percent, reduced claims by 83 percent, and increased team member job satisfaction by 30 percent.

c. More recently, the 2020 and 2021 California Department of Transportation Partnering Award Winners demonstrated the benefits of strong partnering programs as summarized in Table 2–2.

Table 2–2
Caltrans excellence in partnering award winners statistics (2020–2021)

Category	Metric
Safety	30 of 42 projects had zero lost-time accidents
Budget	32 of 42 projects were within or under budget
Schedule	41 of 42 projects delivered early or on time
Issue Resolution Ladder (IRL)	42 of 42 projects used an IRL
Claims	37 of 42 projects had no claims
Value Engineering (VE)	17 VE change proposals were accepted, saving $3.3 million

d. These real-world benefits can be attributed to a number of positive partnering outcomes, including:

(1) Improved communication: Clear and transparent communication helps reduce misunderstandings and ensures all team members are working toward a common set of objectives.

(2) Increased efficiency: Effective collaboration allows tasks to be completed faster and more efficiently, creating an environment where teams work together to develop optimal solutions and identify opportunities for continued improvement.

(3) Better decision-making and problem-solving: Valuing and fully leveraging the team's collective knowledge, experiences, perspectives, and ideas fuels innovation, leads to more creative solutions to problems, and drives better decision-making.

(4) Increased motivation: By establishing shared objectives, team members feel they are contributing to a greater purpose. This has a positive impact on morale, leading

to increased engagement with the project team and motivation to improve performance and quality.

Best Practice: Partnering Effectiveness and Partnering to Deliver in a Pandemic

Lewisville Lake Dam Safety Modification, Lewisville, Texas

One year into construction, the Lewisville Lake Dam Safety Modification project encountered a risk no one had anticipated—the global COVID-19 pandemic.

Having taken the time early on to build strong relationships based on trust, respect, and transparent communication, the project team overcame significant workforce, material, and supply chain challenges.

This was accomplished by rapidly assembling the USACE PM, RE, and Technical Lead with the construction contractor PM, job foreman, and job safety officer to assess impacts to life safety, technical quality, the schedule, and the budget, and then execute changes the team felt were reasonable to mitigate those impacts.

In addition, the team continued to monitor potential impacts through its weekly coordination meetings so they could proactively identify schedule impacts (such as from supply chain delays and from temporary shutdown of fabrication facilities), develop recovery plans, and manage expectations throughout the vertical team.

As a result of the project team's proactive, solutions-based approach that focused on life safety and mutually beneficial outcomes, the project was completed only 6 months past the original baseline and approximately 10 percent under budget.

2–4. Barriers to partnering

It is important to recognize when barriers to partnering may occur so steps can be taken to proactively address them and limit negative impacts to team relationships and project outcomes. As a project progresses, overcoming barriers to partnering becomes increasingly more difficult and costly to implement—the earlier the project team can recognize and address existing barriers, the more beneficial it will be to the team and the project. Barriers to partnering can be categorized into the following three areas, listed in order of likelihood of occurrence:

a. Cultural barriers.

(1) Cultural barriers can arise when individual team member or organizational goals take precedence over the mutually agreed-upon goals of the team. This may be the result of a misaligned understanding of partnering, an adversarial mentality of one or more members of the project team, past negative relationships, a lack of trust, a difference in negotiation styles, communication problems, or a low level of stakeholder commitment toward embracing a relationship-building mindset. Particularly when working with a new agency or organization, take time early in the project to understand each other's culture and common business practices.

(2) For partnering to be successful, management and project leaders must ensure the project team has a clear understanding of the project "culture." Key to this understanding is developing a shared definition of partnering based on collaborative

norms such as trust, fairness, open and honest communication, cooperation, selfless contribution, and respect.

b. Project team barriers.

(1) Project team barriers are associated with a specific team member rather than the broader organization. Examples include leadership's unwillingness or inability to empower decision-making at the lowest level, an unwillingness by team members to acknowledge and address conflict, poor communication, information hording, jealousy, tunnel vision, groupthink, and over aversion to risk that limits innovative thought and approaches.

(2) To overcome these barriers, leadership at all levels must remain actively engaged and committed to project success by promoting partnering training; enabling and empowering those in the field to make decisions at the lowest level; and educating, motivating, or removing project team members who are resistant to practicing effective partnering behaviors.

Best Practice: Make a Change Now

You must be willing to change out people when they are not willing to change their behaviors. Below are best practices you can use to resolve personality issues in your project team. Whichever strategy you choose, do not let conflicts worsen to the point where they negatively impact the project.

- ✓Hold one-on-one sessions with those in conflict.
- ✓Provide specific feedback to give individuals the opportunity to adjust behaviors.
- ✓Shift the decision-making power to someone else.
- ✓Coach each person in the conflict.
- ✓Change out the person/people in conflict. This may be difficult to implement; however, sometimes changing out personnel is in the best interest of the project and should be pursued if alternate strategies are not successful.

c. Organizational barriers.

(1) Organizational barriers are associated with corporate culture and often arise when there is a perception of unfair risk sharing; a perceived opportunity cost of implementing partnering; low confidence in stakeholder ability to perform assigned responsibilities; or a perceived limited return on investment. Consequently, there is an unwillingness to invest the appropriate level of time, effort, and resources to make partnering successful. This can result in stakeholders resorting to a "business as usual" attitude and the implementation of adversarial approaches.

(2) Organizational barriers can also arise within a single organization, where conflicting goals between departments or competition for the time of key personnel can lead to misalignment with the goals of the wider project team.

(3) When a barrier is identified, the team needs to quickly come together to have candid discussions on how best to address the issue. Depending on the significance of

the barrier, a third-party facilitator may effectively assist with resolution. Often, having a meaningful conversation and working through the questions detailed in the next best practice box will resolve the issue before it worsens or escalates, festers, and negatively impacts the rest of the project.

Best Practice: The Art of Focused Conversation

Harnessing the power of conversation to support more effective and positive interactions between and among project team members is one of the most impactful actions a leader can take to effectively address contentious issues and overcome barriers to partnering.

In his book, *The Art of Focused Conversation: 100 Ways to Access Group Wisdom in the Workplace*, R. Brian Stanfield states, "A conversation with one person can solve a problem or help heal a wound. A conversation with several people can generate commitment, bond a team, generate new options, or build a vision. Conversations can shift working patterns, build friendships, rate focus and energy, and cement resolve."

Adapted by the American Society of Civil Engineers, one method that can be used to focus the team's conversation is a four-step approach called FEMA—or Facts, Emotions, Meaning, and Action—which is centered around four key questions:

- ✓ **STEP 1 – FACTS:** *What are the facts surrounding this issue?*
  - Purpose: Establish shared understanding by focusing on data, facts, and truths that everyone can agree on.

- ✓ **STEP 2 – EMOTIONS:** *What are some of the emotions or gut reactions (good or bad) caused by this issue?*
  - Purpose: Elicit immediate personal reactions, moods, memories, and associations.

- ✓ **STEP 3 – MEANING:** *What does this issue mean to us and our success?*
  - ✓ Purpose: Draw out meaning, values, significance, and implications.

- ✓ **STEP 4 – ACTION:** *What action must we take to gain the desired result?*
  - ✓ Purpose: Enable the team to come to resolution, agreement, and possible new directions or actions.

This methodology provides a structured approach that individuals and teams can use to process their thoughts in an orderly fashion and come to collective resolution in a transparent and inclusive manner.

Chapter 3
Partnering Across the Project Delivery Life Cycle

3–1. Background

a. Design and construction are complex industries. Projects often include a multitude of stakeholders and decision-makers; diverse disciplines; experience levels; substantial data; siloed information; intricate systems; complex schedules; and a web of federal, state, local, and international laws, regulations, policies, and standards. For the team to be successful amid this complexity, they must establish a shared set of goals for success and proactively execute toward those goals. This requires the team to develop and sustain a common relationship-building mindset, level of commitment, and structured process centered around achieving these goals across the delivery life cycle.

b. While partnering can provide real-time benefits during any phase, implementing partnering across all phases of delivery, beginning early, during project planning, and continuing through design, construction, and turnover, will enable teams to maximize partnering outcomes.

c. Evidence from a multitude of published sources routinely concludes that ineffective project planning is one of the primary root causes of project failure. Building a strong cohesive project team, securing leadership commitment, and aligning stakeholder mindsets and expectations early are key factors in establishing a solid foundation for success. This early engagement sets the conditions for success and allows the team to positively influence project cost and schedule in the initial planning and design phases where the team has the most impact.

d. While all projects are unique and require tailored partnering approaches, a baseline process and scalable suite of tools and activities should be applied. This will drive consistent practices across the enterprise and ensure all projects are able to benefit from the application of a relationship-building mindset and structured partnering process. Figure 3–1 shows the alignment of the partnering process with the project delivery business process. While the planning and closeout phases are part of the project delivery life cycle, the primary focus of this Playbook is on the design and construction phases.

e. While the concepts and themes presented in this Playbook are widely relevant across project types, the actionable guidance and collaboration tools provided are focused on design-bid-build and design-build procurements. For a design-build project, the contractor’s designer is integrated under the prime contract and all the partnering elements apply to the integrated team. For a design-bid-build project, the designer and construction contractor are independent and there is a transition in partnering responsibilities as the project moves between phases.

f. How partnering activities will be funded should be considered early in the project development process. Typically for construction projects, partnering and facilitation requirements will be included in the project specifications as part of the total

project bid. For design phase partnering, partnering requirements will similarly be outlined with the scope of work and included within the cost proposal. USACE labor and travel is a budgeted project cost managed by the Program Manager and charged as outline in ER 37-1-30. Legal and contracting should always be consulted when determining the best methods to fund partnering activities and project engagements.

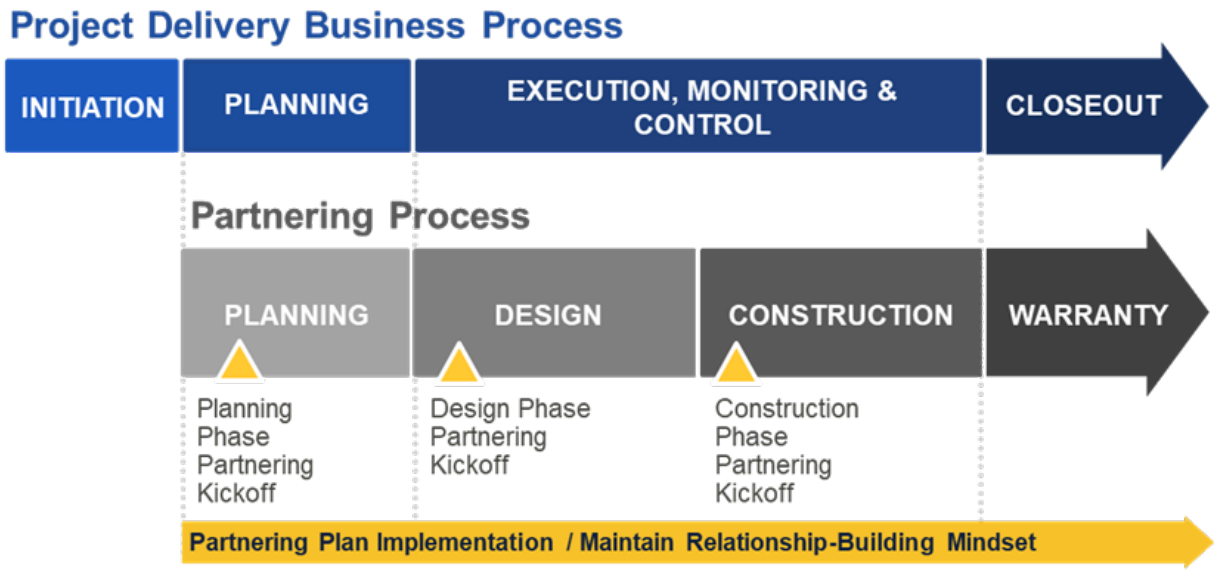

Figure 3–1. Partnering process alignment with the project delivery life cycle

3–2. Key elements of partnering across the project delivery life cycle

The partnering process includes a series of structured meetings and everyday activities that promote relationship-building. Within each project phase, a Partnering Kickoff Workshop initiates the partnering process while the Partnering Closeout Meeting collects final lessons learned and supports the transition to the next project phase. Between these two milestones are a series of more formal partnering progress meetings as well as routine partnering and relationship-building that occurs as part of everyday activities and interactions (see Figure 3–2). The frequency and duration of partnering activities is tailored based on the project phase and agreed-upon partnering intensity level.

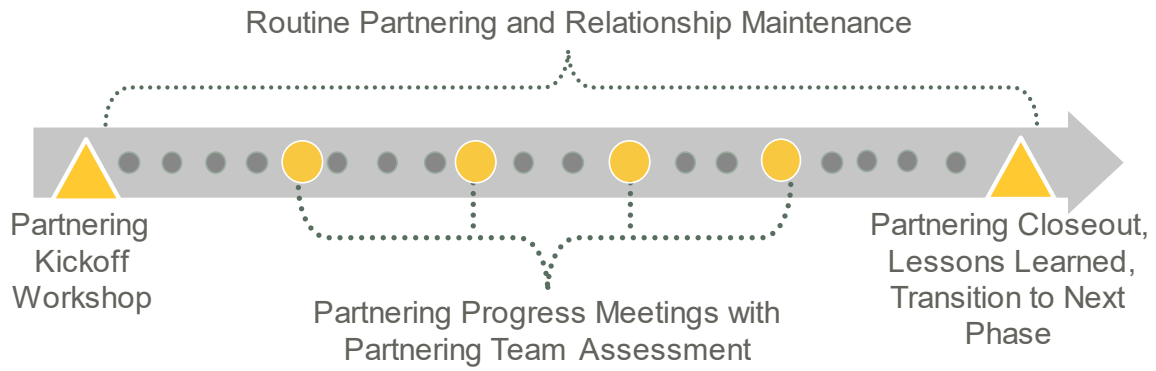

Figure 3–2. Partnering activities across a project phase

a. Partnering intensity assessment.

(1) Navigating risk and complexity is an inherent challenge in design and construction project delivery. Successful outcomes depend on the project team's ability to understand the unique nature of each project and shape a partnering approach that correctly aligns partnering intensity with the appropriate level of project risk and complexity. Project teams should consider various risk factors when determining the scope and scale of partnering elements, tools, and activities, as outlined in Appendix B.

(2) Determining the partnering intensity is not a static activity. At a minimum, project teams should assess and revalidate partnering intensity at the beginning of each major delivery phase (planning, design, and construction) to confirm strategies reflect the changing types and/or levels of risk and complexity. The determined partnering intensity and planned partnering activities should be communicated between relevant stakeholders, particularly A-E and construction contractors, as part of contracting to ensure a clear understanding of level of effort, roles and responsibilities, and the corresponding budget.

Best Practice: Aligning Partnering Intensity with Project Risk

A research study conducted by Michigan State University and supported by the IPI-entitled Scaled for Success: Aligning Partnering and Risk Levels to Optimize Project Performance, found that using a scaled approach to partnering enabled project teams to deliver projects more consistently on time and within budget. Below are key findings from the study that highlight how proper alignment can influence positive project outcomes.

Key Findings

	Project Partnering = Risk Level	Project Partnering > Risk Level
Claims	**0**	**0**
Budget	**1.7% Under Budget**	**5% Under Budget**
Schedule	**On Schedule to 4% Schedule Growth**	**4% Ahead of Schedule**
Job Satisfaction	**8.2% Increase**	**12.5% Increase**

Note: equals (=); greater than (>); percent (%)

Additional findings include:

- ✓ Cost of growth is smaller in projects where partnering is adopted early during project planning and design rather than after construction contract award.
- ✓ Cost avoidance increases as the alignment between project risk and partnering intensity improves.
- ✓ By increasing the level of specificity used to evaluate project risk, teams were better able to determine the appropriate partnering intensity level.
- ✓ A higher frequency of partnering activities (such as workshops, surveys, meetings) results in a lower incidence of change orders and claims.

b. Partnering kickoff workshop.

(1) The partnering kickoff workshop is an essential element in setting conditions for partnering success at the outset of each delivery phase (planning, design, and construction). The workshop includes all stakeholders directly involved in the project and provides an opportunity for individuals to meet, build relationships, and develop a team spirit; familiarize themselves with and commit to the partnering philosophy; establish common goals and objectives; document roles and responsibilities; discuss risks and concerns; validate the project partnering intensity; and set expectations for how the team will work together over the course of the project.

(2) A key component of the partnering kickoff workshop is the collective development of the Partnering Plan, which includes the following components, discussed in detail in Appendix C: Partnering Charter, Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet, Communication Protocols, Shared Risk Register (SRR), Issue Resolution Ladder (IRL), and Relationship Maintenance Plan. Further described in paragraph 3–3 and Appendix C, the Partnering Plan is a set of scalable collaboration tools that support the project team's commitment to work effectively toward mutual success, help maintain accountability, and allow for the broader communication of the team's tailored partnering approach.

(3) The scope and scale of the partnering kickoff workshop and associated Partnering Plan should align with the partnering intensity level of the project (see Table B–3). Chapters 4 and 5 provide additional information on planning and implementing a partnering kickoff workshop in the design and construction phases of the project life cycle.

c. Relationship maintenance.

(1) Sustaining a high-performing team does not just happen by itself. It requires care and attention across the life of the project to ensure the team remains positively engaged and committed to embracing a relationship-building mindset and working together to accomplish agreed-upon goals and objectives using the approach documented in the Partnering Plan. Integral to this effort is a continual focus on instilling a collaborative culture. This includes taking the time to check the pulse of the team's health, proactively resolve conflicts, encourage growth and development, and celebrate team successes.

(2) An effective way to integrate relationship maintenance into the culture is to anchor relationship maintenance elements into all routine project meetings. As an example, this could be as simple as highlighting the team's relationship and performance goals at the top of the agenda and taking five minutes with the team to assess how they are doing relative to those goals.

(3) In addition to routine interactions, interim partnering-specific progress meetings should be scheduled and conducted. These meetings may include both collective and targeted meetings that focus on the senior executive team, contractors/contract administrators, end users, the design team, and/or the USACE Project Delivery Team (PDT).

(a) The project team leadership should verify that progress meetings occur according to the agreed-to schedule and that the appropriate people can attend so that any outstanding or emerging issues can be addressed.

(b) At a minimum, these meetings should include a review of the Partnering Charter to refresh, validate, or adjust specific elements. Progress meeting agendas may include team performance assessment results or elements of the Partnering Plan such as issue resolution, team building, Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System (CPARS) evaluations, or team celebrations. See USACE ER 415-1-17 for specifics on CPARS.

(4) The team's lessons learned at the end of a delivery phase or project is an invaluable asset that should be captured for future projects. The project team should conduct a transition (planning and design phases) or closeout (construction phase) meeting. This allows the team to celebrate its successes, resolve any lingering issues, and collect and reflect on lessons learned that can be used as the team transitions to the next phase or to another project. To promote continuous improvement, team members should be encouraged to make suggestions during the meeting on how

specifications, manuals, or other guidance documents could be clarified and/or modified to better enable effective delivery.

3–3. Partnering tools and activities

a. Partnering Plan.

(1) *Overview*. Integrated as a component of the broader Project Management Plan (PMP), the Partnering Plan is a set of living documents that outline how the team will implement the partnering philosophy across the project delivery life cycle. This includes a suite of collaboration tools to help teams establish the appropriate partnering intensity, collectively manage risk, and effectively resolve issues. It is essential that the project team be an integral part of shaping and refining the Partnering Plan to promote buy-in, commitment, and accountability. See Appendix C for templates and additional information on the Partnering Plan and Appendix D for information on facilitator standards that can affect the Partnering Plan, to include information on the kickoff, progress, and closeout meetings.

(2) *Partnering Plan components*. The Partnering Plan components include the Partnering Charter, Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet, Communication Protocols, SRR, IRL, and Relationship Maintenance Plan, as shown in Figure 3–3.

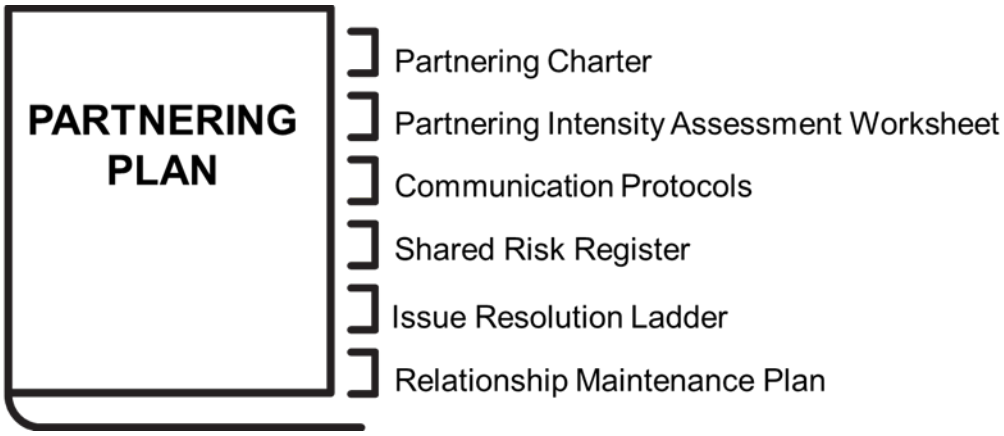

Figure 3–3. Partnering plan components

(a) Partnering Charter.

1. The Partnering Charter is a document that embodies stakeholder commitment to partnering and to the mutual vision for the project. The charter is not a contractual agreement and does not change the terms of any contracts between any stakeholders.

2. An effective charter should be composed of the following key elements: project vision, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, mutual goals, and a signed team commitment statement. The level of detail associated with each of these elements should be scaled to align with the partnering intensity level determined for the project.

See Appendix C for development tools used to scale the charter to the partnering intensity required to meet the unique needs of the project.

a) *Project vision*. The project vision should be a simple statement that clearly articulates the project objectives and keeps the stakeholders focused on the end game throughout the project. All partnering activities should begin by reviewing the project vision and reinforcing the requirement that all parties put the project first before their own goals or objectives. Developing a vision statement can be a good first exercise in working together, listening, sharing ideas, and finding common ground early in the project.

b) *Stakeholder roles and responsibilities*. The primary roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder should be discussed during the partnering kickoff workshop and documented in the charter, with specific emphasis on those stakeholders with direct influence on project outcomes. Discussion during the workshop is an opportunity for the team to learn more about each party's capabilities and set expectations for partnering responsibilities. Decision-makers representing each agency/stakeholder group should be identified during this discussion.

c) *Mutual goals for success*. It is important for the charter to document agreed-upon goals for success developed by the project team. These goals should include foundational project specific performance goals and relationship goals associated with each of the Three C's. Consideration should be given to each team member's contribution toward accomplishing each of those goals and how each goal will be assessed.

d) *Signed team commitment statement*. When the charter is complete, it should be routed for review and signature by all stakeholders. Once all comments are resolved, each party should sign the charter to demonstrate their commitment to the partnering process.

(b) Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet.

1. To optimize the benefits that partnering can yield and to confirm project risk is managed effectively, it is important that the appropriate partnering intensity level be applied. The level of partnering intensity should be scaled to each project's unique requirements and associated risk factors.

2. Appendix B includes the Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet (Table B–1) for project teams to use in determining the appropriate partnering intensity level for their project. Partnering intensity levels range from 1 (low intensity) to 3 (high intensity) and are determined based on a series of risk categories including value, duration, scope and funding, schedule, significance and stakeholders, and project team dynamics and relationships. A separate fourth intensity level has been established for mega projects; however, the Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet does not need to be completed for projects at this level.

(c) Communication protocols. It is important to document the team's commitment to open communication by detailing how the team will interface, both formally and informally, with one another and by defining the key principles that will guide the interface. This includes how information will be provided and received, how issues will be communicated and addressed, how meetings will be conducted (including meeting ground rules, meeting frequency, capturing and distributing meeting minutes, participating in and collecting partnering team assessments), how stakeholder staff (new staff or changes in existing staff) will be onboarded, and how the CPARS evaluation communication process will take place when USACE has a contractual relationship with one or more stakeholders (including A-E contractors and construction contractors).

(d) Shared Risk Register.

1. Every project is faced with risks to success. The partnering process is the ideal mechanism to enable proactive identification of key risks the team faces and to make commitments to collectively manage the risks or solve the problems. Integral to the team's efforts is the collective use of an SRR to document, track, and manage risks throughout the project life cycle.

2. SRRs are intended to be subjective in nature and should not include objective time or cost impacts of any risk, regardless of ownership. Project teams should consider the following questions when preparing to populate the SRR: Who will champion the SRR? How frequently will the team discuss the SRR? How will risks be documented and categorized? What is the likelihood and potential impact of each identified risk? How will the project team address each risk? How will the response plan be implemented to reduce risk exposure? How will the team proactively anticipate changes to identified risks and handle new risks before they adversely impact the project?

3. Developing and maintaining an SRR with the entire project team is essential to facilitating clear and transparent knowledge sharing, educating new team members, and effectively documenting and addressing project challenges throughout the project delivery life cycle. The SRR should be routinely discussed and updated to verify new and/or emerging risks are proactively identified and promptly addressed. Additional information, including an SRR template, is provided in Appendix C.

4. For projects with a higher intensity level, a cost and schedule risk analysis (CSRA) may be either required or desired to better understand and quantify project risks and uncertainties and their potential impacts. A CSRA is a formal, documented process that uses Monte Carlo simulation throughout project delivery to identify, measure, and forecast the potential cost and time impacts of project risks and uncertainties on the estimated total project cost. Results are expressed as contingency amounts in dollars and time and reflect a desired confidence level for successful execution.

5. Typically, the CSRA is used for internal government stakeholder partnering and informs the SRR developed during the planning and/or design phase. The CSRA is routinely updated during construction progress.

(e) Issue Resolution Ladder.

1. No construction project is without issues. As such, it is important that all stakeholders commit to the use of an agreed-upon issue resolution process and structure to ensure the timely identification and resolution of issues and minimize negative impacts to team relationships and project outcomes. For the purposes of this Playbook, an issue is an identified project risk that can negatively impact project objectives. Applying a structured approach to issue resolution can help proactively resolve issues in an effective manner, minimize stress, strengthen relationships, and empower decision-making at the appropriate level to optimize delivery.

2. An IRL is a decision-making tool that provides a visual structure to assist the project team in the issue resolution process, beginning with key decision-makers at the lowest field leadership level and proceeding up through each stakeholder's hierarchy. The project team should confirm the IRL details the appropriate decision-making hierarchy for resolving contractual and/or working relationship issues that may be encountered on the project and includes actual member names.

3. IRLs can vary significantly depending on the type of work being executed (such as Civil Works or Military programs) and the partnering intensity level identified. For example, projects with a higher partnering intensity are likely to require multi-tiered partnering, resulting in the need for additional tiers to account for executive-level involvement at and beyond district-level leadership.

4. As part of the IRL, project teams should develop and maintain an issue resolution log to confirm all issues are tracked from their inception through resolution. At a minimum, the issue resolution log should include the following items: what is the issue, what is the corrective action, who is responsible, and when is the action due. Table C–9 in Appendix C provides an example issue resolution log. The initial issue log should be started early in the project life cycle, maintained through construction, and revisited regularly.

5. When the project team identifies an issue for which resolution cannot be reached, one approach to consider is drafting an issue resolution memorandum (see Appendix C for a template). On completing the memorandum, the team schedules a meeting with the next level of management on the IRL to present the issue together to resolve it as quickly as possible. If necessary, they should continue to elevate the issue per the IRL until it is resolved.

6. Issue resolution for contractual matters relates to the scope of the issue, not the level of the organization identifying the issue. Contracting Officer's Representatives (CORs) and ACOs can resolve only those issues that are within their delegated authority to resolve. If contractual issues cannot be resolved using the partnering

process and tools such as the IRL, they may convert to the formal contractual disputes process identified in the contract for resolution.

7. When partnering is required by the contract and the A-E or construction contractor is unwilling to participate in the partnering process per the contract requirements, the IRL should be used as a first means to resolution. If unsuccessful, issues will be addressed through the contract compliance process and handled outside of the partnering process.

Best Practice: Risk Management

An effective risk management/issue resolution process includes:

- Allowing all parties to add items to the SRR.
- Reviewing items at each tier regularly as part of meetings. This should be an ongoing agenda topic. Higher levels only need a briefing on the most pressing risks and issues being addressed.
- Including a "when by date" for issues when a resolution or decision is needed. Do not wait until the last minute to decide. Higher tiers should monitor these when by dates to confirm risks and issues are being addressed in a timely manner.
- Escalating issues whenever necessary. Escalating issues is not an easy thing to do. Staff often feel that escalating is a negative choice and somehow shows their lack of ability. In fact, quickly recognizing issues that need to be escalated to higher levels is the primary purpose of the IRL. Early coaching and encouragement will be needed to keep issue resolution flowing.
- Escalating issues with options. The up brief should be jointly presented, not one-sided.
- Higher tiers taking an issue away from the team if the team is stuck. When an issue is escalated, the higher tier should handle it, not send it back for more review and information.

(f) Relationship Maintenance Plan.

1. Collectively preparing and implementing partnering consistent with a Relationship Maintenance Plan is critical for maintaining the partnering effort throughout the project life cycle. An effective plan should include the team's agreement on the following specified partnering activities, their associated frequency, and critical milestones.

2. Partnering progress meetings should include the following:

a) Partnering progress meetings may include both collective and targeted meetings that focus on the senior executive team, contractors/contract administrators, end users, the design team, and/or the USACE PDT. The project team leadership should verify that progress meetings occur according to the agreed-to schedule and that the appropriate people can attend so that any outstanding or emerging issues can be addressed.

b) Progress meetings should center around team performance assessment results, issue resolution, team building, team celebration, or a combination of these elements. At a minimum, these meetings should review all elements of the charter to validate, add to, or edit specific items. As appropriate, CPARS evaluation areas can also be discussed.

Best Practice: Implementing a Successful CPARS Evaluation

Open and honest communication regarding CPARS evaluation builds trust between the government and its contractors. The following are best practices to consider:

- ✓ Discuss the CPARS process during the partnering kickoff workshop and document the discussion in the meeting notes to ensure mutual understanding at the start of the project.
- ✓ Discuss how each CPARS evaluation area (quality, schedule, cost control, management, small business contracting, regulatory compliance, etc.) will be rated and the definition of success for each area.
- ✓ Conduct an informal review with the contractor regarding their performance in each CPARS evaluation area quarterly (not uploaded into CPARS).
- ✓ Ask the contractor to submit a self-evaluation prior to drafting the interim and final CPARS evaluations.
- ✓ Review the draft CPARS evaluation with the contractor before formally sending it to the contractor in CPARS.

3. Partnering should be incorporated into routine/weekly coordination meetings. Partnering is not only a formal activity during designated partnering meetings but a relationship-building mindset that should be consistently encouraged during all team interactions. Taking time to celebrate successes or collaboratively discuss issues are all part of the partnering process.

4. Plan and incorporate team building activities.

a) One individual cannot achieve successful project delivery alone. It requires a team of dedicated professionals working together toward common goals and objectives. Team building is a proven and effective way to build and sustain strong cohesive teams, can be scaled based on available resources, and can occur either in person or virtually. By planning fun and motivational activities, the project team can foster bonds and connections that lead to improved communication, problem-solving, collaboration, conflict resolution, and productivity.

b) Team-building activities can serve many purposes. These include networking, socializing, and getting to know one another better; enhancing teamwork and team performance; celebration; collaboration and fostering innovation; communication; showing appreciation; and creating something to look forward to.

c) One best practice is to have the group brainstorm activities of interest to them during the partnering kickoff workshop and ask for volunteers to coordinate planning.

Consider planning team-building activities on a regular basis, including around major project milestones and in conjunction with partnering progress meetings.

d) It is important to consult with an ethics counselor before conducting any team-building event to confirm it adheres to all applicable ethics regulations and avoids the appearance of any ethics violation.

b. Team partnering assessment.

(1) Team partnering assessments are an important means of maintaining a positive working relationship and actively managing the health of the project team. Routine implementation of team partnering assessments can assist with identifying and addressing areas of concern early before they impact the project. By determining areas for improving relationship behaviors and/or the partnering process early, it ensures that all team members remain committed to achieving agreed-upon goals and objectives. The recommended frequency of completing team partnering assessments is based on the partnering intensity and typically aligns with the frequency of partnering maintenance meetings. Appendix E provides additional information on typical questions as part of the assessment.

(2) Consistent with the Relationship Maintenance Plan, each project team stakeholder should complete a partnering team assessment to provide feedback on how they and others are doing in fulfilling their commitments and achieving agreed-upon relationship goals. This activity helps identify new/emerging issues and provides accountability for those charged with partnering implementation and follow-through. The partnering team assessment is most effective when all stakeholders participate.

Best Practice: Resetting as a Team

Projects with a Level 1 partnering intensity do not require a formal team partnering assessment. However, it can still be beneficial to set aside time to ask and discuss open-ended questions such as:

- ✓ What is going well?
- ✓ What is not going well?
- ✓ What does success look like to you?

(3) Results from the partnering team assessment should be discussed during Partnering Progress Meetings. Average scores and trends in responses should be reviewed and discussed along with anonymized comments from participants. If issues are identified, determine potential actions to resolve or monitor the issue. Adjustments to the Partnering Plan, particularly the Relationship Maintenance Plan, may be needed to address relationship-building challenges.

(4) If internal USACE relationships are not optimal, internal partnering meetings may be necessary before holding similar meetings with the wider group of stakeholders. Project health and team partnering assessments should help identify these situations. If a situation is identified, consider a team-building meeting or series of meetings to rectify

the relationship issues. There may be times when an internal meeting is necessary to correct behavior and realign business practices to mitigate impacts to other parties.

(5) Collaboration among stakeholders is likely to be a significant project risk on mega projects or those determined to be partnering intensity Level 3. One strategy to promote effective collaboration is to use a system called Collaborative Analytics (CA), which assists project team leaders in proactively identifying areas of stress within the team and fixing pain points before they worsen. Through a CA consultant, a monthly survey is conducted based on key performance areas identified by the project team. As further detailed in Appendix E, the survey results are analyzed and standardized reports displaying key leading indicators and trends are prepared.

(6) Quantitative performance measures can also be used to assess the existence of appropriate work processes and provide insight into stakeholders' adherence to these processes. Quantitative performance measures should be linked with the project goals established during the project partnering kickoff workshop and include processes to complete trackable tasks to ensure project delivery results.

(a) Examples of quantitative performance measures include: (1) request for information (RFI) response time, (2) deficiency resolution time, (3) modification resolution time, and (4) submittal review time. Table 3–1 provides additional example quantitative performance measures for construction project execution.

(b) It is important to make it clear to all stakeholders that these are goals and do not supersede or change any requirement or review times specified in the contract. Performance against quantitative performance targets should also be discussed at partnering progress meetings.

Table 3–1
Example quantitative assessment areas

Performance Goals	Responsible Party	Goal	Checkpoints
Submittals			
Government review time	Government		
Percent requiring resubmission	Both		
Resubmission time	Contractor		
RFI Time			
Submission to schedule impact	Contractor		
Government response	Government		
Correspondence Time			
Response; if answer required	Both		
Issue resolution	Both		
Change Time			
Requests for Proposal (RFP) to valid proposal	Contractor		
Proposal to settlement	Both		
Settlement to execution	Government		

Best Practice: Assessing Performance

Adapted from "What Gets Measured Improves" by Sue Dyer, International Partnering Institute, 2007

A study conducted by the International Partnering Institute found that project teams that routinely assessed their performance and held one another accountable for their commitments throughout the project improved over time and achieved the most successful outcomes. Best practices that project teams should consider when developing a team performance assessment instrument include:

- ✓ Team members need to be a part of developing the measures so that they "buy-in" and are committed to them.
- ✓ Assessments should be measurable, specific to the project, reassessed routinely, and adjusted, as necessary, to make sure they are current, relevant, and address key success factors.
- ✓ Make sure the assessment feedback is structured to focus on the project, not on an individual or stakeholder.
- ✓ Conducting assessments, discussing feedback, and making course corrections on a monthly basis is the most effective means to keeping projects on track.
- ✓ Assessments should be administered by a neutral third party, such as a facilitator, to establish a safe environment for team members to be open and honest and deal with core issues.
- ✓ Maintaining executive leadership awareness of assessment feedback helps confirm the team has the resources it needs to be successful and can overcome barriers outside of the control of team leaders in the field.
- ✓ Assessments are an effective tool to ensure all stakeholders have a voice and maintain an appropriate balance of power.

Case Study: Collaborative Analytics

Fort Leonard Wood Hospital Replacement, Missouri

Hospitals are some of the most challenging facility types to design and construct. This is largely driven by the complexity of modern medicine and the constant evolution of the technology that medical professionals use to deliver state-of-the-art care. This complexity prompted the project team to gather lessons learned from multiple recently constructed hospitals. A lack of collaboration among the stakeholders was identified as a significant project risk.

One strategy the project team used to enhance collaboration was employing a collaborative analytics consultant. Data and comments received through CA were used by the team to identify and address numerous issues before they impacted project cost, schedule, or quality.

Success stories from the project include correcting non-collaborative behavior exhibited by a government team member, significantly reducing the time required to process RFIs and submittals, establishing regular meetings between the prime contractor and their trade partners to discuss and emphasize collaboration, relaxing design schedule milestones that would have resulted in quality issues, and rapidly addressing unforeseen site conditions that resulted in no additional contract time and a significant credit on the final adjusted amount for the modifications.

Key benefits of CA include identifying collaboration issues while there is still time to affect the outcome, enhancing the project team's understanding and appreciation of each stakeholder's unique perspective, and creating an environment of trust that leads to more effective decision-making.

c. Partnering facilitation.

(1) Partnering meetings should occur on all projects regardless of the partnering intensity level. The level of facilitation is scaled to the project intensity. For smaller low intensity projects this may simply be a designated person on the project team who leads the discussions. The facilitator's responsibility is to manage the partnering process and enable each of the stakeholders to realize the benefits of cooperative and collaborative action. At lower levels of intensity, partnering can be facilitated by a member of the PLT who has experience with facilitation.

(2) Whenever possible, and as the partnering intensity level of a project increases, a third-party facilitator should be considered as a supplement to the routine facilitation being conducted by project team leadership. The third-party facilitator can be used to support key milestone events such as the partnering kickoff workshop and follow-on partnering progress meetings. An internal USACE trained facilitator independent from the project team can also be considered.

(3) The third-party facilitator can provide an important independent and objective voice that can help alleviate potential stressors likely to impact effective communication and collaboration. They can also bring expertise, such as organizational development, communications, group dynamics, issue resolution, and team building, which may be vital to successfully navigating complex partnering situations. If a third-party facilitator is

used during the planning or design phase, the team may consider using the same facilitator during the construction phase to bring continuity to the project life cycle.

(4) Third-party facilitators can be hired directly by USACE, the A-E contractor, or the construction contractor. The contract documents or specifications need to identify who will hire and pay for a facilitator and the process to select them, as well as minimal qualifications and relevant experience that must be met. No matter who the facilitator is, they should have some level of experience with construction projects, be familiar with this Playbook, and be involved as soon as possible in the partnering planning. Facilitator standards and additional related information is provided in Appendix D.

Best Practice: Partnering on Small, Less Complex Projects

The team has assessed a Level 1 partnering intensity for the project. Based on the intensity level, you will be performing team-led facilitation. So now what?

First, it is important to remember that small or less complex projects can benefit from partnering as much as larger, more complex ones. Conflicts and problems can more quickly become issues and be potentially exacerbated by less experienced team members and fewer available resources.

Since smaller, less complex projects have fewer formal partnering-specific plans and activities, it is incumbent upon the project leaders for each stakeholder to find ways of keeping the team focused on partnering and maintaining a relationship-building mindset.

Strategies for accomplishing this include:

- ✓ Holding a partnering workshop even if it is part of other planned meetings.
- ✓ Designating a “partnering champion” for each stakeholder who is responsible for leading their respective members in fostering a relationship-building mindset and carrying out relationship maintenance activities.
- ✓ Documenting the partnering champions in the Partnering Charter by annotating the responsibility next to their signature block.
- ✓ Including a few minutes on the agenda in each project coordination meeting to review the project partnering goals.
- ✓ Taking time for team-building activities.
- ✓ Finding ways to maintain regular communication, even when things are calm, to ensure collaboration occurs quickly when issues arise.

d. Partnering as an integral element of governance.

(1) While partnering and governance are not the same, they are intrinsically linked. Strong working relationships enable effective governance and effective governance provides the foundation needed to build trust and foster strong working relationships. Governance provides and promotes effective communication both vertically and horizontally with necessary parties, resource providers and project executives within the government, and contractor partners. It helps to achieve needed accountability, visibility, understanding, and timely decision-making to promote effective communication and issue resolution at appropriate levels.

(2) Governance can be defined as the framework that details how programs and/or projects should be managed and overseen consistent with agreed-upon objectives, program management plans, and stakeholder interests. This includes the structure that will be applied, the individuals who will be participating and what they will be accountable/responsible for, the information that will be shared, and the frequency that the governance activities will occur.

(3) It is important that the partnering philosophy be applied to project governance at all partnering intensity levels. This includes considering how project risk and complexity influences the need for varying tiers of governance and how relationships should be handled at each echelon. The Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet (Table B–1) and the Partnering Intensity-Activity Alignment table (Table B–3) in Appendix B are tools project teams can use to inform decisions on tiered governance and requisite partnering activities.

(4) The Partnering Plan and other collaboration tools and activities are used to confirm all project stakeholders are identified, appropriately integrated into the governance process, and enabled/empowered to effectively perform their documented roles, responsibilities, and decision-making authorities. To achieve this end, the Partnering Charter should be used to secure stakeholder commitment to the partnering philosophy, collective goals, objectives, and measures for success. These in turn will frame follow-on reporting and performance monitoring.

(5) Routine use of the SRR will help project teams proactively identify key risks that should be monitored and/or addressed throughout the governance process, while use of the IRL will enable teams to quickly resolve issues at the appropriate level through an agreed-upon timeline, escalation procedure, and governance structure.

(6) The Relationship Maintenance Plan and the team partnering assessment should be used to reinforce the team’s commitment to applying the partnering philosophy throughout the life of the project and the governance process. This includes detailing specific activities the project team will undertake to foster high-performing collaborative relationships and actively monitor team health within and across each echelon of the defined governance structure.

(7) When developing the Relationship Maintenance Plan, project teams should consider how best to align/synchronize routine governance and partnering progress meetings to eliminate duplicitous meetings, and ensure relationships are managed according to the team’s approach to managing risk and performance. For example, when a project team elects to establish a tiered governance structure, the partnering cadence should include all quarterly, biannual, and/or other frequency of executive-level forums. A multi-tiered structure for partnering, detailed in Figure 3–4, can include a Senior Executive Board (SEB) and/or an Executive Leadership Team (ELT) in addition to the PLT. A brief summary of each tier definition from the USACE Mega Projects-Overall Project Delivery Guidance (ECB 2023-11) is provided after Figure 3–4.

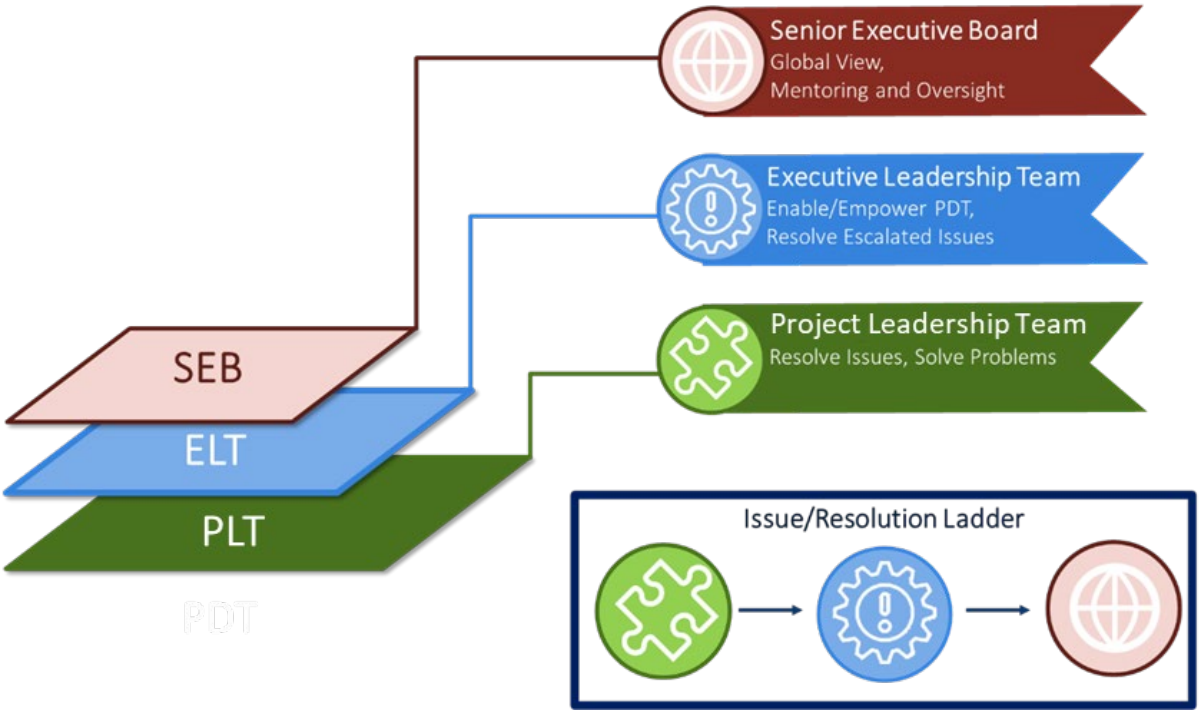

Figure 3–4. Example multi-tiered governance structure

(a) Senior Executive Board. Chaired by the major subordinate command's (MSC) Senior Project Executive (SPE), the SEB is composed of SPE staff (which must include a senior contracting representative within the MSC) and senior executive representatives from the project/resource sponsor, end users, installation owners (if applicable), and corporate-level officers from the Designer of Record (USACE in house and/or A-E contractor) and construction contractor. Headquarters, USACE (HQUSACE) executive leadership (General Officer/Senior Executive Service), the National Program Manager, and Engineering and Construction Division senior engineers must be included as advisors to the SEB, participate in all SEB meetings, and be actively involved in all critical SEB activities.

Case Study: Multi-Tiered Partnering

Next National Geospatial-Intelligence Agency (NGA) West Project
St. Louis, Missouri

Based on the partnering intensity level, USACE and NGA collectively agreed to implement a three-tiered partnering structure to effectively manage the Next NGA West project. Formal sessions at each echelon of the structure were held on a recurring basis over the project delivery life cycle. Sessions were sequenced, beginning with the PLT session through the SEB session, to maintain alignment and inform higher-echelon discussion.

A neutral third-party facilitator was selected to support all three tiers of the partnering structure. The facilitator used a combination of online feedback surveys, presession interviews, and observation of team coordination meetings to provide candid feedback and ensure team members at all echelons remained focused on resolving issues, maintaining positive team behaviors, and achieving project goals.

By engaging early and often at all levels, the collective team was able to develop the relationships and trust needed to quickly address key issues, such as user changes, quality control, and safety, and maintain a high level of productivity.

(b) Executive Leadership Team. The ELT is chaired by the District Commander, the Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management, or the Chief of Engineering and/or Construction. The chair may change as the project progresses through the life cycle. For example, the Deputy District Engineer may lead the planning phase, Chief of Engineering the design phase, and Chief of Construction the construction phase. The ELT is composed of USACE district senior leadership (such as the Corporate Board), the PCO, project/resource sponsors, and regional representation from the Designer of Record (USACE in house and/or A-E contractor) and construction contractor. This team should confirm the initial partnering meeting occurs and that appropriate partnering progress meetings are taking place at the PLT level.

(c) Project Leadership Team. The PLT is responsible for managing the day-to-day engineering and/or construction efforts. The PLT consists of the USACE PM, Area Engineer, RE/ACO, Technical Lead, and other key working-level leadership representatives from external government, A-E contractor, and construction contractor. Similar to the ELT, this team will evolve through the project life cycle with member transitions between project phases.

(d) Funding for federal stakeholder involvement. An understanding of the appropriate use of funds for leadership and non-PLT support of partnering efforts within the governance structure is critical. Consults with legal and contracting to determine the best methods to fund partnering activities and engagement on projects. See ER 37-1-30 for additional information.

Best Practice: Multi-Tiered Partnering

The following are considerations when applying multi-tiered partnering:

- Ensure the extent of executive level engagement aligns with the anticipated challenges, complexities, and risks presented by the project.
- Confirm A-E and construction contractor contract language includes requirements for participation in the multi-tiered governance structure.
- If the contractor's owner is part of the working team on a smaller project, multi-tiered partnering may not be required.
- Professionally facilitated partnering sessions should be an integral element of multi-tiered partnering. To maintain neutrality, the facilitators for these sessions should be third-party external professionals and not USACE employees, a contractor directly involved with the project (such as the A-E contractor or construction contractor), or a project stakeholder.
- It is important that the higher tiers in a multi-tier model meet early in the project to ensure they have a solid working relationship ahead of any significant issues.
- Leadership engagement and support throughout the process is critical. Multi-tiered partnering presents unique opportunities to integrate the relationship-building mindset throughout the project life cycle.

3–4. Partnering roles and responsibilities

The following are roles and responsibilities of key individuals that lead the partnering process and support maintaining the Partnering Plan. The roles and responsibilities change based on the phase of delivery and partnering intensity required.

a. Over the life cycle.

(1) According to ER 5-1-11, the USACE PM is responsible for management and leadership across the life cycle of a project, including overall accountability for the development and maintenance of the PMP. As such, the PM is ultimately responsible and accountable for the Partnering Plan. Additional duties of the PM include ensuring partnering contract language is appropriately tailored to the project in the specifications, stakeholders are clearly identified, and adequate funding has been budgeted for the partnering efforts.

(2) The PCO has ultimate contractual responsibility for the project and needs to be involved in any contractual-related discussions, including those involving change orders or disputes. The PCO does not typically lead the partnering effort or Partnering Plan on projects.

b. Design phase.

(1) While the PM is accountable for the overall Partnering Plan, the day-to-day management and maintenance of the Partnering Plan may be delegated to another party such as a Technical Lead.

(2) The A-E contractor may have a lead role in supporting the Partnering Plan in the design phase depending on the contractual requirements. The specific partnering responsibilities for the A-E contractor will be determined before procurement.

(3) For lower-intensity projects, a member of the PLT may facilitate partnering sessions during the design charrette and design phase, and lead development of the Partnering Plan. These responsibilities often transition to a third party facilitator for higher-intensity projects.

c. Construction phase.

(1) While the USACE PM maintains involvement during the construction phase, the field construction office leads the partnering process. The field office partnering lead is typically the ACO, who may also be the Area Engineer or RE.

(2) The ACO or another member of the PLT may facilitate partnering sessions and coordinate the Partnering Plan on lower-intensity projects during the construction phase. For larger, higher-intensity projects, facilitation and leading the partnering effort is typically done by a third-party facilitator under the construction contractor. The specific partnering responsibilities for the construction contractor will be determined before procurement and be part of the contract.

Chapter 4
Considerations for Planning and Implementing Design Phase Partnering

4–1. Planning for success

a. Partnering should be implemented during the design phase of a construction project. Planning and implementing the partnering process during the design phase is typically the responsibility of the USACE PM with support from the Technical Lead and PCO. If there is knowledge of who the field construction lead will be (such as the RE for the relevant construction office), they should also be engaged. Table 4–1 provides a design phase partnering checklist to assist in planning this phase of the partnering effort.

b. Early in the planning for the design phase, the USACE PM should hold a meeting with the USACE project team to determine the partnering intensity required to meet the unique needs of the project. Appendix B includes a Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet to help determine the best suited partnering elements for this phase. The score developed from the worksheet should be used in combination with the knowledge and experience of the project team to ultimately determine the appropriate level of partnering intensity and the specific partnering elements for the project.

c. Designers of Record, which can be USACE District Engineering Division or A-E contractor staff, should be regular participants in partnering meetings during both the design and construction phases as stakeholders. Project contracts should account for all appropriate costs so that A-E contractors participate during both phases. Appendix B provides scalable partnering elements that can be included in the A-E contract scope of work or in the design requirements if an in-house design team is being used. The USACE PDT staff should align expectations on the level of participation and thus level of effort anticipated for partnering efforts before solicitation of the design services contract.

d. An industry-government engagement best practice on single- or multiple-award task order contracts is to meet with all awardees to clarify partnering expectations. Clarifying these expectations early will give awardees the opportunity to factor them into their A-E fee proposals.

Table 4–1
Design phase partnering checklist

Design Phase Partnering Planning
✓ Hold project team partnering planning meeting early in the project planning phase • Identify all stakeholders both internal and external to USACE • Determine level of partnering intensity required to meet unique project needs • Select facilitator type appropriate for the determined partnering intensity level
✓ Include design phase and construction phase partnering requirements in the Architect-Engineer (A-E) contract and discuss with contracting opportunities to share the draft scope with the potential A-E contractor pool
Design Phase Partnering Activities
✓ Plan design phase partnering kickoff workshop • USACE Project Manager, Technical Lead and Procuring Contracting Officer meet to discuss and prepare for workshop • Get stakeholder commitment to partner • Find a date, time, and location that works for all stakeholders • Invite all stakeholders to workshop o Provide stakeholders a copy of the Playbook and partnering training materials o Collect stakeholder project goals and concerns before workshop o Include Resident Engineer or others with construction knowledge as part of workshop • Finalize agenda and begin drafting Partnering Charter
✓ Hold design phase partnering kickoff workshop • Introduce all stakeholders • Conduct partnering overview/training • Develop Partnering Plan o Partnering Charter o Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet o Communication Protocols o Shared Risk Register o Issue Resolution Ladder o Relationship Maintenance Plan
✓ Finalize Partnering Charter and route for stakeholder signature
✓ Implement Relationship Maintenance Plan • Schedule partnering progress meetings • Conduct team partnering assessments • Include partnering discussions during coordination and design review meetings • Conduct team-building activities
✓ Update charter when there are changes, to include new stakeholders joining the team and as other parts of the charter need revision (such as goals, risks)
✓ Recommend to PCO procurement strategies/bid packages through market research and industry outreach
✓ Support the PCO in resolving potential issues early through bidder inquiries
✓ Assist the PCO with timely source selection decisions
✓ Resolve issues quickly and at lowest level
✓ Implement the Issue Resolution Ladder as needed
Planning Activities for Construction Phase Partnering
✓ Assess the partnering intensity level for the construction phase
✓ Tailor the Construction Contract Division 01 Partnering Specification for inclusion in 65 percent design specifications on design-bid-build project or in the request for proposal on a design-build
✓ Consider appropriate participation from the Designer of Record during construction activities, such as submittal reviews, inspections, and participation in construction phase partnering meetings

e. As part of the design phase partnering kickoff meeting, the project team should determine ways to actively involve individuals with construction knowledge and experience. Ideally, these construction individuals will also have knowledge of the site where the construction will occur. Engaging individuals with construction expertise early is key to maximizing the value they can provide during the planning and design process, where the cost of changes is significantly lower than later during construction (see Figure 4–1).

(1) Research has shown that the more construction expertise is leveraged during planning and design, the higher the likelihood of project success.

(2) A World Economic Forum report states, “construction’s share of the total cost over the lifetime of the asset can be as high as 10–50 percent … this cost component is largely determined early on … to achieve substantial improvements in construction productivity … [organizations] need to ensure that during the design and engineering phase, they keep the actual construction process in mind.” Thus, making this a goal of the design phase Partnering Charter is an effective way of ensuring construction expertise is engaged early and often. The following are strategies for involving internal and external construction expertise during the design phase.

(a) Internal. Verify the RE and Technical Lead are included in all design phase planning, design, and project team meetings and activities including the following: developing and updating PMPs; supporting the PCO through participation in acquisition planning and acquisition source selection evaluation boards; serving as the primary proponent of the biddability, constructability, operability, environmental, and sustainability (BCOES) process; participating in all pre-proposal conferences and site visits; and participating in the design charrette.

(b) External.

1. Use sources sought notices and RFIs to collaborate with industry representatives, obtain meaningful feedback, and meet one-on-one with potential offerors.

2. Post the draft requests for proposal (RFPs) to SAM.gov to solicit feedback and communicate with industry early. If using an existing multiple-award task order contract, share the RFP with the indefinite delivery contract holders for feedback. Provide constant and open communication with industry representatives on any updates to solicitation dates and planned contract awards.

3. Conduct pre-proposal conferences and host Industry Days.

4. Implement integrated design and construction acquisition methods to engage the construction contractor early in design.

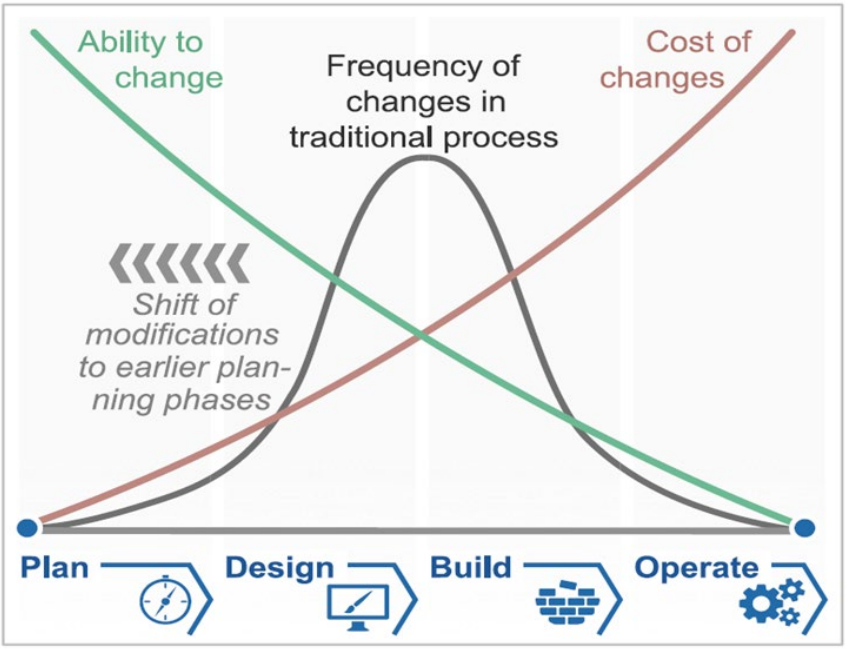

Figure 4–1. Cost of changes in the construction life cycle (World Economic Forum and The Boston Consulting Group 2016)

4–2. Implementing design phase partnering

a. Design phase partnering kickoff workshop. Once all stakeholders have been identified and are committed to the partnering process, the USACE PM should hold a design phase partnering kickoff workshop. Typically, this occurs at or around the same time as the design charrette or design kickoff meeting and includes development of the design phase Partnering Charter. Appendix C outlines Partnering Plan elements and Appendix D includes example workshop agendas.

b. Partnering with industry.

(1) Engaging with the construction industry throughout the design phase is critical to setting conditions for success during construction. It is incumbent on senior leaders to engage with industry on broad issues such as market conditions, industry trends, and current and future USACE programs. Engagement with industry about specific acquisitions and feedback on approaches is the responsibility of the PCO with assistance from the USACE PDT.

(2) The means and methods for how this engagement will take place should be discussed by the team during the kickoff workshop and documented in the Partnering Plan. This includes recommendations to PCO on how industry could be engaged early in project planning to help shape successful procurement strategies.

(3) It is important to apply a relationship-building mindset when communicating with industry. Positive interactions with industry during this phase can provide mutually

beneficial outcomes to both USACE and industry. Proactive, routine, and transparent engagement with industry helps build trust and better anticipate and proactively mitigate potential project risks, including the transfer of risk from the design phase to the construction phase. It also helps optimize contractor bidding pools and avoid unnecessary cost growth resulting from poorly defined bid packages, unknown or poor relationships, and unresolved issues that lead to costly claims and/or litigation. USACE PDT members should always confirm that the PCO is aware and involved in any communication with prospective offerors, as some communications may violate the Procurement Integrity Act of 1988 or the Competition in Contracting Act of 1984.

Best Practice: Industry Day Success

Industry Days can prove highly effective in helping develop relationships between the consulting community and the USACE team. The USACE Rock Island District runs a successful Industry Day event in collaboration with a local professional organization. The event kicks off with an evening social hour the night before the event that provides an informal networking opportunity for both public and private-sector employees. The Industry Day event includes a variety of topics such as workload forecasts from different USACE Districts and non-USACE entities. Technical topics of interest are usually included for small group roundtable or one-on-one discussions. The ability to issue professional development hours for licensure maintenance is an effective way to add value to the event for participants.

One of the best Industry Day discussions was a USACE-industry collaboration presentation where the A-E community was able to interact with USACE leadership to discuss RFP formulation, contract approach, consulting community capabilities, and team formulation. The USACE team leading the discussion presented the audience with a series of questions that encouraged dialogue between the participants. This discussion helped the USACE PCO formalize their acquisition approach with a focus on increased competition and better RFP response from the A-E community.

The most successful Industry Day events are well attended by USACE staff including district leadership, contracting staff, discipline chiefs, and project management. Good participation from the USACE team encourages relationship building and early team member interaction.

c. Optimization of BCOES reviews and the Engineering Considerations and Instructions for Field Personnel (ECIFP).

(1) During the design phase, the project team should consider ways to optimize the BCOES review process to facilitate a smooth formal BCOES certification, produce effective procurement packages, and minimize the transfer of project risk into the construction phase. See ER 415-1-11 for more information on this process.

(2) Project teams should also consider ways to optimize the ECIFP to document design intent and enable effective communication between engineering and construction personnel throughout the project life cycle. This should include identifying required designer of record submittal reviews and recommended designer of record site visits or inspections.

d. Relationship maintenance. Implementing the Relationship Maintenance Plan must be a top priority for the entire project team. The USACE PM has lead responsibility for keeping the team focused on partnering after the design phase partnering kickoff workshop. Making partnering one of the first topics covered at each design and weekly coordination meeting is one of the best ways to keep the team focused on maintaining a relationship-building mindset. This should include regular review of the elements detailed in the Partnering Plan. Figure 4–2 has recommended partnering touchpoints along the design phase timeline.

Best Practice: Central City Design Kickoff Meeting

An A-E design kickoff meeting provides a great opportunity to begin setting the conditions for success. The USACE A-E COR for a large Civil Works project in Fort Worth, Texas, capitalized on the design kickoff meeting to begin building collaborative relationships with their design contractor and key stakeholders early. In addition to the standard design kickoff components, the COR facilitated discussion on shared team goals for the project, including discussions on effective communication between stakeholders and developing an SRR. The team also had a good discussion on what success looks like in terms of CPARS. At the conclusion of the kickoff meeting, the entire project team had a clear understanding of the project risks and team goals.

The COR wanted to ensure the efforts on this early partnering plan carried through the project life cycle. The Design Lead and COR, in collaboration with the RE, developed contract language for A-E engagement in the construction phase services scope. This codified life cycle partnering by integrating the A-E in key construction activities like kickoff meetings, risk management meetings, and partnering sessions. The COR's proactive approach to bringing partnering elements into the project early and carrying them throughout the life cycle set conditions for success on a very complex, high visibility Civil Works project.

Best Practice: Partnering During Design Charrettes

Design charrettes are a great opportunity to set conditions for success early in the project life cycle by helping the project team understand project goals, risks, constraints, and overall direction. At this early phase, the team has the greatest flexibility to adjust and address concerns with reduced risk of cost, scope, and schedule impacts. Perhaps most importantly, the charrette phase presents a great opportunity for the team to begin building enduring, collaborative relationships that will grow throughout the design process. Ideally, the facilitator of the charrette sessions should be skilled and knowledgeable on the design and construction process. The facilitator or assistant facilitator may be the PM or Design Lead for the project.

The benefit of the PM or Design Lead in this role is that they will have a good understanding of the project scope, specific customer needs, and knowledge of the stakeholders. Building a Partnering Plan in support of the design effort at this early phase provides the team a structured approach supporting building relationships early. Building these relationships early starts the path of partnering that will evolve and support the team throughout project delivery.

Encouraging the owner, installation, end user, and other relevant stakeholders to send the right people to the charrette sessions will make these session much more productive.

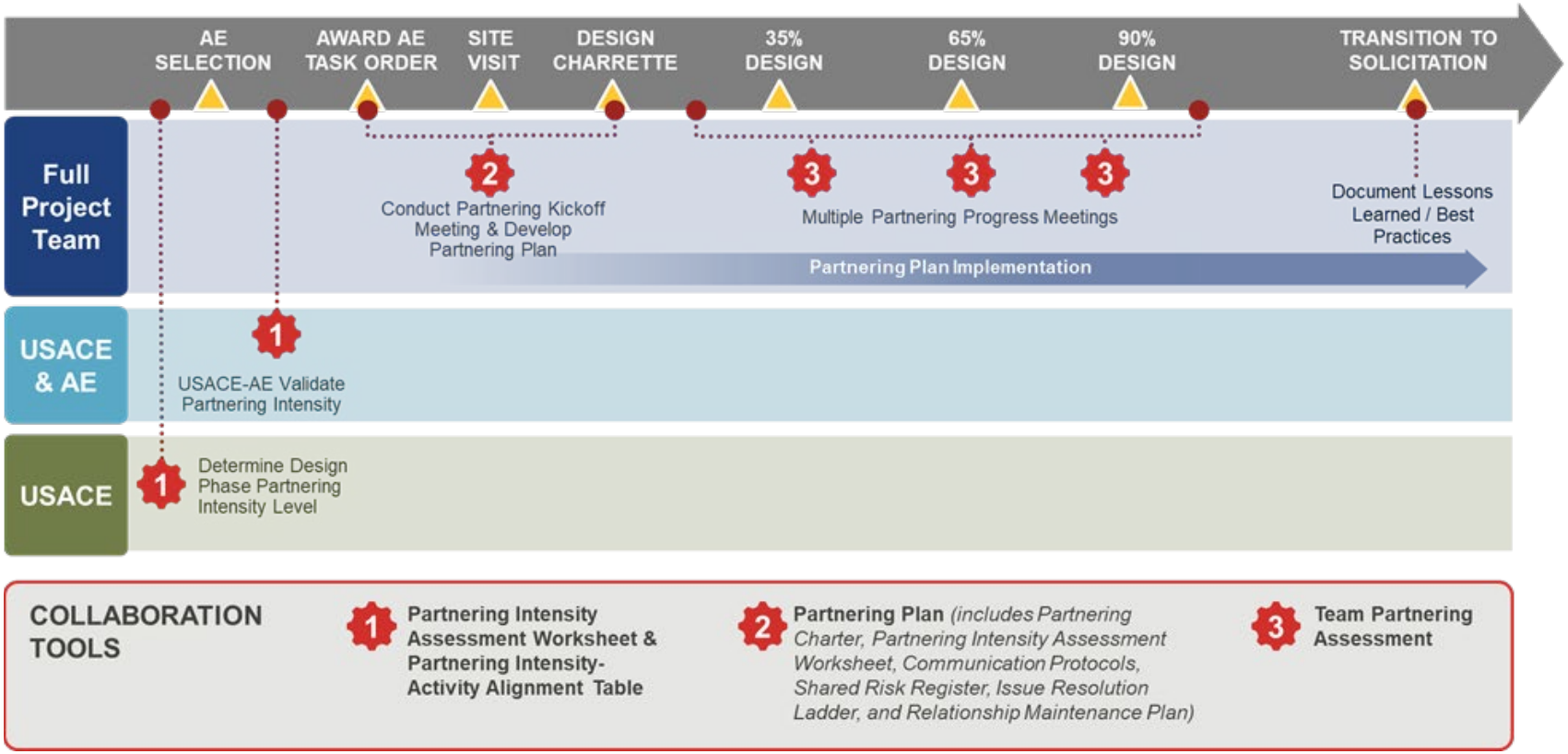

Figure 4–2. Design phase partnering timeline

4–3. Construction phase partnering planning

a. Partnering intensity.

(1) The extent of construction phase partnering efforts should be consistent with the anticipated risks of the project. Appendix B includes a Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet consisting of three levels to assist the project team in determining the appropriate level of construction phase partnering. Each level includes recommended partnering elements for the team to consider using for the project. A separate fourth intensity level has been established for mega projects; the Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet does not need to be completed for mega projects.

(2) The Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet provides a baseline framework from which to build the final suite of partnering elements. The experience of the team and unique project requirements should drive those partnering elements the team ultimately decides are required for the project.

b. Construction contract partnering specifications. Appendix B describes partnering elements to be included in the construction contract specifications, depending on the level of partnering intensity determined using the assessment worksheet in Appendix B. In the design phase, the project team should tailor this specification language as needed, to confirm the construction phase partnering effort aligns with the unique needs of the project, their experience, and the elements from the Partnering Intensity-Activity Alignment table (Table B–3) that they have decided are required for the project.

c. Role of the Designer of Record during construction. The Designer of Record (USACE in house and/or A-E firm) will continue to be involved during construction, considering the activities and level of participation most appropriate for the project. Typical involvement may include reviewing submittals for design integrity, performing inspections, and participating in construction phase partnering meetings.

d. Transition to construction. The team should consider how best to pass on the institutional knowledge gained during the design phase to the construction phase project team. Continued engagement from key team members, such as the USACE PM and the Designer of Record, will help bridge the design and construction project phases. The elements of the Partnering Plan and lessons learned from the design phase partnering closeout session should be made available to new team members onboarded during construction.

Best Practice: Bridging Partnering from Design into Construction

It is important to continue building relationships as the team moves from the design phase into the construction phase. The knowledge gained on how to most effectively and efficiently work together and how to mitigate for known project challenges should be passed from the design to the construction team. Methods to maintain continuity in the partnering efforts include:

- Implement an ECIFP to document design intent, assumptions, and instructions on unique design features.
- Complete a robust BCOES. As part of the constructability review, develop a preliminary schedule of the project to validate project duration for procurement purposes and confirm the critical path can support construction phase management efforts.
- For larger projects, develop an independent third-party cost estimate and reconcile this estimate with the designer's cost estimate to achieve cost confidence in advance of the bid phase.
- Implement a risk management process to identify/track/mitigate the various risks identified from the early planning phase and throughout the project development and delivery life cycle. Have a risk management professional lead this effort.
- Set up a PLT with representatives from the owner, construction contractor, USACE, and designer to address fast-moving project issues.
- Maintain consistent staff across project phases. Consider using the designer of record on the construction phase services. Keep the design team informed throughout the bidding phase, construction kickoff, and via regular project updates. This could be as simple as sharing progress meeting minutes.
- Use the Partnering Plan developed during design as a starting point for construction. Include all stakeholders associated with the project as part of the partnering process and share any lessons learned from partnering activities during the design phase.
- Use a consistent facilitator across design and construction when feasible.

Chapter 5
Considerations for Construction Phase Partnering

5–1. Introduction

a. Award of the construction contract is a significant milestone in the construction project life cycle. It represents the point where day-to-day responsibility for the project oversight transitions to the RE and construction phase PCO/ACO. The USACE PM and Technical Lead should stay involved with the project through completion, but the RE and ACO have responsibility for implementing project partnering during the construction phase.

b. On award of the construction contract, several new stakeholders, including the prime contractor, key subcontractors, suppliers, and design firms, join the project team. To account for these changes, a construction phase partnering kickoff meeting will be held to establish a new Partnering Charter for this phase of the project. Table 5–1 provides a construction phase partnering checklist for the RE and PCO/ACO to use as a guide in implementing this phase of the partnering effort.

Best Practice: Onboarding New Team Members

When new stakeholders or new members of existing stakeholders transition into the project team, it is important to take the time to bring them on board and integrate them into the team. Key to this is making sure they recognize and embrace the partnering culture practiced by the project team and maintain a consistent standard.

The following are best practices to consider in bringing on new members of the team:

- ✓ Provide partnering training material and a copy of this Playbook.
- ✓ Review all partnering elements included in the project, including the Partnering Charter and any collaboration tools the team is using.
- ✓ Review recent team partnering assessment results to help them understand the team dynamics.
- ✓ Consider conducting a mini-partnering workshop to quickly integrate them into the project team and align them with partnering goals.
- ✓ Make team members feel a part of the project by introducing them at weekly progress meetings, giving them a tour of the project site, and providing a copy of the weekly notes.

Table 5–1
Construction phase partnering checklist

Project Team Construction Phase Partnering Implementation Activities
✓ Revalidate the design phase partnering intensity and assumptions for the construction phase
✓ Plan construction phase partnering kickoff workshop • USACE Project Manager, Resident Engineer, Procuring Contracting Officer/Administrative Contracting Officer, and contractor meet to discuss contract partnering specification requirements, review team partnering roles and responsibilities, and prepare for construction phase partnering kickoff workshop • Review the facilitator requirements in the contract • Identify new stakeholders added at award (such as construction contractor, A-E firm if design build, key subcontractors and/or suppliers, other contractors if there will be joint occupancy) and integrate them into the project team • Find a date, time, and location that works for all stakeholders • Invite all stakeholders to the construction phase partnering kickoff workshop o Provide stakeholders a copy of the Playbook and partnering training materials o Collect stakeholders' project goals and concerns before the workshop • Finalize agenda and begin drafting the construction phase Partnering Charter
✓ Hold the construction phase partnering kickoff workshop • Introduce all stakeholders • Conduct partnering overview/training • Develop Partnering Plan o Partnering Charter o Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet o Communication Protocols o Shared Risk Register o Issue Resolution Ladder o Relationship Maintenance Plan
✓ Finalize Partnering Charter and route for stakeholder signature if not signed during the kickoff workshop
✓ Implement Relationship Maintenance Plan • Schedule partnering progress meetings • Conduct team partnering assessments • Include partnering discussions during regularly scheduled team meeting • Conduct team-building activities
✓ Update the Partnering Charter when there are changes to include new stakeholders joining the team and as other parts of the charter need revision (such as goals, Shared Risk Register)
✓ Resolve issues quickly and at the lowest level
✓ Implement the Issue Resolution Ladder as needed
✓ Consider the need for USACE internal partnering meetings
✓ Schedule and conduct the closeout partnering meeting and disseminate lessons learned

5–2. Construction phase partnering implementation

a. After award of the construction contract, the USACE PM, RE, and PCO/ACO should revalidate the construction phase partnering intensity level and assumptions made during the design phase to verify risks have not changed. This will ensure partnering efforts align with the anticipated project challenges as previously assessed.

b. Once the project team has revalidated the partnering intensity level required, the RE and PCO/ACO should contact new stakeholders, including the construction

contractor, and begin planning the pre-construction conference along with the initial construction phase partnering kickoff workshop. Ideally, the workshop should be held between 30 and 60 days after the Notice to Proceed. This gives everyone a chance to get to know each other up front and begin work early to identify and mitigate project challenges, thus setting the partnering relationship in motion.

c. The construction phase partnering workshop should be held when the contractor and all key stakeholders have identified the team who will be involved in the day-to-day management of the project. Effective partnering requires these key participants to be on board and in attendance at the workshop.

d. Where practical, using the design phase facilitator in the construction phase assists with continuity and a smoother transition to construction. The facilitator understands the key stakeholders, project scope, and partnering deliverables.

e. Before the construction phase partnering workshop, project team leadership should review the design phase partnering deliverables to calibrate the partnering efforts for construction. For example, they may want to review the SRR and adjust it, as needed, to include any new risks that may have been identified during the construction phase partnering intensity level assessment and revalidation process. This will serve as the basis for developing a construction phase SRR during the workshop.

f. Once decisions for construction phase partnering have been revalidated or adjusted, the SRR has been reviewed and prepared as a starting point for development at the workshop, and the construction contractor has verified key members of the team are in place, the RE/ACO should schedule the workshop. Appendix C discusses partnering plan elements and Appendix D includes example partnering workshop agendas.

Best Practice: Managing Stakeholder Turnover

Fargo-Moorhead Area Diversion Public-Private Partnership, Fargo, North Dakota

Originally awarded in December 2016, construction on the Fargo-Moorhead project was forced to stop for 20 months because of a federal injunction issued in September 2017. Soon after the injunction was lifted, it was recognized that a significant portion of the USACE and contractor project team had turned over.

The project team collectively determined the best approach to set conditions for success moving forward would be to conduct a “reset.” The team held a new pre-construction conference and partnering session, reintroduced the parties to each other, developed a new Partnering Charter, and established a new set of mutual goals.

Renewing the team’s commitment to the project and effective partnerships was critical to establishing the mindset necessary to overcome key challenges associated with restarting a major project in the middle of flood season, with all new players, while negotiating time and cost impacts associated with an extended suspension of the project.

g. Implementing the Relationship Maintenance Plan must continue to be a top priority for the entire project team. The USACE RE/ACO and construction contractor PM have the lead responsibility for keeping the team focused on partnering after the kickoff workshop. Making partnering one of the first topics covered at each weekly coordination meeting is one of the best ways to keep the team focused on maintaining a relationship-building mindset and regularly reviewing the elements of the Partnering Charter.

h. Once the project is complete, a final closeout partnering meeting will enable the team to capitalize on key takeaways and lessons learned for future projects. For many projects, this meeting may only take an hour or so to complete. For larger, more complex (such as mega) projects, the team may consider holding a longer after-action review to fully discuss partnering successes and identify areas for improvement. This closeout partnering meeting enables the team to collect and document partnering lessons learned from all stakeholders, verify there are no lingering unresolved issues, and ensure a smooth closeout process. Figure 5–1 has recommended partnering touchpoints along the construction phase timeline.

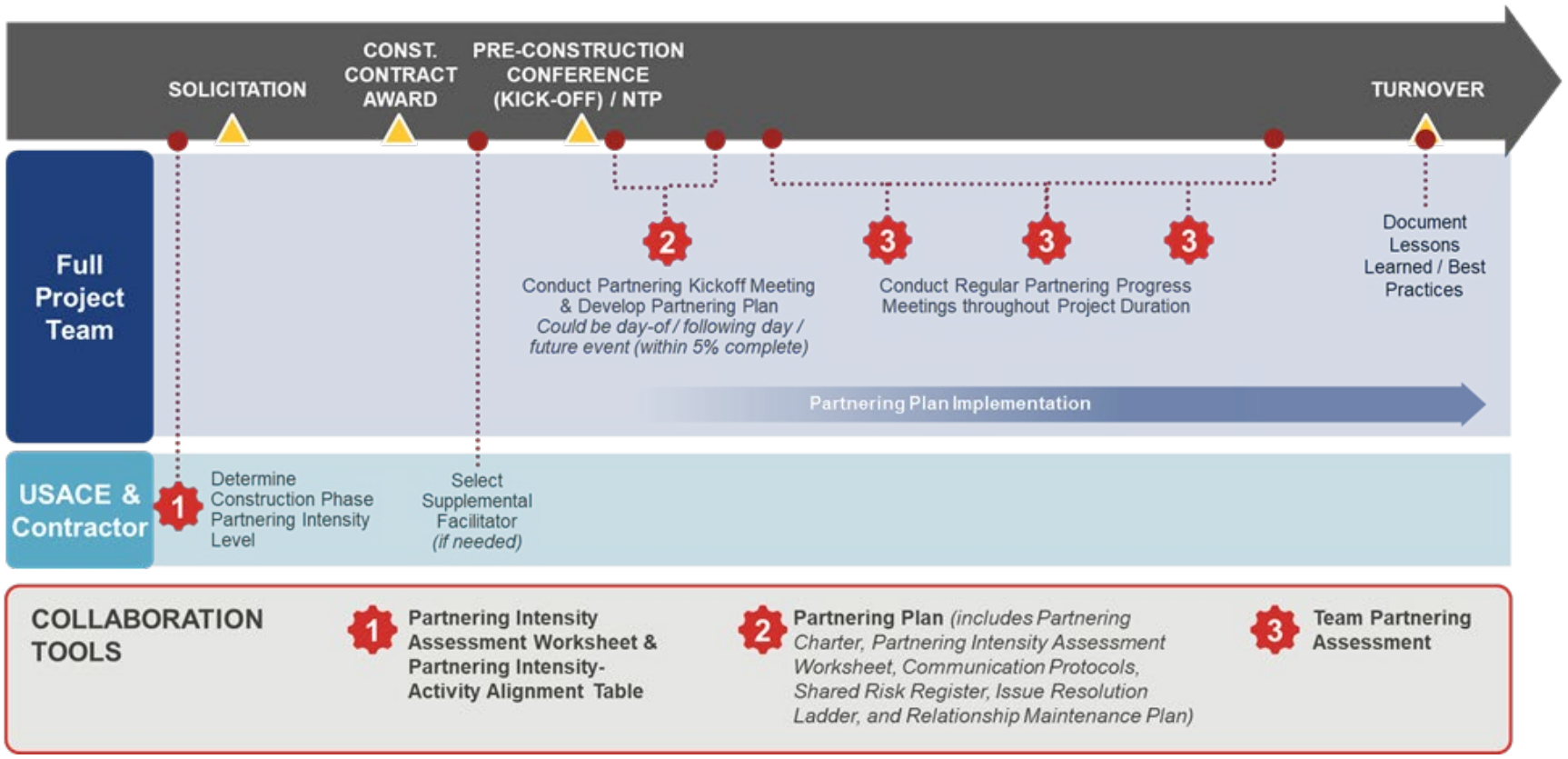

Figure 5–1. Construction phase partnering timeline

Appendix A
References

Required Publications

Unless otherwise indicated, all U.S. Army Corps of Engineers publications are available on the USACE website at https://publications.usace.army.mil. Army publications are available on the Army Publishing Directorate website at https://armypubs.army.mil. DoD Publications are available on the Executive Services Directorate website at https://www.esd.whs.mil. Federal Acquisition Regulation (FAR) publications are available at https://www.acquisition.gov/.

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Appendix B
Assessing Project Partnering Intensity

B–1. Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet

a. The Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet is shown in Table B–1 and is available for download from the USACE Construction Management Administration Application (CMA²) Partnering and Relationship-building page. The worksheet provides a guide for project teams to use as a framework for determining the appropriate project partnering intensity level during both design and construction phases. Each project is unique; therefore, the project team should complete the Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet for the specific needs of the project. Designated mega projects do not need to complete this worksheet as mega projects have their own category of partnering intensity.

b. The project team should discuss the risk factors and considerations listed in the Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet and qualitatively assess the level of risk associated with each of the risk factors. When assessing the level of risk, the project team should consider both the likelihood of the risk occurring and the potential impact to the project if that risk is realized. For each risk factor, the project team should select low, medium, or high as a rating and add brief notes to the table for why each selection was made. Below are considerations for each risk factor:

(1) Value ($) risk. While higher budgets do not always equate to higher complexity and risk, the two are often correlated. Typically, higher-value projects tend to involve more stakeholders and have an increased level of visibility. This often requires a greater emphasis on communication and engagement to keep stakeholders informed, address concerns in a timely manner, manage expectations, and maintain alignment.

(2) Duration and location risk.

(a) While not always the case, projects spanning multiple years often experience higher instances of stakeholder turnover. These types of projects also tend to have greater changes in team members reflecting the various phases of delivery. These changes can cause disruptions to the project team dynamic and divergence away from the collective vision, goals, and commitments if not managed appropriately.

(b) Project duration can also affect stakeholder staffing decisions and capacity. It is important to understand how the timeline will impact the team’s ability to sufficiently staff and retain qualified personnel throughout the life cycle.

(c) Location can also impact sufficient staffing and retention of qualified personnel as well as access to and storage of materials, supplies, and equipment. Will the project be located close to a major metropolitan area or is it in a remote area? If the project is located overseas, the team should consider whether they are authorized to sustain a permanent presence and the extent that they must rely on the local workforce to perform key activities. Is the project located in a right-to-work or highly unionized area and how might that affect industry workforce availability?

(d) Ease of access to the site should also be considered. Will the project be located on an installation and/or are there any specific security requirements associated with site access?

(3) Scope and funding risk.

(a) Teams should assess the level of technical complexity required during project planning, design, and construction. Consider whether innovative and/or unique approaches will be incorporated in the project. Will the project team be working with uncommon materials, technologies, methods, or processes, or are there any particularly onerous time constraints on the project? Does the project require complex land acquisitions or multiple facility/utility relocations? Is the project a “first of its kind” and thus requires the design and/or construction of something for which no standards or criteria exist or the integration of multiple phases and/or incremental funding allotments? Any of these factors will increase the risk of not meeting budget or schedule objectives.

(b) Equally impactful to budget and schedule objectives is the likelihood of changes to project scope. Factors teams should consider include the potential for engineering and/or user-requested changes resulting from immature scope definition and/or design or misalignment between the project/resource sponsor and end user on project requirements; scope reduction to achieve an awardable project within the existing programmed amount; unforeseen site conditions; and changes to account for the implementation of new statutory, regulatory, or policy directives.

(c) How the project is resourced, by whom, and the extent to which sufficient funds can be accessed and made available to address project needs all contribute to a project’s overall risk profile and should be considered when determining the intensity of partnering efforts. It is easy for tensions to build on a project that is operating on an extremely constrained budget where there is limited ability or appetite to seek additional resources to address issues that may arise during delivery. Instituting an effective partnering approach early in the life cycle will go a long way to building the strong foundation needed for the team to successfully navigate this significant challenge.

(d) Teams should also consider the risk impacts of incrementally funded projects or those resourced through unconventional means (such as multiple types and/or sources of funds, uses unique authorities or agreement vehicles, involves an international partner) or by a stakeholder not familiar with USACE and/or the Federal Government.

(4) Schedule risk.

(a) Schedule risk can constitute up to one third of all risks encountered on a construction project. These risks can stem from various sources, some of which are controllable and some of which are not. Understanding the types of uncontrollable risk that may be encountered, the likelihood of their occurrence, and their potential impact to project timelines can help teams take proactive steps to develop mitigation strategies through routine engagement and open communication.

(b) Uncontrollable risk can manifest in many forms. Questions the team might consider include: Will the project require permitting or work to be performed by a third party such as an installation or private utility provider? Will the project require a waiver of some kind, who is the responsible decision authority, and what is the associated approval timeline? Are there supply chain delays or labor/equipment shortages that are likely to impact project timelines?

(c) The extent to which the project faces schedule constraints should also be considered. Is the project resourced with expiring funds that must be obligated before the end of the fiscal year? Is the project part of a larger project or program with interdependent critical path milestones? Does the project have an aggressive or unrealistic schedule and is it likely there will be pressure to compress the schedule further? Does this project support a critical stakeholder mission need date that if not met, will result in reputational risk to USACE and the broader project team?

(5) Significance risk. Some projects generate a higher level of visibility and scrutiny than others. This may be the result of schedule sensitivities, location, strategic importance, or the nature of associated stakeholder groups. While this does not necessarily affect a project's critical path, organizations will be disproportionately affected by any cost or schedule overruns in such an environment, so it is even more important to mitigate these risks. Increased partnering efforts, including an added focus on knowledge sharing and open and honest communication, can go a long way in reassuring all stakeholders that their concerns are understood and being addressed during the project.

(6) Stakeholder risk. It is important to consider the number and types of stakeholders that will be involved in the project and the complexity of synchronizing stakeholder goals, expectations, and decision-making. The greater the number of stakeholders involved and the more decision-making required, the higher the likelihood for misalignment. More robust partnering is likely required to maintain continuous alignment during the project.

(7) Project team dynamics and relationships risk. Consider whether there are preexisting working relationships with all stakeholders or whether anyone on the team has had any adverse experiences with any other team member before. Consider the likelihood of stakeholders with the most influence and impact on issue resolution and decision-making to stay engaged, involved, and aware of their accountability for project success. If the likelihood is low, it is strongly recommended that more rigorous partnering be implemented.

Table B–1
Partnering intensity assessment worksheet

RISK FACTOR	SUBFACTORS	RISK LEVEL *(mark selection)*			
		LOW-1	MED-2	HIGH-3	NOTES
Value ($)	**Consider the following:** • **Project Value** (Level 1 = <$20M; Level 2 = $20M–$200M; Level 3 = >$200M) • **Design Fee Value** (Level 1 = <$2M; Level 2 = $2M–$20M; Level 3 = >$20M)				
Duration and Location	**Consider the following:** • **Staffing Adequacy** *(includes ability to sufficiently staff project with qualified personnel throughout delivery)* • **Turnover** *(includes potential for USACE/stakeholder turnover because of length of design/construction)* • **Location** (*includes CONUS/OCONUS, remoteness of location, ease of access, workforce availability*)				
Scope and Funding Risks	**Consider the following:** • **Uniqueness/Technical Risk** *(includes complexity of design and construction; existence of standards and criteria; distinctiveness of project features; potential for design criteria changes/interpretation; use of international design criteria; use of standard designs; use of new technologies, processes, or acquisition approaches)* • **Funding Risk** *(includes design fee relative to the programmed amount, use of incremental funding, contingency sufficient and accessible, one funding stream versus cost share/multiple types of funds)* • **Level of Integration Required** *(includes phased projects, multiple concurrent/dependent projects executed by one or more stakeholder)* • **Scope Management Risk** *(includes likelihood of scope changes [growth or reduction] during design/construction)* • **Potential Damages** *(includes extent of potential punitive exposure, potential for liquidated damages)*				
Schedule Risks	**Consider the following:** • **Constraints** *(includes schedule realism, potential for schedule compression/delays)* • **Level of Control of Schedule Variables** *(includes permitting, real estate, utilities, planned technical reviews, the supply chain, waiver requests)* • **Submittals** *(includes timeliness of submittal reviews and submittal acceptance, number of submittals)*				

RISK FACTOR	SUBFACTORS	RISK LEVEL *(mark selection)*			
		LOW-1	MED-2	HIGH-3	NOTES
Significance and Stakeholder Risks	**Consider the following:** • **Congressional/Public/Executive Interest** *(includes visibility, support, political implications)* • **National/International Visibility** *(includes importance at national, state, or local levels and/or internationally with one or more foreign nation; media attention; potential for reputational risk)* • **Number/Type of Stakeholders** *(includes number of stakeholders with decision-making authority, complexity of communication, stakeholder types such as large versus small businesses, high-ranking officials, regulatory bodies)* • **Stakeholder History and Influence** *(includes history of working with stakeholders, level of involvement/influence in decision-making and overall project delivery)*				
Project Team Dynamics and Relationships	**Consider the following:** • **Leadership Experience and Competency** *(includes both USACE and stakeholder team leadership at varying echelons with specific emphasis on the field team (PM, RE, and PCO/ACO), experience with like-sized projects and teams)* • **Team Complexity** *(includes use of/need for tiered governance, technical disciplines required, potential for conflicting stakeholder views, project team location, potential for project team turnover)* • **Past Performance** *(includes effectiveness of prior partnering efforts and overall project performance)* • **Commitment to Partnering** *(includes tiered leadership commitment, overall stakeholder commitment)*				
Total Scores: 6–7 = Level 1; 8–10 = Level 1 or 2; 11–13 = Level 2; 14–15 = Level 2 or 3; 16–18 = Level 3					Total Score

c. Once the risk levels have been considered using Table B–1, the project team should assign 1 point for low, 2 points for medium, 3 points for high ratings, then add up the points for a total score. The total score is used to determine the appropriate partnering intensity level (Level 1, 2, or 3) according to Table B–2.

Table B–2
Determining partnering intensity level by score

Total Score	Partnering Intensity Level
6–7	Level 1
8–10	Level 1 or 2 (based on team discretion)
11–13	Level 2
14–15	Level 2 or 3 (based on team discretion)
16–18	Level 3

B–2. Partnering intensity-activity alignment

a. The partnering intensity level determined from the scoring exercise is used to identify the partnering activities that will be incorporated into a project. Table B–3 provides the Partnering Intensity-Activity Alignment table. The table identifies categories of partnering activities (such as partnering cadence, facilitation, tiered partnering) and is organized based on whether activities are applicable to the design phase, construction phase, or both.

b. Within each category, specific partnering elements (such as partnering kickoff workshops, partnering progress meetings) are identified with details regarding the level of effort required. The project team should review elements that are suggested but not required, according to the project's selected partnering intensity level, and determine if such elements will be completed based on the specific needs of the project. The project team should customize these elements considering the partnering intensity of their project. Elements requiring a determination at each partnering intensity level are outlined in Table B–4.

c. When an in-house design team is used, consider the respective partnering elements in the partnering effort during the design phase. For A-E-contracted designs, add the relevant partnering elements to the A-E contract scope of work and include this Playbook as a reference. For construction contracts, the appropriate partnering elements for Level 1, 2, or 3 can be tailored within the Unified Facilities Guide Specifications.

Table B–3
Partnering intensity-activity alignment

CATEGORY		PARTNERING ELEMENTS	INTENSITY LEVELS (Level of Effort)			
			1-LOW	2-MED	3-HIGH	MEGA
Partnering Meeting Cadence	Design Phase	**PARTNERING KICKOFF WORKSHOP** **Level 1:** Included as part of design project kickoff (in-person or virtual) **Level 2:** Can be included as part of design project kickoff (in-person or virtual) or stand-alone meeting; 2 to 4 hours focused specifically on partnering **Level 3/Mega:** Stand-alone partnering kickoff meeting; includes Executive Leadership Team (ELT)/Senior Executive Board (SEB)	●	●	●	●
		PARTNERING PROGRESS MEETINGS **Level 1:** Included as agenda item in all milestone meetings **Level 2:** Included as agenda item in all milestone meetings; quarterly or semiannual partnering meetings with ELT **Level 3/Mega:** Included as agenda item in all milestone meetings; quarterly partnering meetings with ELT and semiannual meetings with SEB	●	●	●	●
		PARTNERING CLOSEOUT MEETING **Level 1:** Part of already planned final progress meeting (may be 95% design review, not formal closeout); informal lessons learned discussion **Level 2:** Part of already planned final progress meeting (may be 95% design review, not formal closeout); informal lessons learned discussion or separate closeout at team discretion **Level 3:** Stand-alone closeout; facilitator-led at team discretion **Mega:** Facilitator-led, stand-alone closeout	◑	●	●	●
	Construction Phase	**PARTNERING KICKOFF WORKSHOP** **Level 1:** Included as part of construction project kickoff **Level 2**: Separate 2- to 4-hour meeting focused specifically on partnering **Level 3/Mega:** Stand-alone 4- to 8-hour partnering kickoff meeting; includes ELT/SEB	●	●	●	●
		PARTNERING PROGRESS MEETINGS **Level 1:** Partnering included as agenda item in weekly meetings; 1 to 4 partnering-specific, team-led meetings per year **Level 2:** Partnering included as agenda item in weekly meetings; 2 to 8 partnering-specific meetings (some can be team-led); quarterly or semiannual partnering meetings with ELT **Level 3/Mega**: Partnering included as agenda item in all weekly meetings; 4 to 12 facilitated partnering -specific meetings; quarterly partnering meetings with ELT and semiannual meetings w/SEB	●	●	●	●
		PARTNERING CLOSEOUT MEETING **Level 1:** Part of already planned closeout meeting; informal lessons learned discussion **Level 2:** Option to be part of already planned closeout meeting with focused 1 to 2 hours on partnering lessons learned/best practices OR separate closeout at team discretion; formally documented lessons learned/best practices **Level 3/Mega:** Facilitator-led, stand-alone closeout; formally documented partnering lessons learned/best practices	◑	●	●	●

● Applies to All Projects ◑ Suggested ○ Not Applicable

Table B–3
Partnering intensity-activity alignment (continued)

CATEGORY	PARTNERING ELEMENTS		INTENSITY LEVELS (Level of Effort)			
			1-LOW	2-MED	3-HIGH	MEGA
Facilitation	All Phases	**ROUTINE TEAM-LED** Review project team partnering goals; promote and apply partnering principles (3C's) into existing meetings; implement scaled teambuilding activities	●	●	●	●
		SUPPLEMENTAL INDEPENDENT THIRD-PARTY **Level 2**: Internal independent USACE or contractor facilitator **Level 3/Mega**: External independent third-party facilitator	○	◑	●	●
Tiered Partnering	All Phases	**EXECUTIVE LEADERSHIP TEAM** **Level 2:** Kickoff and semiannual or quarterly partnering meetings **Level 3/Mega:** Kickoff and quarterly partnering meetings	○	◑	●	●
		SENIOR EXECUTIVE BOARD **Level 3/Mega**: Kickoff and semiannual partnering meetings	○	○	◑	◑
Partnering Evaluation	Design Phase	**TEAM PARTNERING ASSESSMENT** **Level 1:** Informal feedback **Level 2:** Quarterly or semiannual team partnering assessment; reviewed at partnering progress meetings/design milestones **Level 3/Mega:** Formal, documented, supported by facilitator; quarterly team partnering assessment	●	●	●	●
	Construction Phase	**TEAM PARTNERING ASSESSMENT** **Level 1:** Informal feedback **Level 2:** Bimonthly or quarterly team partnering assessment; reviewed at partnering progress meetings **Level 3/Mega:** Monthly or bimonthly team partnering assessment; reviewed at partnering progress meetings	●	●	●	●
	All Phases	**COLLABORATIVE ANALYTICS**	○	○	◑	◑
Deliverables	All Phases	**PARTNERING PLAN (to include a partnering charter, partnering intensity assessment worksheet, communication protocols, shared risk register, issue resolution ladder, and relationship maintenance plan)** **Level 1:** Formal partnering charter; all other elements informal included in kickoff meeting minutes **Level 2:** Formal partnering plan – all elements **Level 3/Mega:** Formal partnering plan – all elements	●	●	●	●
Early Industry Engagement	All Phases	**EARLY ENGAGEMENT ACTIVITIES** **Level 1:** Routine market research **Level 2:** Routine market research; recommended draft request for proposal (RFP), industry days and site visit as appropriate **Level 3/Mega:** Routine market research; draft RFP; industry days; site visit	●	●	●	●

● Applies to All Projects ◑ Suggested ○ Not Applicable

Table B–4
Partnering approach questions to consider for each intensity level

Partnering Intensity Level	Team Decisions for Partnering Approach
1	• Who will be responsible for the development and maintenance of the Partnering Plan (USACE, contractor, coordinated between project team leaders)?
2	• Will there be tiered partnering with an Executive Leadership Team? • If so, will the group meet quarterly or semiannually? • What will be the planned frequency of partnering progress meetings for the project leadership team? • What will be the planned frequency for partnering assessments (quarterly or semiannually for design; bimonthly or quarterly for construction)? • Will the project require supplemental facilitation? *Use of supplemental facilitation is strongly encouraged, particularly if there is planned ELT involvement.* ○ What type of supplemental facilitation is available or most appropriate (independent third party, internal independent USACE staff, independent contractor facilitator)? ○ At what cadence will the supplemental facilitator be needed? ○ Is there a facilitator who has already been used in a previous project phase? • Will the partnering closeout meeting be incorporated into the agenda of other final meetings or be held as a separate session? • Who will be responsible for the development and maintenance of the Partnering Plan (USACE, contractor, facilitator, other)?
3	• Will a Senior Executive Board be included as part of tiered partnering? • What will be the planned frequency of partnering progress meetings for the project leadership team? • What will be the planned frequency for partnering assessments (quarterly for design; monthly or bimonthly for construction)? ○ Will Collaborative Analytics be used? • Who will be responsible for the development and maintenance of the Partnering Plan (USACE, contractor, facilitator, other)?

Appendix C
Partnering Plan Elements

C–1. Purpose

This appendix provides the instructions and templates necessary to complete a Partnering Plan for each intensity level. Each element of the Partnering Plan should be tailored to specific project needs.

C–2. Partnering Plan requirements based on intensity level

a. As an integral part of the PMP, the Partnering Plan is required for every project regardless of intensity level. However, the required components of the Partnering Plan differ for Level 1 projects versus Level 2, Level 3, or mega projects. Table C–1 lists the required components of a Partnering Plan for each intensity level.

Table C–1
Partnering plan required components

Intensity Level	Partnering Plan Required Components
Level 1	• Partnering Charter • Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet *(other Partnering Plan elements recommended for team discussion but no formal submittal required)*
Level 2	• Partnering Charter • Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet • Communication Protocols • Shared Risk Register • Issue Resolution Ladder • Relationship Maintenance Plan
Level 3/Mega Projects	• Partnering Charter • Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet (*not required for mega projects* • Communication Protocols • Shared Risk Register • Issue Resolution Ladder • Relationship Maintenance Plan

b. Although the Partnering Charter is the only required element to formally document within a Partnering Plan for Level 1 projects, all other elements of the Partnering Plan (such as communications, risk, issue resolution, maintenance) should be discussed during the project kickoff meeting and recorded within that meeting's minutes.

C–3. Partnering Plan templates

Blank templates for each of the Partnering Plan components are provided on the USACE Construction Management Administration Application page on Partnering and Relationship Building. Available templates are described in the following sections:

a. Partnering Charter

b. Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet

c. Communication Protocols

d. Shared Risk Register

e. Issue Resolution Ladder

f. Relationship Maintenance Plan

C–4. Partnering charter

a. The Partnering Charter is a document that embodies stakeholder commitment to partnering and to the mutual vision for the project. The charter is not a contractual agreement and does not change the terms of any contracts between any stakeholders.

b. An effective charter should be composed of the following key elements: project vision, stakeholder roles and responsibilities, mutual goals, and a signed team commitment statement (see Figure C–1). The level of detail associated with each of these elements should be scaled to align with the partnering intensity level determined for the project.

(1) *Vision*. The project vision should be a simple statement that clearly articulates the project objectives and keeps the stakeholders focused throughout the project.

(2) *Stakeholder roles and responsibilities*. The primary roles and responsibilities of each stakeholder should be discussed during the partnering kickoff workshop and documented in the charter, with specific emphasis on those stakeholders with direct influence on project outcomes.

(3) *Mutual goals for success*. Mutual goals for success should include foundational project specific performance goals and relationship goals associated with each of the Three C's (commitment, communication, and collaboration).

(4) *Signed team commitment statement*. When the charter is complete, it should be routed for review and signature by all stakeholders. Once all comments are resolved, each party should sign the charter to demonstrate their commitment to the partnering process.

Sample Partnering Charter
Project Vision: Create strong partnerships to deliver a cost-effective and high-quality facility.
Stakeholders: (Identify each stakeholder and key project participants along with their roles and responsibilities) • Sponsor/end user • USACE • Designer of Record (USACE in house and/or architect-engineer contractor) • Construction contractor • Key subcontractor(s) • Other external parties with project influence
Project Objectives: • (As summarized from the project scope, including an overview by the end user of the impact the project will have on their mission)
Mutual goals: • Core project goals o Meet all contractual obligations o Deliver the project safely o Meet quality requirements o Stay on budget o Deliver on time • Relationship Building Goals (*define success on the project for Commitment, Communication, and Collaboration*) o Open, honest, and respectful communication o Issues resolved quickly and proactively o Leadership is accessible
Stakeholder commitment to partnering and signatures: The project team is committed to achieving our goals, communicating effectively, proactively managing our risks/issues, and following the Issue Resolution Ladder and Relationship Maintenance Plan. _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____ _____

Figure C–1. Sample partnering charter

C–5. Communication protocols

a. It is important to document the team's commitment to open communication by detailing how the team will interface, both formally and informally, with one another and by defining the key principles that will guide the interface.

b. Communication protocols detail how information will be given and received, how issues will be communicated and addressed, how meetings will be conducted (including ground rules, frequency, capturing and distribution of meeting minutes, participation and collection of partnering team assessments), how stakeholder staff (new staff or changes in existing staff) will be onboarded, and how the CPARS evaluation process will take place when USACE has a contractual relationship with one or more stakeholders (such as A-E contractor, construction contractor). If communication protocols have already been developed as part of the Communication Plan within the PMP, the protocols can be included via reference in the Partnering Plan.

(1) *Communication procedures*.

(a) It is important to document how and how often communication, both formal and informal, will occur between stakeholders.

(b) Before communication occurs, however, the partnering team must agree on what tools and platforms to use for communication. Within this section, decisions regarding communication tools and platforms (such as email, phone, SharePoint, Microsoft Teams, Webex) should be documented.

(c) Next, the frequency by which stakeholder communication occurs should be documented in the table format provided in Table C–2. The types of communication frequencies to document include the following:

1. Progress meeting schedule.

2. Timeframe for the distribution of minutes after partnering meetings.

3. Other project-specific regular communication such as project update emails, newsletters, blogs, and other stakeholder- or public-facing materials.

(2) *Communication directory*. The Communication Directory is a table documenting each project partner and their contact information. Include names, titles, organizations, phone numbers (and clarification for whether a phone number is for daytime-only or 24-hour use), and email addresses, as shown in Table C–3. Anytime partnering changes occur, including if a stakeholder leaves the project or a new one joins, confirm that all contact information is updated.

(3) *Communication flowchart*. After tools, platforms, and contacts are determined for stakeholders, the correct lines of communication between stakeholders should be clearly delineated. Developing a communication flowchart helps stakeholders understand who to talk to when different types of opportunities or concerns arise during the project (see Figure C–2).

(4) *Stakeholder change procedures*. Over time, new stakeholders will exit or join the project team. If a stakeholder leaves, a knowledge transfer session should occur to capture any key contacts and information that may need to be transmitted to other team members. If a new stakeholder joins the project, they should receive partnering training

and be introduced to the Partnering Plan. Stakeholder change procedures document who will conduct knowledge transfer or onboarding sessions, along with the key topics to be discussed (see Table C–4).

(5) *CPARS evaluation*. Clearly document how often the CPARS evaluation will occur and the procedures that USACE and the contractor(s) will follow when completing it. Include in the documentation whether the contractor will have a draft review period with USACE prior to finalization, in addition to the schedule for completion.

Table C–2
Example communication procedures

Communication Type	Communication Tool or Platform	Communication Frequency
Informal coordination and project updates	• Email • Phone	As necessary
Formal coordination (contract updates, letters of concern)	• Email	As necessary
Project progress meetings	• Microsoft Teams	Weekly
Progress meeting minutes	• Portable Document Format (PDF) • Uploaded to Partnering Team SharePoint	Within 24 hours of progress meeting
Partnering progress meetings	• In person at field office	Quarterly (January, April, July, September)
Partnering progress meeting minutes	• PDF • Uploaded to Partnering Team SharePoint	Within 24 hours of progress meeting
Partnering Plan review and update	• PDF • Uploaded to Partnering Team SharePoint	Quarterly (January, April, July, September)

Table C–3
Example communication directory

Organization	Name	Title	Phone	Email
Executive Leadership Team				
USACE	First Last	Deputy for Project Management	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@usace.army.mil
USACE	First Last	Contracting Officer	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@usace.army.mil
Design Consultant	First Last	Principal-in-Charge	Daytime Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@consultant.com
General Contractor	First Last	President	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@contractor.com
Project Sponsor	First Last	Director of Project Delivery	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@sponsor.com
Project Leadership Team				
USACE	First Last	Project Manager	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@usace.army.mil
USACE	First Last	Technical Lead	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@usace.army.mil
USACE	First Last	Media Relations	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@usace.army.mil
Design Consultant	First Last	Project Manager/Technical Lead	Daytime Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@consultant.com
General Contractor	First Last	Construction Manager	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@contractor.com
General Contractor	First Last	Superintendent	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@contractor.com
Project Sponsor	First Last	Liaison Officer	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@sponsor.com
Project Sponsor	First Last	Public Information Officer	24-Hour Cell: 555-555-5555	name.name@sponsor.com

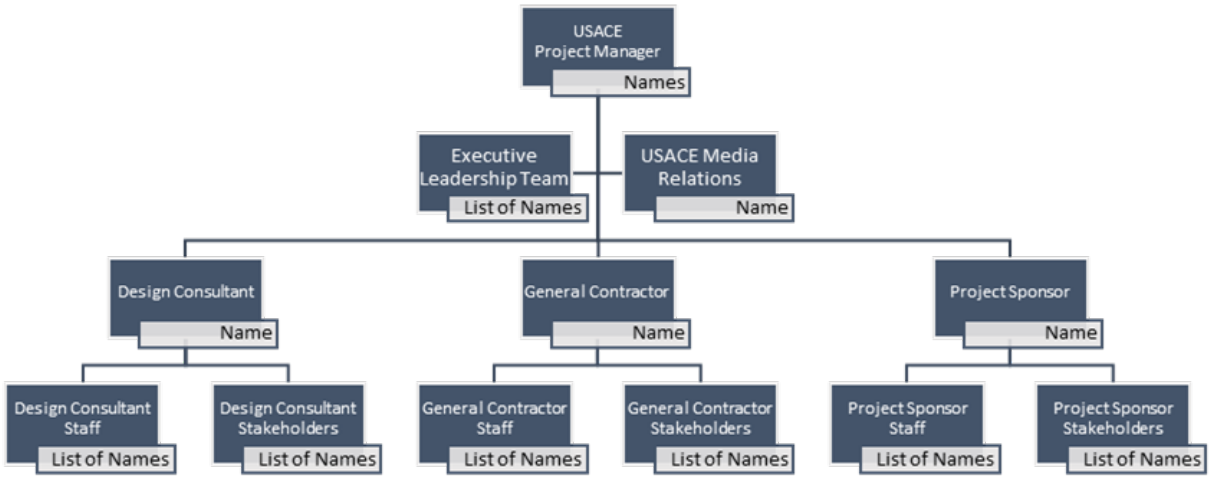

Figure C–2. Communication flowchart

Table C–4
Example stakeholder change procedures

Stakeholder Change Type	Communication Platform and Estimated Duration	Required Attendees	Topics to Cover
Onboarding (new stakeholder)	• In person • 30 minutes	• USACE Project Manager • Design Consultant Project Manager • General Contractor Superintendent • Project Sponsor Liaison Officer	• Introductions • Project Charter (all project intensities) • Partnering Plan (Level 2, Level 3, and mega projects only) • Best methods for communication with new stakeholder • Schedule concerns regarding existing communication calendars • Agreement on changes in the Partnering Plan necessary to incorporate new stakeholder
Knowledge transfer (leaving stakeholder)	• In person, if possible • Microsoft Teams as a secondary platform • 30–60 minutes, dependent on stakeholder involvement	• USACE Project Manager	• Overview of what worked well regarding partnering on the project (such as communication, technology, stakeholders) • Discussion of what was unsuccessful and needs improvement regarding partnering on the project (such as communication, technology, stakeholders) • Consideration of opportunities for better partnering on the project going forward

C–6. Shared Risk Register

Every project is faced with risks that can impact success. The partnering process is the ideal mechanism to enable proactive identification of key risks the team faces and to make commitments to collectively manage the risks or solve the problems. Integral to the team's efforts is the collective use of a SRR to document, track, and manage risks throughout the project life cycle. See Table C–5 for an example SRR.

a. Building an SRR.

(1) SRRs are intended to be subjective in nature and should not include objective time or cost impacts of any risk, regardless of ownership. Project teams should consider the following questions when preparing to populate the SRR:

(a) How will risks be documented and categorized?

(b) What is the likelihood and potential impact of each identified risks?

(c) How will the project team address each risk?

(d) How will the response plan be implemented to reduce risk exposure?

(e) How will the team proactively anticipate changes to identified risks and handle new risks before they adversely impact the project?

(2) Risk levels are assigned a rating based on the likelihood of a risk occurring and its impact. When completing an SRR, be sure to assign a risk level of low, moderate, or high to the risk's impact to project cost and schedule. Figure C–3 shows how to assign a risk level to a risk.

(3) The SRR will be reviewed by stakeholders during each project progress meeting (weekly) to review outstanding items and to add new items to the register, as necessary.

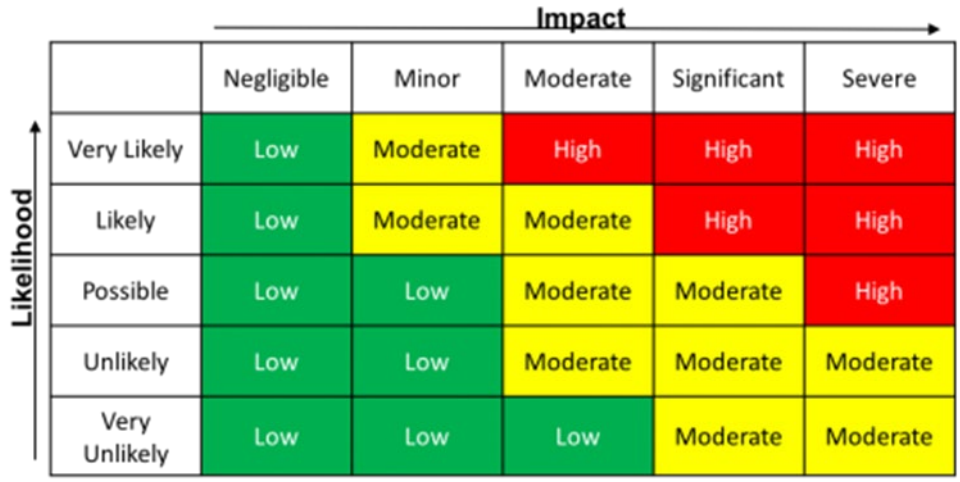

Figure C–3. Risk level ratings

b. Cost and schedule risk analysis (optional for Level 3/required for mega projects).

(1) For Level 3 or mega projects, a CSRA may be either required or desired to better understand and quantify projects risks and uncertainties and their potential impacts. A CSRA is a formal, documented process that uses Monte Carlo simulation throughout project delivery to identify, measure, and forecast the potential cost and time impacts of project risks and uncertainties on the estimated total project cost. Results are expressed as contingency amounts in dollars and time and reflect a desired confidence level for successful execution.

(2) Typically, the CSRA is used for internal government stakeholder partnering and informs the SRR developed during the planning and/or design phase. The CSRA is routinely updated throughout construction completion, commissioning, and turnover. The CSRA should not be provided to stakeholders external to the government.

Table C–5
Example shared risk register

Shared Risk Register

Risk #	Phase	Status	Date Added	Risk Statement	Potential Impact	Mitigation Measures	Likelihood	*Project Cost*		*Project Schedule*		*Action Owner(s)*	*Action Date*	*Days to Action Date*
								Impact	*Risk Level*	*Impact*	*Risk Level*			
1	Phase 1	Open	XX-May-24	Approval of submittals for long-lead equipment and materials.	Submittals for X, Y, Z require review from multiple subject matter experts not located at the project site. The submitted schedule indicates a 14-day review period versus the contract requirement of 30 days. Concern exists that there will be significant schedule impacts if the contractor does not receive A/B/C codes on the first submittal.	Contractor to schedule and facilitate a virtual pre-submittal review meeting between appropriate parties.	Likely	Negligible	Low	Significant	High	Contractor, Field Staff	XX-Apr-25	9

C–7. Issue Resolution Ladder

Issues will arise during every project. Ensuring that all stakeholders agree on how to address issues is important to partnering success. An IRL documents how stakeholders agree to quickly address issues with the appropriate decision-makers to solve issues at the lowest possible level. An IRL is a required component of the Partnering Plan but other issue resolution tools can also be used depending on the specific needs of the project.

a. Issue resolution procedures. All stakeholders should answer the following questions when determining the issue resolution procedures for the project (see Table C–6):

(1) How will issues be documented, tracked, and followed through to completion?

(2) What does it mean to solve issues at the lowest level? What are the types of issues that must be addressed by those with specific project authority such as warranted contracting officers for the government or contractor personnel with specific authority delegated to them for the project?

(3) What are the levels, who is on each level, and how long before an unresolved issue is elevated to the next level?

(4) What process will be used to elevate an issue? Can an individual do it or should the parties be required to put the issue in writing using an issue resolution memorandum?

b. Issue Resolution Ladder.

(1) The IRL should be used to provide a visual structure to address issues quickly with appropriate decision-makers and timelines to indicate when the issue should be elevated. See Table C–7 for an example.

(2) IRLs can vary significantly depending on the type of work being executed (such as Civil Works or Military programs) and the partnering intensity level identified.

(3) An issue should be elevated from one level to the next in the IRL when an agreement cannot be reached at the current level within the agreed-upon time. When elevation occurs, it should be done in writing (via email) or by using the Issue Resolution Memorandum (see Table C–8). Resolution should be achieved as soon as possible since there is a limited time to resolve an issue before it affects the schedule.

c. Issue resolution log.

(1) The issue resolution log is the way that project partners will document issues that may impact the project. Within the log, the issue will be described and assigned to a specific individual to address. After the issue is resolved, the final resolution and

means of communication will be included. This log will serve as a historical record for lessons learned during the project closeout process (see Table C–9).

(2) The initial issue tracking list should be started at the partnering kickoff workshop and reviewed at all weekly meetings and partnering progress meetings.

(3) The project team should confirm the IRL details the resolution chain in resolving contractual and/or working relationship issues that may be encountered on the project and the inclusion of actual member names.

d. Issue resolution memorandum. When an issue is identified for which resolution cannot be reached, involved parties can work together to develop an issue elevation memorandum (see Table C–8). Once the memorandum is completed, they will schedule a meeting with the next level of management on the IRL to present the issue together to resolve it as quickly as possible. If necessary, they should continue to elevate the issue per the IRL until it is resolved.

Table C–6
Example issue resolution procedures

Issue Resolution Plan
• Issues will be tracked in the weekly coordination meeting notes and not removed until they are resolved. • We will strive to resolve issues at the lowest possible level so long as the issue is within the authority granted each party at the respective level. • An Issue Resolution Ladder will be used to elevate issues and the time limits included for each level will be respected. • Any party unable to resolve an issue can decide it is time to elevate the issue but the parties at that level will need to explain the issue to the next level either verbally or in writing. • Inaction is not an alternative. • Once made, a decision is owned and known by all.

Table C–7
Example Issue Resolution Ladder

Level	Sponsor/ End User	USACE Noncontractual	USACE Contractual	Construction Contractor	A-E Contractor	Time to Elevate
5	Installation Commander	District Commander	Procuring Contracting Officer (PCO), in coordination with Chief of the Contracting Office	Owner/ President	Owner/President	2 weeks
4	Department of Public Works (DPW) Director	Chief of Engineering and Construction and Deputy District Engineer for Programs and Project Management	PCO	Project Executive/Vice President	Project Executive/Vice President	2 weeks
3	DPW Chief of Engineering	Area Engineer/ Resident Engineer and PM	Administrative Contracting Officer	Project Manager	Design Project Manager	1 week
2	DPW PM	Project Engineer	COR	Contractor Quality Control Manager	On-Site Representative (if applicable)	1 week
1	DPW Inspector	Quality Assurance Representative	COR	Superintendent	On-Site Representative (if applicable)	1 day

Table C–8
Example issue resolution memorandum

Example Issue Elevation Memorandum **Resident Engineer/Administrative Contracting Officer – Construction Contractor Project Manager Level**
Project name: Contract number: Resident Engineer/Administrative Contracting Officer: Prime Contractor Project Manager:
Type of issue: ___ Policy issue ___ Administrative issue ___ Technical/specification issue
List individuals and organizations affected by this issue and its resolution (such as Design, Materials, Maintenance, End user, Other Governmental Agencies): _____ _____ _____
Agreed-upon problem statement (a brief description of issue needing further assistance for resolution): _____ _____
Where we agree: _____ _____ _____ _____
Where we disagree: _____ _____ _____ _____
Additional comments and recommendations: _____ _____ _____
Issue resolved ___ No – Forwarded to next level in Issue Resolution Ladder on date_____ at this level? ___ Yes – Describe resolution below: _____ _____ _____
If resolved, written feedback of the resolution was transmitted to Team Members and persons affected by this issue on (date) at (time) _____
_____ _____ Signed USACE RE/ACO and Construction Contractor Project Manager

Table C–9
Example issue resolution log

#	Issue Description	Date Identified	Responsible Party	Issue Resolution Ladder Level	Due Date	Current Status	Date Resolved	Final Resolution	How Final Resolution was Communicated

C–8. Relationship Maintenance Plan

Collectively preparing and implementing partnering consistent with a Relationship Maintenance Plan is critical for maintaining the partnering effort throughout the project. Within the Relationship Maintenance Plan, a schedule for progress meetings and team building should be included, along with documented agreements regarding the frequency and content of partnering team assessments.

a. Progress meeting schedule. An effective Relationship Maintenance Plan should include the team's agreement on the frequency and time frame of project progress meetings, partnering progress meetings and team-building activities (see Table C–10). Appendix D provides more information on how to facilitate a partnering meeting, facilitator standards, and how to set an agenda for a project or partnering progress meeting.

b. Partnering Team Assessment procedures.

(1) Team partnering assessments are an important means of maintaining a positive working partnership and actively managing the health of the project and the team. Routine implementation of team partnering assessments can assist with identifying and addressing areas of concern early, before they impact the project, by determining areas for improving relationship behaviors and/or the partnering process and ensuring that all team members remain committed to achieving agreed-upon goals and objectives.

(2) Within this section, stakeholders should agree on the frequency by which assessments will take place and what types of questions should be included in the assessment.

(3) A template for the partnering team assessment is provided in Appendix E. The template should be modified based on the decisions reached from team partnering assessment questions. Overall, this performance-based assessment is intended to provide feedback on how stakeholders are doing in fulfilling their commitments and achieving agreed-upon relationship goals. Each assessment helps identify new/emerging issues and provides accountability for those charged with partnering implementation and follow-through.

Table C–10
Example progress meeting schedule

Date and Time	Meeting Type	Location	Deliverables
Every Tuesday, 1300–1500	• Project Progress Meeting	Microsoft Teams	• Meeting minutes
January 16, 2024 0800–1300	• Partnering Progress Meeting • Team-Building Lunch	In person at USACE	• Meeting minutes • Updates to Partnering Plan
April 15, 2024 0800–1300	• Partnering Progress Meeting • Team-Building Lunch	In person at USACE	• Meeting minutes • Updates to Partnering Plan
July 15, 2024 0800–1300	• Partnering Progress Meeting • Team-Building Lunch	In person at USACE	• Meeting minutes • Updates to Partnering Plan
October 14, 2024 0800–1300	• Partnering Progress Meeting • Team-Building Lunch	In person at USACE	• Meeting minutes • Updates to Partnering Plan

Table C–11
Example partnering team assessment procedures

Partnering Team Assessment Procedures
• Stakeholders will complete the Partnering Team Assessment at least 5 business days prior to each quarterly partnering progress meeting. • The assessment responses will be collected and analyzed by the project team leaders or third-party facilitator for trends and potential issues. • The USACE Project Manager will email the assessment analysis to all stakeholders at least 48 hours in advance of the quarterly partnering progress meeting and will include discussion points regarding the assessment on the meeting agenda. • Stakeholders will discuss the partnering successes, past issues, and potential future issues highlighted in the assessments during the quarterly partnering progress meeting. • Issues that cannot be resolved during the quarterly partnering progress meeting will be addressed via the issue resolution procedures documented within the Issue Resolution Plan.

Appendix D
Facilitation Standards

D–1. Purpose

a. The USACE approach to relationships and partnering is predicated on a core set of principles derived from the Command Partnering Philosophy. Central to these principles is the understanding that partnering should be implemented routinely across the project delivery life cycle from planning and programming to design, construction, and turnover. Additionally, it is important for USACE leadership at every echelon to take an active role in driving project partnering. Regardless of the type of facilitator used to develop and execute partnering (Appendix B, paragraph B–2, discusses determining the correct type of facilitator), USACE project team leadership is responsible for ensuring that partnering occurs and is maintained throughout the project life cycle.

b. A partnering facilitator is an important role for every project because the facilitator takes the lead in organizing, leading, and following up on all partnering activities. Whether a member of the PLT or an external contractor, the facilitator's responsibility is to manage the partnering process and enable each of the stakeholders to realize the benefits of cooperative and collaborative action. Using a facilitator to maintain positive partnering relationships is crucial for managing the following complexities that arise during design and construction projects:

(1) Stakeholders. The greater the number of stakeholders involved in the project, the greater the complexity of decision-making and problem-solving. Facilitators mediate conversations and provide frameworks for positive discussions to occur.

(2) Tiered partnering. When an ELT or a SEB is included on a project, a facilitator can support better communication between the tiers.

(3) Potential conflict. Facilitators are key for providing independent, unbiased support to teams navigating conflict.

(4) Supplemental resource. Facilitators help project leaders focus on their project work by taking on all aspects of partnering including logistics, planning, and execution.

D–2. Facilitator selection

a. When a third-party facilitator is required, they can be contracted directly by USACE or as a subcontractor to either the A-E or construction contractor. The exact contracting mechanism for engaging the third-party facilitator will be a project-specific decision and clarified within scoping documents and coordinated with Contracting and Counsel to verify scope and legal compliance. When the facilitator is a subcontractor to the A-E or construction contractor, then selection of the facilitator will be at the discretion of the A-E or contractor. Things to consider when selecting a facilitator through a direct USACE include:

(1) Does the facilitator have the skillsets to carry out their expected roles and responsibilities as part of the project team?

(2) Does the facilitator have the availability to make a commitment over the project's duration?

b. Facilitators must meet the minimum requirements outlined in Table D–1. Teams can include other project-specific requirements as needed (such as fluency in specific languages, specialized technical knowledge) when selecting their facilitator.

c. A good facilitator helps the project team increase performance by assisting them in having open and honest communication, collaboration, trust, and resolution of project issues. Below are key elements that help make a good facilitator and can be demonstrated as accomplishments from previous experience in partnering facilitation:

(1) Professional exchange. Interpersonal "soft" skills are key in establishing and promoting a partnering spirit among a diverse stakeholder team. The facilitator should create a safe environment, which is critical in establishing trust.

(2) Baseline knowledge/experience with the design or construction process. Facilitators are not involved in the day-to-day execution of the project but need to have substantial experience in design or construction projects to lead detailed and meaningful discussions.

(3) Communication skills. Facilitators must be skilled in active listening. Active listening skills include paraphrasing, summing up, asking questions, and being authentic. Additional communication skills include welcoming body language, motivating language and tone, patience, expressing respect, responding effectively to difficult questions and situations, drawing relevant points from discussions, encouraging everyone's participation, keeping the team focused, and building team relationships.

(4) Neutrality. The facilitator must be impartial and maintain an unbiased perspective.

(5) Planning/time management. The facilitator is tasked with planning and executing a variety of meetings and workshops. They need to verify that each meeting is planned and moderated properly to adequately address all necessary agenda items.

(6) Situational awareness. The facilitator should be able to "read the room" and must be able to guide the conversation to meet all stakeholder needs.

(7) Conflict resolution. Conflict is a typical part of the partnering process and a facilitator needs to help the team proactively solve conflicts.

(8) Team-building skills. The facilitator should create opportunities for team building to reinforce the benefits of working together or by organizing ways for team members to learn more about each other.

Table D–1
Facilitator minimum requirements

Team	Project Phase	Team Involvement
Level 1	Design	• Team led; a third-party facilitator is not typically used
	Construction	• Team led; a third-party facilitator is not typically used
Level 2	Design	• Either an independent USACE facilitator, an independent contractor facilitator, or a third-party facilitator • At least 1 year of experience in partnering facilitation • Previous experience partnering at least one project with a design budget over $2 million
	Construction	• Either an independent USACE facilitator, an independent contractor facilitator, or a third-party facilitator • At least 1 year of experience in partnering facilitation • Previous experience partnering at least one project with a construction budget over $20 million
Level 3	Design	• External, third-party facilitator • At least 3 years of experience in partnering facilitation • Previous experience partnering at least one project with a design budget over $20 million
	Construction	• External, third-party facilitator • At least 3 years of experience in partnering facilitation • Previous experience partnering at least one project with a construction budget over $200 million
Mega	Design	• External, third-party facilitator • At least 5 years of experience in partnering facilitation • Previous experience partnering at least three projects with a design budget over $20 million
	Construction	• External, third-party facilitator • At least 5 years of experience in partnering facilitation • Previous experience partnering at least three projects with a construction budget over $200 million

D–3. Partnering kickoff workshop

The partnering kickoff workshop establishes the partnering relationship and initiates the partnering process. Project team leaders and the facilitator will set a time, date, and location for the partnering kickoff workshop and the workshop agenda should be customized based on the needs of the team and the project objectives.

a. Workshop timing. The partnering kickoff workshop should be held close to the Notice-to-Proceed (NTP). Ensuring that the workshop is held earlier in the project confirms that partnering agreements and norms are set for the duration of the project. Typically, a kickoff workshop will occur within 30 to 60 days after the NTP is issued.

b. Stakeholder identification.

(1) The first step in planning a partnering kickoff workshop is for the facilitator and project team leaders to establish the partnering stakeholders. Stakeholders on the

project are individuals, groups, or organizations within or outside of USACE who have an interest in, are impacted by, or can influence project delivery. For larger projects with many stakeholders, it may be helpful for the facilitator to develop and email a survey to stakeholders in advance of the workshop to collect introductory information and gather initial partnering concerns or considerations.

(2) Regardless of project intensity or phase (design or construction), stakeholders generally include USACE project leaders, team leaders for the design or construction firm(s), the resource sponsor, local government liaisons, and public information representatives for all parties involved. For Level 2 or 3 projects, tiered partnering includes higher levels of leadership in the ELT and/or SEB. Table D–2 lists typical attendees at the partnering kickoff workshop, but the exact invite list will be specific to the project. At least one representative from each stakeholder group should attend the kickoff workshop and all follow-on partnering progress meetings. To be most effective, stakeholders who participate in the kickoff workshop should have decision-making authority.

Table D–2
Typical stakeholders at the partnering kickoff workshop

Team	Project Phase	Team Involvement	Typical Stakeholders
Working-Level Project Team	Design	• Level 1: Required • Level 2: Required • Level 3: Required • Mega: Required	• USACE • Construction contractor • Designer of Record • Resource sponsor • End user • Key subcontractors
	Construction	• Level 1: Required • Level 2: Required • Level 3: Required • Mega: Required	
ELT	Design	• Level 1: Required • Level 2: Required • Level 3: Required • Mega: Required	• USACE district senior leadership • USACE Contracting Officer • Project resource support • Command/sponsors • Designer of Record representative • Construction contractor regional representative
	Construction	• Level 1: Required • Level 2: Required • Level 3: Required • Mega: Required	
SEB	Design	• Level 1: Not Required • Level 2: Not Required • Level 3: Suggested • Mega: Suggested	• USACE division senior project representative • Regional contracting chief • Senior executive representatives from the project resource/sponsor • Corporate-level officers from the Designer of Record • Corporate-level officers from the construction contractor
	Construction	• Level 1: Not Required • Level 2: Not Required • Level 3: Suggested • Mega: Suggested	

c. Workshop agenda development.

(1) Before developing the partnering kickoff workshop agenda and inviting stakeholders, the facilitator and the project team leaders should discuss project background information. The facilitator needs to understand the project so they can accurately discuss it with stakeholders. Project background information such as the scope, budget amount, acquisition method, contract number, contract award date, NTP date, construction duration, contractor completion/beneficial occupancy dates, and progress percent scheduled/actual should be discussed. This information can be added to the cover page of the agenda as a snapshot of the project.

(2) The main purpose of the partnering kickoff workshop is to begin to establish team relationships and initiate the partnering process. Typical activities during the kickoff workshop include getting to know each other and developing elements of the Partnering Plan. This includes setting shared goals via the Partnering Charter, establishing communication protocols, discussing project risks, and committing to an ongoing Relationship Maintenance Plan. If time is short, developing the Partnering Charter is the best activity to occur in person within a team setting. Other elements of the partnering plan can be started by project team leaders before or after the kickoff workshop and shared with the project team. In most cases, further refinement of the Partnering Plan will be an action item from the partnering kickoff meeting.

(3) Example agendas across project phase and partnering intensity level are provided in the following sections. In general, the partnering kickoff meeting includes the following elements:

(a) Introductions. The partnering kickoff workshop should begin by welcoming the participants and having them introduce themselves. Participant introductions can include information about their personal background, such as hobbies and families, and their professional background. This provides an opportunity for the participants to relax, get acquainted, and begin establishing the basis for strong, cohesive team dynamics. Roles and responsibilities should be identified. It is critical to highlight those participants with decision-making authority for the project.

(b) Project overview. Following participant introductions, a summary of the project scope should be provided along with an overview by the end user of the impact the project will have on their mission.

(c) Partnering fundamentals. Partnering fundamentals should be reviewed to reinforce key partnering concepts and get everyone in the relationship-building mindset. Participants previous experiences with partnering and expectations for the process can also be discussed.

(d) Team-building activities. When participants are new to the partnering process, the facilitator may conduct a short and simple team-building exercise to reinforce the benefits of working together rather than separately. In workshops with more experienced and supportive stakeholders, specific team-building exercises may not

need to be conducted. Instead, team-building concepts can be incorporated into the other activities conducted at the workshop.

(e) Partnering Charter. Developing the Partnering Charter is a significant part of the workshop. For projects with lower levels of partnering intensity, the charter may be developed and finalized during the workshop, allowing all participants to immediately sign it. For projects with higher levels of partnering intensity, it may be necessary for the facilitator to develop the charter after the workshop and then provide the opportunity for comment before finalizing and routing the charter to all stakeholders for signature.

(f) Other Partnering Plan elements. Once the project team has either completed or framed out the charter, the next step in the workshop is to begin developing other elements of the Partnering Plan. Typically, the designated facilitator is responsible for coordinating the planning, development, and completion of the collaboration tools. There may not be time to complete each of the plan components during the workshop, but each tool should be discussed and a plan to finalize them agreed upon by the project team. The plan should include assigning responsibility for completion of each tool, the expected timeline for completion, and how the team plans to hold themselves accountable.

(4) Design or construction kickoff meeting (Level 1). For both the design and construction phases, projects with a Level 1 partnering intensity can incorporate partnering elements into the project kickoff meeting instead of having a separate session. During the kickoff meeting, the Partnering Charter should be developed and included within the PMP. All other elements of the partnering plan, including the team's goals for partnering success and agreements regarding communications, risk, issues resolution, and roles and responsibilities should be discussed by the project partners during the kickoff meeting with action items and key decisions recorded in the meeting minutes. Partnering elements to cover during a project kickoff meeting for projects with a Level 1 partnering intensity are included in Table D–3.

Table D–3
Design or construction phase project kickoff meeting agenda items (Level 1)

Duration	Agenda Item
30 Minutes	Partnering Charter development • Identification of project stakeholders • Stakeholder roles and responsibilities • Vision statement • Mutual goals
15 Minutes	Communication Procedures • Who will communicate updates to team members • What type of information will be communicated across team members • When does communication occur and how frequently • How will communication occur
15 Minutes	Risk and Issue Resolution Procedures • How partnering-specific items will be tracked and addressed in the Shared Risk Register • How partnering-related issues will be resolved and by whom

(5) Design kickoff meeting (Level 2). For design phase projects with a Level 2 partnering intensity, partnering elements can be either incorporated into the already occurring project kickoff meeting or addressed during a stand-alone, partnering-specific meeting. Regardless of whether partnering discussions are incorporated into the project kickoff meeting or occur in an independent meeting, 2 to 4 hours should be allocated to adequately discuss and formalize all elements of the full Partnering Plan. An example agenda for a 2.5-hour partnering meeting is included in Table D–4. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

Table D–4
Design phase partnering workshop agenda for project kickoff meeting (Level 2)

Duration	Agenda Item
45 Minutes	Partnering Charter development • Identification of project stakeholders • Stakeholder roles and responsibilities • Vision statement • Mutual goals
30 Minutes	Communication plan • Purpose • Communications directory and flowchart (Who) • Types of communication (What) • Frequency of communication (When) • Communication tools and platforms (How) • Staff change procedures • CPARS procedures (if relevant)
5 Minutes	Break
15 Minutes	Risk plan • Purpose • Agreement on use and maintenance • Overview of Shared Risk Register
15 Minutes	Issue resolution • Purpose • Issue Resolution Ladder • Issue Resolution Log
15 Minutes	Relationship Maintenance Plan • Purpose • Meeting types and schedule • Team-building activities
10 Minutes	Team partnering assessment • Purpose • Assessment template
15 Minutes	Review and document partnering action items Closing remarks

(6) Construction kickoff meeting (Level 2). For construction phase projects with a Level 2 partnering intensity, a partnering-specific meeting should be held independent of the project kickoff meeting. This meeting may last 2 to 4 hours, and all elements of the Partnering Plan should be discussed and formalized. An example agenda for a 4-hour Level 2 construction phase kickoff meeting is included in Table D–5. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

Table D–5
Construction phase partnering kickoff meeting (Level 2)

Duration	Agenda Item
45 Minutes	• Welcome • Introductions • Project scope review • Mission review
45 Minutes	Partnering Charter development • Identification of project stakeholders • Stakeholder roles and responsibilities • Vision statement • Mutual goals
30 Minutes	Communication plan • Purpose • Communications directory and flowchart (Who) • Types of communication (What) • Frequency of communication (When) • Communication tools and platforms (How) • Staff change procedures • CPARS procedures
10 Minutes	Break
30 Minutes	Risk plan • Purpose • Agreement on use and maintenance • Overview of Shared Risk Register
30 Minutes	Issue resolution • Purpose • Issue Resolution Ladder • Issue Resolution Log
15 Minutes	Relationship Maintenance Plan • Purpose • Meeting types and schedule • Team-building activities
15 Minutes	Team partnering assessment • Purpose • Assessment template
20 Minutes	• Review and document partnering action items • Closing remarks *Consider a team building or social activity following the meeting*

(7) Design or construction kickoff meeting (Level 3 and Mega). For projects with a Level 3 partnering intensity or mega projects for both the design and the construction phases, a partnering-specific meeting should be held independent of the project kickoff meeting. This meeting may last 4 to 8 hours and should include the ELT plus the SEB if applicable. During the meeting, all elements of the Partnering Plan should be discussed and formalized. An example agenda for an 8-hour Level 3 construction kickoff meeting

is included in Table D–6. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

Table D–6
Design or construction phase partnering kickoff meeting (Level 3 and Mega)

Duration	Agenda Item
45 Minutes	• Welcome • Introductions • Project scope review • Mission review • Partnering overview/training/lessons learned • Partnering milestones
30 Minutes	Team-building activity
60 Minutes	Partnering Charter development • Identification of project stakeholders • Stakeholder roles and responsibilities • Vision statement • Mutual goals
15 Minutes	Break
30 Minutes	Communication plan • Purpose • Communications directory and flowchart (Who) • Types of communication (What) • Frequency of communication (When) • Communication tools and platforms (How) • Staff change procedures • CPARS procedures
30 Minutes	Risk plan • Purpose • Agreement on use and maintenance • Overview of Shared Risk Register
30 Minutes	Issue resolution • Purpose • Issue Resolution Ladder • Issue Resolution Log
60 Minutes	Lunch
30 Minutes	Relationship Maintenance Plan • Purpose • Meeting types and schedule • Team-building activities
30 Minutes	Team partnering assessment • Purpose • Assessment template
15 Minutes	Break
90 Minutes	• Presentation of plan elements to ELT and SEB • ELT and SEB comments
15 Minutes	• Review and document partnering action items • Closing remarks *Consider a team building or social activity following the meeting*

d. Kickoff workshop logistics.

(1) Prior to the kickoff workshop, project team leaders and the facilitator should confirm logistics such as date, duration, time, location, and incidental items to have available at the workshop (such as audio-visual equipment, extension cords, easels, flipchart paper, name tags or name tents, sign-in sheets, colored markers, post-it notes, and pens/pencils). If any attendees will attend virtually, determine the logistics for their participation.

(2) At least one month prior to the workshop, invitations to the workshop should be sent to stakeholders. These invitations should include: (1) time, date, and location of the workshop; (2) contact information; (3) purpose of the workshop; (4) the draft agenda; and (5) any read-aheads.

(3) During the workshop, the facilitator is typically responsible for:

(a) Setting the stage. This may include covering ground rules, introductions, defining expectations and successes, and partnering fundamentals.

(b) Supporting development of the Partnering Plan. The facilitator should elicit feedback from all relevant stakeholders on elements of the Partnering Plan and may be involved in drafting the plan for stakeholder approval. Appendix C provides for more information on the Partnering Plan.

(c) Team building. The facilitator should help the stakeholders brainstorm future team-building activities and solicit volunteers to coordinate the planning of these activities. The responsibility for planning and organizing each future activity should be assigned during the workshop. Examples of team-building activities include potluck lunches, volunteering as a group, cookouts during future partnering meetings, happy hour, games and activities, and attending or organizing team sporting events.

(d) Assigning next steps. At the end of the workshop, the facilitator should summarize the workshop discussions and assign action items to appropriate stakeholders. The facilitator should also set expectations for when meeting minutes and the final Partnering Plan will be distributed.

(e) Workshop follow-up. Within one week of the workshop, the facilitator should send a thank you email to all attendees. Meeting minutes, the final Partnering Plan, and any other agreed-upon deliverables should be included in this email. Additionally, the facilitator should email calendar invitations for upcoming partnering meetings as discussed during the kickoff workshop.

D–4. Partnering progress meetings

a. Whether during the design or construction phases, progress meetings provide the opportunity to discuss partnering successes, issues, and next steps. Depending on the level of partnering intensity, discussions regarding partnering can occur as part of regular project milestone or progress meetings, or as stand-alone partnering-specific

progress meetings. All discussions regarding partnering concerns or resolutions should be recorded and distributed within the meeting minutes.

b. Partnering progress meetings are also an opportunity to discuss results from team partnering assessments. The facilitator may support the distribution and collection of partnering team assessment as a way to maintain anonymity within the responses. The facilitator should work with project team leaders on setting up the team partnering assessments and reviewing responses prior to each partnering progress meeting.

(1) *Design phase project milestone meetings (all levels)*. For the design phase, partnering discussions should occur during all milestone meetings regardless of the level of partnering intensity. Example agenda items for a 1-hour design phase partnering progress meeting that occurs during a project milestone meeting are included in Table D–7. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

Table D–7
Design phase agenda items for project milestone meetings (all levels)

Duration	Agenda Item
15 Minutes	• Review Partnering Charter and team goals • Review partnering action item status • Assess partnering activities to date, reviewing team partnering assessment results as applicable
30 Minutes	Discuss upcoming partnering opportunities, issues, or needs
15 Minutes	Issue action items to be accomplished by the next milestone meeting

(2) *Design phase partnering progress meetings (Level 2, Level 3, and Mega)*. In addition to the partnering workshops held during project milestone meetings, Level 2, Level 3, or mega projects may necessitate ongoing quarterly or semiannual partnering-specific meetings with the ELT and/or SEB when they are involved. An example agenda for a 2-hour design phase partnering progress meeting for Level 2, Level 3, or mega projects is included in Table D–8. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

Table D–8
Design phase partnering progress meetings (Level 2, Level 3, or Mega)

Duration	Agenda Item
30 Minutes	• Welcome • Introductions • Project status update • Project successes/milestones/achievements
15 Minutes	• Review partnering action item status • Review partnering team assessment results
15 Minutes	ELT and/or SEB comments on project and partnering to date
5 Minutes	Break
30 Minutes	Discuss upcoming partnering opportunities, issues, or needs
15 Minutes	Adjust Partnering Plan sections based on revised goals and forecasted activities • Partnering Charter • Communication Protocols • Shared Risk Register • Issue Resolution Ladder • Partnering Maintenance Plan
10 Minutes	• Issue action items • Closing remarks

(3) *Construction phase project progress meetings (all levels)*. For the construction phase, partnering discussions should occur during all weekly project progress meetings regardless of the level of partnering intensity. Example partnering agenda items for weekly project progress meeting are included in Table D–9. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

Table D–9
Construction phase project progress meeting agenda items (all levels)

Duration	Agenda Item
15 Minutes	• Review partnering action item status; celebrate recent project successes • Discuss upcoming partnering opportunities, issues, or needs • Issue action items to be accomplished by the next progress meeting

(4) *Construction phase partnering progress meetings (all levels)*. Additionally, partnering-specific progress meetings should also be held during the construction phase for projects of all partnering intensity levels. An example agenda for a 4-hour construction phase partnering progress meeting is included in Table D–10. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

(a) Level 1 projects should hold at least one and up to four partnering-specific meetings each year. The team can facilitate these meetings.

(b) For Level 2 projects, at least two and up to eight partnering-specific meetings should be held each year (these can be facilitated by the team itself or by an external facilitator) and partnering meetings with the ELT should be held on a semiannual or quarterly basis.

(c) Level 3 projects should hold between 4 and 12 partnering-specific meetings using an external facilitator. Level 3 partnering meetings with the ELT should occur at least quarterly, while partnering meetings with the SEB should occur at least semiannually if SEB involvement is included.

Table D–10
Construction phase partnering progress meetings (all levels)

Duration	Agenda Item
45 Minutes	• Welcome • Introductions • Project status update • Project successes/milestones/achievements
45 Minutes	• Review partnering action item status • Review partnering team assessment results
30 Minutes	ELT and/or SEB comments on project and partnering to date
15 Minutes	Break
45 Minutes	Discuss upcoming partnering opportunities, issues, or needs
45 Minutes	Adjust Partnering Plan sections based on revised goals and forecasted activities • Communication plan • Risk plan • Issues resolution • Partnering assessment
15 Minutes	• Issue action items • Closing remarks *Consider a team building or social activity following the meeting*

D–5. Partnering closeout meeting

For both the design and construction phases, the closeout meeting provides an opportunity for stakeholders to discuss partnering successes and lessons learned that can be incorporated into future projects. The decision to hold partnering discussions during the project closeout meeting itself or as a stand-alone partnering-specific meeting, as with the kickoff meeting and progress meetings, depends on the level of partnering intensity assigned to the project. Table D–11 provides more information about how partnering closeout meetings should occur based on project intensity levels.

Table D–11
Partnering closeout meeting requirements

Project Intensity Level	Project Phase	Partnering Closeout Meeting Information
Level 1	Design	• Part of the already planned final project progress meeting or during the 95 percent design review meeting • Lessons learned are documented in the meeting minutes
	Construction	• Part of the already planned project closeout meeting • Lessons learned are documented in the meeting minutes
Level 2	Design	• Part of the already planned final project progress meeting or during the 95 percent design review meeting • Lessons learned are documented in the meeting minutes • A separate, partnering-specific closeout meeting may be held per team discretion
	Construction	• Either part of the already planned project closeout meeting with at least 1 to 2 hours set aside to discuss partnering, or held as a separate, partnering-specific closeout meeting • Lessons learned and best practices are formally documented in a partnering closeout report
Level 3	Design	• Independent partnering-specific closeout meeting • Lessons learned and best practices are formally documented in a partnering closeout report • May be led by a third-party facilitator
	Construction	• Independent partnering-specific closeout meeting • Lessons learned and best practices are formally documented in a partnering closeout report • Must be led by a third-party facilitator
Mega	Design	• Independent partnering-specific closeout meeting • Lessons learned and best practices are formally documented in a partnering closeout report • Must be led by a third-party facilitator
	Construction	• Independent partnering-specific closeout meeting • Lessons learned and best practices are formally documented in a partnering closeout report • Must be led by a third-party facilitator

a. Design or construction phase partnering closeout meeting (Levels 1 and 2). Level 1 and 2 projects may hold closeout discussions as part of the design phase final progress meeting (such as 95 percent design review) or the construction phase project closeout meeting. As with the kickoff meeting, the successes and lessons learned should be documented within the meeting's minutes. Elements to cover during the partnering workshop held during one of these final meetings are included in Table D–12.

Table D–12
Design or construction phase partnering closeout agenda (Levels 1 and 2)

Duration	Agenda Item
15 Minutes	Partnering successes • What worked well on the project? • What helped lead to project team success? • What portions of the partnering process were most useful to the team in building effective relationships?
15 Minutes	Partnering lessons learned • What challenges did the project team face? • How were challenges overcome? • What improvements could have been made to the partnering process? • If there is another phase of the project, are there recommendations for how partnering efforts should be adjusted?

b. Design or construction phase partnering closeout meeting (Level 3 and Mega). Level 3 and mega projects necessitate a stand-alone, partnering-specific closeout meeting for both the design and the construction phases. It is recommended that this closeout meeting be led by a facilitator, although Level 2 project teams may opt to facilitate the meeting. The partnering successes and lessons learned should be documented as part of the project closeout. The ELT should be invited to both Level 2 and Level 3 partnering closeout meetings and the SEB should be invited to Level 3 partnering closeout meetings when included. An example agenda for a 2-hour design or construction phase partnering closeout meeting is included in Table D–13. Expected durations should be adjusted depending on project partnering complexity.

Table D–13
Design or construction phase partnering closeout meeting agenda (Level 3 and Mega)

Duration	Agenda Item
15 Minutes	• Welcome • Introductions
30 Minutes	ELT and/or SEB comments on project successes and lessons learned
30 Minutes	Partnering successes • What worked well on the project? • What helped lead to project team success? • What portions of the partnering process were most useful to the team in building effective relationships?
10 Minutes	Closing remarks

D–6. Partnering facilitator evaluations

The USACE PM should distribute an evaluation survey to gauge the facilitator's performance at the end of the kickoff meeting and at the closeout meeting. The survey should be distributed, collected, and analyzed by the PM to verify anonymity and accuracy. Table D–14 provides a survey template that may be modified to fit project and team needs.

Table D–14
Facilitator evaluation survey template

Project Name and Location	**[Name]**
	[Organization]
	[Date]

As a project team member, please indicate your reaction to each of the following:

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Comments
1. Both Meetings: Rate your knowledge of partnering before/after the kickoff/closeout meeting.						
2. Both Meetings: The partnering facilitator was knowledgeable about the project and the design/construction process.						
3. Both Meetings: The partnering facilitator remained neutral to all parties.						
4. Both Meetings: The partnering facilitator planned the session effectively and accomplished the intended workshop outcomes of the kickoff/closeout meeting.						
5. Kickoff Meeting: The partnering facilitator effectively helped the team set up the Partnering Charter and other components of the Partnering Plan.						
6. Closeout Meeting: The partnering facilitator encouraged participation of all key stakeholders throughout the project.						
7. Both Meetings: The length of the kickoff/closeout meeting was appropriate.						
8. Both Meetings: Overall, I was satisfied with this partnering facilitator and would recommend them to others.						

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Comments
9. Closeout Meeting: The partnering facilitator stayed connected to the team and the project throughout the life of the project.						
10. Both Meetings: The partnering facilitator added value to the partnering process.						
11. Closeout Meeting: The partnering facilitator effectively led team-building activities throughout the project life.						
12. Closeout Meeting: The partnering facilitator was effective in assisting the team with issue resolution.						
14. Additional comments:						

D–7. Partnering facilitator checklist

Table D–15 provides a partnering facilitator checklist to use when planning partnering for a project of any intensity level.

Table D–15
Partnering facilitator checklist

Planning for the Partnering Meeting/Workshop
Meet with the USACE Project Manager (PM) and/or other key project leaders to identify the following: ☐ Important project details (such as scope, budget, projected milestones, community impact) ☐ Key partnering stakeholders who need to attend the meeting/workshop ☐ Necessary length of meeting/workshop and high-level agenda items ☐ Meeting/workshop speakers ☐ Meeting location and, if online, platform for use
If holding an in-person workshop/meeting, confirm the following logistics: ☐ Conference room with enough seats for attendees ☐ Audio-visual equipment details in conference room for slide deck/computer screen sharing ☐ Ability for virtual attendees to participate if planned ☐ Catering, if applicable
Develop a pre-meeting/workshop read-ahead packet, inclusive of the following: ☐ Meeting/workshop agenda ☐ Brief project overview (such as scope, budget, projected milestones, community details) ☐ Pre-drafted charter or other elements of the Partnering Plan, if applicable ☐ Any other materials as requested by the PM
Develop a meeting/workshop invitation email for the PM to send to all required attendees. Be sure to include the following details: ☐ Purpose of meeting/workshop ☐ Logistics information (date, time, and location or virtual platform link if online) ☐ Pre-meeting/workshop read-ahead packet ☐ Contact information of the PM for follow-up questions
Develop meeting/workshop slide deck for use and ensure that it is approved by the PM.
Create a sign-in sheet that includes contact information (name, title, organization, phone, email) for use at the workshop.
Plan for nametags and/or name tents for all workshop attendees to include name, title, and organization name.
Develop a Facilitation Evaluation Form (for kickoff or closeout meetings only) and ensure that the PM has it for dissemination.
Print out copies of the agenda and slide deck for attendees to use during the meeting/workshop.
In-Person Meeting/Workshop Materials Needed
Flip charts for use during brainstorming sessions.
Large tip markers for writing on flip charts.
Easels for flip charts and/or tape to affix flip chart paper to walls.
Regular size post-it notes.
Name tags and name tents.
Dry erase markers (four colors) and eraser.
Pens and pads of paper for attendees to use.
Power cords and power strips for attendees to use to plug in laptops.
Duct tape or electrical tape to tape power cords to the floor to minimize trip hazards.
Laptop with presentation remote (clicker).

In-Person Meeting/Workshop Setup
Arrange tables and chairs to fit meeting/workshop needs.
Arrange flip charts for use.
Create a sign-in area with the sign-in sheet, name tags, and name tents.
Place agendas, printed slide decks, pens, and pads of paper at every seat.
Arrange extension cords and power strips for attendee use. Tape down any cords in walkways.
Confirm that your laptop works with the audio-visual system in the room.

Appendix E
Assessing Relationship Health

E–1. Team partnering assessment

a. A team partnering assessment is a tool used to measure the performance of the project team in implementing the core partnering components of commitment, communication, and collaboration (the Three C's) and achieving the shared goals committed to in the Partnering Charter. This assessment is not a formal evaluation such as a Performance Evaluation or Contractor CPARS. Table E–1 shows a template available for distribution to members of the project team. Efforts should be made to keep responses anonymous, either through distribution and collection by a third party or by having each stakeholder group collect and aggregate their own feedback to then share with project team leaders.

b. All projects should assess the team's relationship-building mindset by asking how the team is embodying the Three C's. However, what defines excellence for each component will differ from project to project. The items to consider as part of rating each goal should be adjusted, as applicable, for a given team (examples are provided in Table E–2). Defining success for each of the Three C's should be discussed when developing the Partnering Charter.

c. Other project-specific goals from the Partnering Charter or as agreed upon by the project team can be added for assessment. The template also recommends additional open-ended questions on the team's successes and areas for improvement. Table E–2 provides examples.

d. The input received via the partnering team assessments should be discussed during Partnering Progress Meetings to determine ways the team is working well together and potential areas for improvement. Scoring within the partnering team assessment is not directly related to any formal review process. Table E–3 provides an assessment example.

Table E–1
Example goals for demonstrating a relationship-building mindset

Relationship-Building Mindset	Example Goals
Commitment	Promote behaviors that foster trust (honesty, transparency, and integrity).
	Leadership is accessible, accountable, proactive, and supportive.
	Team members are accountable, taking full ownership of responsibilities and honoring commitments.
	The team puts successful delivery of the mission first, addressing the requirements of the mission before the goals and requirements of any one organization.
	The team continually assesses and adjusts performance, as needed, to ensure successful project delivery outcomes.
Communication	The team maintains respectful, professional, and productive communication.
	The team uses clear, open, consistent, and timely communication.
	Team members listen actively and seek to understand and learn from each other.
	Communication channels are developed and maintained for real-time communication in the field.
	The team openly communicates and actively facilitates resolution of differences.
Collaboration	Participation of all team members is encouraged.
	The team is integrated and working together cohesively.
	The team has a sense of pride for what they are accomplishing.
	The team engages in early coordination of issues that may require a change and works to minimize impacts.
	Problems are solved at the lowest level possible and escalated via the Issue Resolution Ladder when necessary.
	The team works creatively to solves issues in a timely fashion.
	Potential risks to project outcomes are proactively being identified, assessed, and mitigated.

Table E–2
Example additional goals and open-ended questions

Category	Example Goals and Questions
Safety	Create and maintain processes to appropriately identify and address safety concerns.
	Maintain an accident-free environment.
Quality	Implement an effective quality management program to minimize issues and re-work.
	Supports the design, planning and execution of an effective commissioning program through early integration.
	Team has proactive inspections and timely material testing.
Schedule	Address potential schedule slippages collectively to mitigate impacts to project delivery.
	Establish and meet agreed-upon milestones required to successfully deliver the project.
	Prompt notification of schedule changes.
Administration	Submit and review required paperwork in a timely and accurate manner.
Balance	Appropriately balance the competing needs of safety, quality, and schedule.
Cost	Maintain cost controls to deliver project on budget.
Open-Ended Questions	List project successes since the last partnering session.
	List challenges experienced since the last partnering session or future expected challenges.
	Describe something working well within the team and/or areas that could be adjusted within the team.
	List near-term upcoming challenges for the team and/or project.
	Is there other input you would like to provide?
	What is something working well within the team?
	What is one area that could be adjusted within the team to improve the relationships?

Table E–3
Team partnering assessment

Project Name	
Contract Number	
Location	
Resident Office	
Date	
Organization	
Role	

Please help the team evaluate ongoing partnering outcomes by providing feedback and rating the listed goals.

RATINGS
1 = Poor
2 = Marginal
3 = Average
4 = Good
5 = Excellent
N/A = Not Applicable

GOALS	RATING	COMMENTS ***Please provide a short comment to support your rating. Please do not identify specific individuals in your comments/responses.***
Please rate the team's COMMITMENT *Items to consider include:* • *Team members are accountable and honor commitments* • *Team puts successful delivery of the project first*		
Please rate the team's COMMUNICATION *Items to consider include:* • *Clear, open, consistent, and timely communication* • *Team members listen actively and seek to understand and learn from each other*		
Please rate the team's COLLABORATION *Items to consider include:* • *Team works collaboratively to solve issues in a timely manner* • *Potential risks to project outcomes are proactively identified, assessed, and mitigated*		
Other project-specific goal (as needed)		
Other project-specific goal (as needed)		
Other project-specific goal (as needed)		

ADDITIONAL FEEDBACK	
What is something working well within the team?	
What is one area that could be adjusted within the team to improve the relationships?	
Please provide any other input regarding the team's ongoing partnering.	

E–2. Collaborative analytics

a. Collaborative analytics (CA) is a tool that can be used to proactively monitor team integration, predict project stress, and correct issues before they impact project schedule or budget. This tool is especially helpful on projects where relationships and stakeholder collaboration are determined to be major risk factors.

b. To employ CA on a project, a specific CA consultant is hired to establish a set of early indicators based on input from the project team and the latest research in organizational behavior, industrial psychology, and behavioral economics. These indicators are then translated into a survey that is completed by the project team on a monthly basis. Typically, assessments focus on areas such as communication, engagement, quality of work, innovation, organization, accountability, level of support, and team environment.

c. The CA assessment is anonymous and typically takes about 10 minutes to complete. Feedback from the assessment is analyzed by the CA tool and displayed in a series of standard reports that address overall project performance and trends in performance and relationships.

d. These reports are initially provided to a group of team leaders called the Collaborative Analytics Subgroup Leadership (CASL) team, which represents all project stakeholders including government parties, the A-E contractor, the construction contractor, and key trade partners. The CASL team meets monthly to discuss the survey results and, when appropriate, develops corrective actions. Survey results and proposed corrective actions are shared with the project team and senior leadership.

e. CA tools can be implemented as stand-alone for specific projects or more broadly across a program, district, or region.

Glossary of Terms

Acronym	Definition
ACO	Administrative Contracting Officer
A-E	Architect-Engineer
ARIMS	Army Records Information Management System
BCOES	Biddability, Constructability, Operability, Environmental, and Sustainability
CA	Collaborative Analytics
CASL	Collaborative Analytics Subgroup Leadership
CECG	Chief of Engineers and Commanding General
CMA²	Construction Management Administration Application
CONUS	Continental United States
COR	Contracting Officer's Representative
CPARS	Contractor Performance Assessment Reporting System
CSRA	Cost and Schedule Risk Analysis
DA	Department of the Army
DPW	Department of Public Works
ECIFP	Engineering Considerations and Instructions for Field Personnel
ELT	Executive Leadership Team
EP	Engineer Pamphlet
ER	Engineer Regulation
FAR	Federal Acquisition Regulation
HQUSACE	Headquarters, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
IPI	International Partnering Institute
IRL	Issue Resolution Ladder
MSC	Major Subordinate Command
NTP	Notice-to-Proceed
OCONUS	Outside the Continental United States
OFPP	Office of Federal Procurement Policy
PCO	Procuring Contracting Officer
PDT	Project Delivery Team
Playbook	Partnering Playbook
PLT	Project Leadership Team
PM	Project Manager
PMP	Project Management Plan
RE	Resident Engineer
RFI	Request for Information
RFP	Request for Proposal
RRS-A	Records Retention Schedule – Army
SEB	Senior Executive Board

Acronym	Definition
SPE	Senior Project Executive
SRR	Shared Risk Register
USACE	U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
VE	Value Engineering

Issue Resolution Ladder
A decision-making tool that provides a visual structure of how stakeholders agree to quickly address issues with the appropriate decision-makers.

Multi-Tiered Partnering
A tiered governance structure including an Executive Leadership Team and/or a Senior Executive Board in addition to the working-level project team.

Partnering
A management philosophy that seeks to maximize the effectiveness of the project team across the life cycle through a relationship-building mindset and structured process for collaboration and teamwork to solve problems, manage risk, drive innovation, resolve issues, and deliver safe, quality projects on time and within budget.

Partnering Charter
A written document that creates a symbolic reminder of stakeholder commitment to partnering and to the mutual vision for the project.

Partnering Closeout Meeting
Final partnering session of a project delivery phase where lessons learned are captured and successes are celebrated.

Partnering Facilitator
Manages the partnering process and enables each of the stakeholders to realize the benefits of cooperative and collaborative action.

Partnering Intensity
A designated level based on assessing project risks that helps to determine the appropriate frequency and duration of partnering activities.

Partnering Kickoff Workshop
The initial partnering session where the team sets the conditions for partnering success at the outset of each delivery phase.

Partnering Plan
A living document that outlines how the team will implement the partnering philosophy across the project delivery life cycle. The Partnering Plan includes the Partnering Charter, Partnering Intensity Assessment Worksheet, Communication Protocols, Shared Risk Register, Issue Resolution Ladder, and Relationship Maintenance Plan.

Partnering Progress Meetings
More formal meetings to discuss partnering successes, issues, and next steps. The meetings can include senior leadership and often review feedback from team partnering assessment.

Relationship-Building Mindset
A frame of mind rooted in collaboration, communication, and commitment.

Shared Risk Register
A collaboration tool that helps the team document, track, and manage risk throughout the project life cycle.

Team Partnering Assessment
A tool used to determine the health of the project and team by asking team members to qualitatively evaluate the team's performance against relationship-building goals.