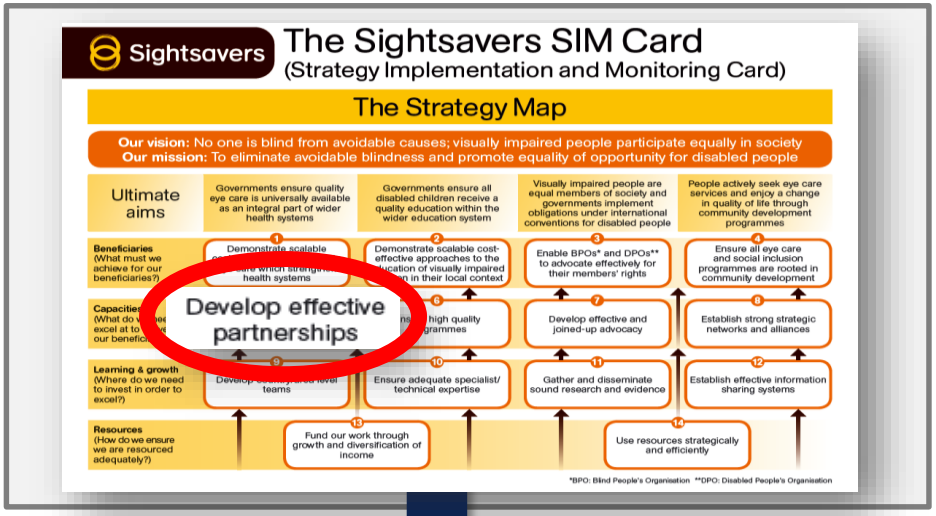
Partnership Framework for implementing partners

December 2017

Introduction

Developing effective partnerships is a key strategic objective. We have developed a three phase programme partnership framework that supports the partnership policy and principles, and translates them into a step-by-step plan. It simplifies and replaces the previous (130 pages long) policy guidelines.



Partnership Policy

Partnership Principles

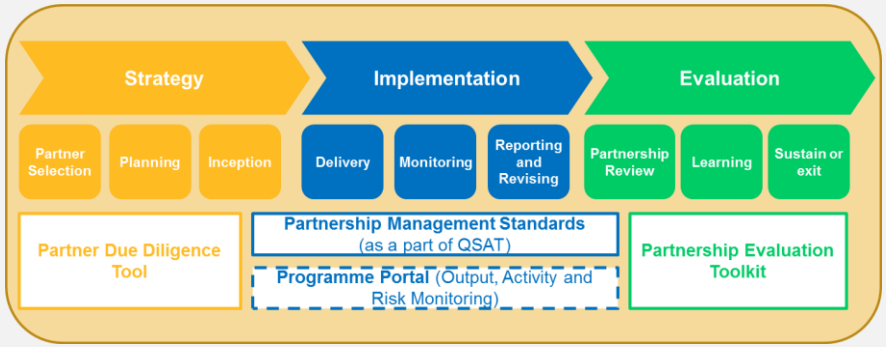
Shared goals & compatible values
The partners' goals should align with and provide a clearly defined added value to the achievement of Sightsavers' mission to eliminate avoidable blindness and promote equality of opportunity for disabled people. The partners' vision, values and ways of working should be compatible with that of Sightsavers

Openness and understanding
Example statement: We will collaborate closely with our partners and share all relevant information openly to build a trusting relationship to jointly deliver aligned development activities. We will communicate in a timely manner with the purpose to build an understanding for the effect changes can have on goals and outcomes. We are open to taking measured risks and trying out new approaches to achieve the shared goal. Our commitment to the shared impact is such that we are open to giving up autonomy in decision-making to work for the benefit of the partnership as a whole. We will commit time and resources to monitoring and improving the health of our partnership, as well as the measuring the impact of the projects beneath this.

Mutual accountability
Sightsavers and the partners should be accountable to each other and also to other stakeholders, including beneficiaries, for their actions, their achievement of impact and their efficient use of a range of resources. Accountability should be established for efficient use of all types of resources including information, contacts, skills, materials and equipment. This also involves having an awareness of power dynamics (e.g. control of resources) and avoiding using it as a form of control unless it is strictly necessary.

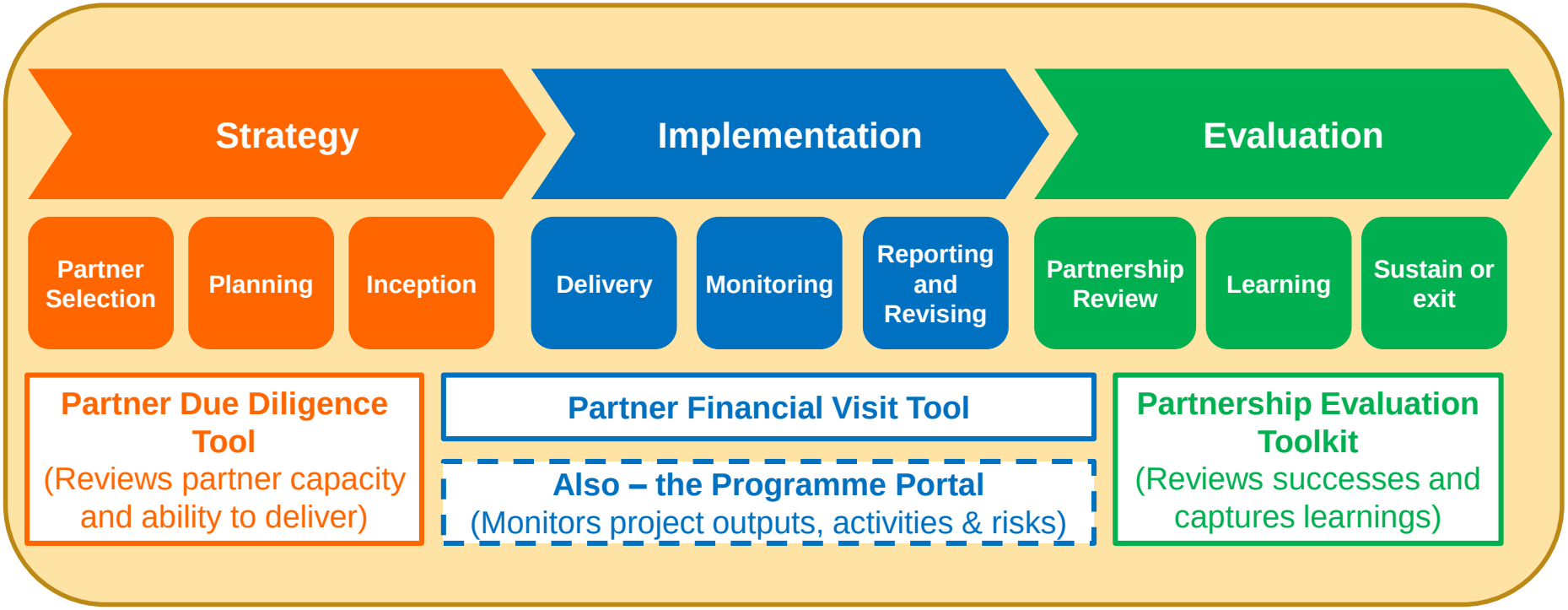
Ownership
The ownership of the partnership process and its outcomes should be shared among all partners.The partners should take appropriate management responsibility for an initiative, have a sense of commitment and considering that it belongs to them. This does not necessarily mean that the programme is self-sustaining; the partner organisation(s) and/or communities may draw on Sightsavers or other stakeholders for financial and other forms of support.

Partnership Framework



Partnership Framework for implementing partners

Our partnership framework has been conceptualised in three phases, to mirror and align with the project design process. Each phase of the framework is comprised of three stages, which outline the key activities that should take place. A series of tools and templates underpins each phase, to support these activities.



Partnership Framework – activities for the *Strategy* phase

Strategy | Implementation | Evaluation

Partner Selection | Planning | Inception | Delivery | Monitoring | Reporting and Revising | Partnership Review | Learning | Sustain or exit

Activities

Partner Selection

- Set purpose and goals of the partnership via the project/programme strategy and intervention logic.
- Evaluate potential partner(s) with "light touch" version of Due Diligence Tool to check alignment with Sightsavers' strategy/principles, and to determine their appropriateness for the role.
- Select final partner(s), taking into account Due Diligence Tool scoring and the scope and the nature of the project.

Planning

- Evaluate chosen partner(s) with "in depth" version of Due Diligence Tool to understand strengths/weaknesses and their implications for project design.
- Address any critical performance gaps via an organisation development (OD) plan, or other means, as appropriate.
- Produce project documentation (proposal, log frame, budget, implementation plan), and ensure exit strategies are included.
- Establish measurable partnership goals and objectives aligned to the SIM Card
- Resolve issues and assign mutual accountability among partners

Inception

- Finalise the implementation plan with partner(s), ensuring clear roles and responsibilities articulated
- Agree on indicators to determine whether the partnership is healthy and finalise KPIs for the partnership
- Agree on the monitoring procedures and processes
- Agree on the reporting expectations and schedule
- Agree on planned "moving on" strategies in case of partnership exit

Templates Tools

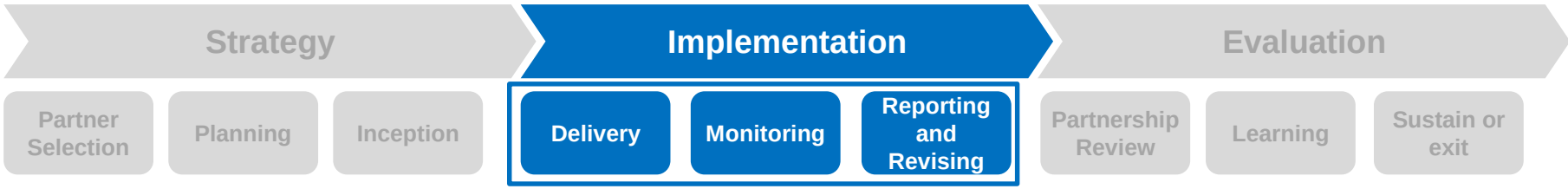
Partner Due Diligence Tool – to be used during the project design process

- Concept Note template

- Project proposal template
- Implementation plan
- PFA, log frame & budget templates
- OD plan templates
- SIM Card indicators

- Work plan template (implementation plan template)
- M&E plan template
- Reporting templates

Partnership Framework – activities for the *Implementation* phase



Activities

Delivery

- Implement project activities as planned.
- Manage any risks and issues to the project or partnership, escalating where necessary.
- Actively support partner organisational development and capacity building.

Monitoring

- Review partner's reports on project activities & indicators every period.
- Use Partner Financial Monitoring Handbook to understand process.
- Visit the partner to verify reports, view activities and review systems.
- Monitor progress against agreed actions.
- Regularly check in with partners on how the partnership is progressing and what could be improved.

Reporting and Revising

- Regularly report on monitoring data to showcase performance.
- Discuss with partners any need for project revisions/adjustments in response to changing circumstances and learnings.

Templates Tools

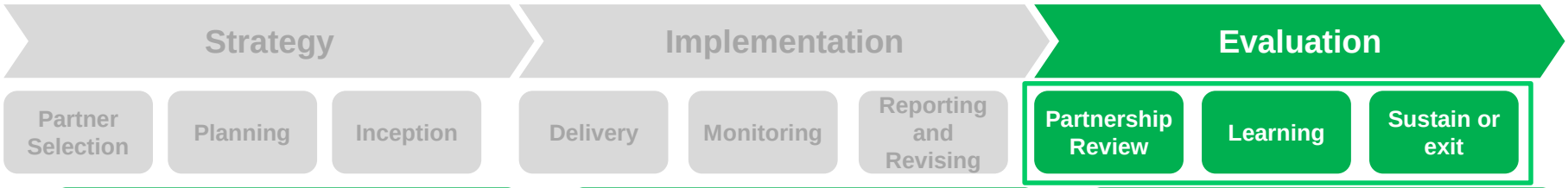
Partner Financial Visit Tool & Partner Financial Reporting Template

- Work plan template (implementation plan template)

- Partner visit template
- Partner financial reporting template
- Partner financial visit tool
- Partner financial visit terms of reference

- Financial report template
- Output statistics data entry framework within Programme Portal

Partnership Framework – activities for the *Evaluation* phase



Activities

Partnership Review

- Review the performance of the partnership and of the project
- Assess the partner's relationship with Sightsavers and with any other partners in the project
- Assess progress against the OD plan or other mechanisms for capacity development (where relevant)
- Determine partners' satisfaction with relationship quality, mechanisms and behaviours

Learning

- Capture partnership learnings and experiences in a coordinated manner through partnership case studies and lessons learned.
- Disseminate knowledge to keep interested parties updated on the successes and challenges (includes partners and other country/area teams)
- Use the learnings to inform future project design, programme policy and/or partnership strategy within Sightsavers

Sustain or exit

- Assess whether the partnership should continue in its current form, change into a new type of relationship, or cease altogether.
- Help the partner plan for ongoing operations through "moving on" strategies and implementing the sustainability plan, where relevant.

Templates Tools

Partnership Evaluation Toolkit

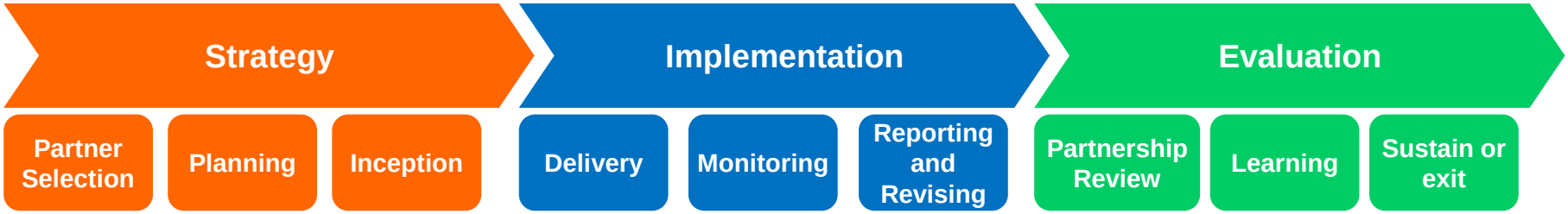
- Partnership review survey

- Partnership learning capture template

- Exit planning toolkit, which includes:
  - Project exit guidance
  - Exit process and exit documentation checklists
  - Exit risk assessment matrix

Partnership Framework - Toolkit

A series of tools and templates underpins each phase of the partnership framework, to support critical partnership activities.



Partner Due Diligence Tool

- **Comprehensive tool that enables assessment of partners for:**
  - Capacity (human resources, project mgmt, infrastructure etc)
  - Strength of financial frameworks and accounting mechanisms
  - Partner credibility / track record
- Designed to ensure that we have a full understanding of their prospective partners' strengths and weaknesses and how that should impact on project design.
- **Tailored versions available for the following partner types**:
  1. Government
  2. BPO/DPO/CBO
  3. NGO/INGO/private sector

Partner Financial Visit Tool & Partner Financial Reporting Template

Partner Financial Reporting Template

- Tool to allow partners to report back on spend against budget in agreed Sightsavers format

Partner Financial Visit Tool

- Sets out a flexible list of questions to ask partners during visits
- Helps plan the visit
- Creates a report of visit showing progress across different visits

Partnership Evaluation Toolkit

Includes three separate items:

1. **Partnership review survey**: a short survey focusing on the relationship and collaboration between the partners based on the seven Partnership Principles.
2. **Partnership learning capture template**: captures important learnings from the partnership such as key success factors, challenges and lessons learnt for the future.
3. **Exit Planning toolkit**: Includes tools and templates including
   - Exit planning guidelines
   - Exit process and exit documentation checklists
   - Risk assessment template