

Round table discussions in strategic partnerships

You can find background information about round table discussions on page 40 of the guide.

SPACE FOR NOTES

1. Decision and responsibilities

A decision to hold round table discussions is taken jointly in a forum with a mandate over the partnership's activities. People responsible from both partners who have an insight into each core operation are appointed to draw up themes. The practical responsibility is delegated and a decision made about resource utilisation. One of the partners' operational support functions will often assume responsibility for hosting the event. Individuals with responsibility for themes and practical matters make up a working group for the round table discussion.

- Who are the members of the working group?

2. Themes

Individuals with responsibility for themes suggest themes, and decisions on one or more themes and on timing are taken together. Suitable themes find common ground in many parts of both organisations. The working group compiles a list of key employees and key operations for each theme. Informal conversations to sound out interest and pick up feedback can contribute to creating a framework for conversations.

- What are the themes for the round table discussion?
- When will the round table discussion be held?
- Who should be contacted ahead of the round table discussion?

3. Meeting place

Those responsible for practical matters book access to premises for the desired data. A suitable venue is set up so that it is possible to hold both a general gathering and multiple parallel group discussions. Those responsible for practical matters book any necessary catering. If funding is available, the recommendation is to start with breakfast or end with lunch or an informal gathering with snacks.

- Where should the round table discussion be held?

4. Participants

The working group draws up an invitation to discussions on selected themes and sends it out to key employees and contact persons in key operations. It is helpful if the senior management teams are senders of the invitation. Everyone involved in managing the partnership helps to inform and encourage participation. Those responsible for practical matters receive applications and send out reminders.

5. Structure

The working group decides on the structure and schedule. Representatives of management can provide a context and lend legitimacy, but they must not take on the role of moderator. The working group delegates roles and secures any need for additional employees in connection with holding the discussion. A discussion host in each group can keep the time, remind participants of the themes and encourage everyone to contribute. A secretary in each group can make sure the discussion is documented.

- Which roles are to be responsible for what?

6. Implementation

Those with overall responsibility for the partnership open the meeting and explain the context. A few experiences of collaboration can contribute to an understanding of what the partnership is all about. The group discussions are introduced by a moderator, and one person from each group reports back when everyone reconvenes. The organisers end the session by summarising and explaining what will happen after the meeting. Everyone is equal in a round table discussion. This can be guaranteed, for example, by applying the following instructions: there is a round in which everyone has an opportunity to introduce themselves and their ideas. Everyone around the table is on the same level and has the same importance and status during the discussion.

- What is the schedule for the round table discussion?
- What are the instructions for the round table discussion?

7. Documentation

Those responsible for practical matters compile the notes from the meeting in a report and send a summary to all invitees and participants. The working group produces a list of all suggestions and proposals for collaboration that emerged in the discussions.

8. Prioritisation

The working group reports back on the round table discussion in the same forum that took the decision on implementation. This forum decides which suggestions and proposals are to be prioritised as activities within the partnership. Prioritised activities are entered into the partnership's operational plan, and responsibility for startup and implementation is delegated.

- Which suggestions and proposals for activities are prioritised?

