

# Collaboration

Tackling Complex Problems



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# Complex problems

- Wicked problems (Allen & Gould, 1986)
- Messy problems (Ackoff, 1975)
- Intractable problems (Lewicki et al., 2002)
- Knotty tasks (Cropper, 1996)
- Turbulent conditions (Emery & Trist, 1965)



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# Wicked Problems

- A wicked problem is a social or cultural problem that is difficult or impossible to solve:
  - incomplete or contradictory knowledge
  - the number of people and opinions involved
  - the large economic burden
  - the interconnected nature of these problems with other problems



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# Wicked Problems

- Can't be solved by one group
- Requires multi-stakeholder engagement
  - Synergy  $1+1+1=6$
- Examples:
  - Climate change
  - Poverty
  - Rural Sustainability



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# Wicked problems

- Cannot understand issue appropriate level of without engagement
- Engagement is not a political afterthought but an epistemic requirement to complexity
- Chronic nature of wicked problems makes engagement an ongoing requirement



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# IAP2 Spectrum of Public Participation



## **Inform**

To provide the public with balanced and objective information to assist them in understanding the problem, alternatives, opportunities and/or solutions.

## **Consult**

To obtain public feedback on analysis, alternatives and/or decisions.

## **Involve**

To work directly with the public throughout the process to ensure that public concerns and aspirations are consistently understood and considered.

## **Collaborate**

To partner with the public in each aspect of the decision including the development of alternatives and the identification of the preferred solution.

## **Empower**

To place final decision-making in the hands of the public.

**Public  
participation  
goal**

# Widespread agreement

- The strategy of going it alone has been placed on the “endangered strategy list” (Austin, 2000, p. 8)
- Collaboration is not only the right thing to do but there is now a global imperative to partner (CBSR, 2005, p. 7)
- Governments, industry and citizens have to embrace collaboration (Dion, 2004, p. 2)



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# COLLABORATION INVOLVES...

A commitment to a common or complementary purpose where resources are pooled or jointly secured, and where products are shared (Atkinson, 1999)



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# Collaborating at Grenfell

- Multi-scale
  - Within divisions
  - Across Grenfell/ Memorial
  - Multi-sectoral (Quadruple helix)
    - Government
    - Community
    - Business
    - University



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# Defining Partnership

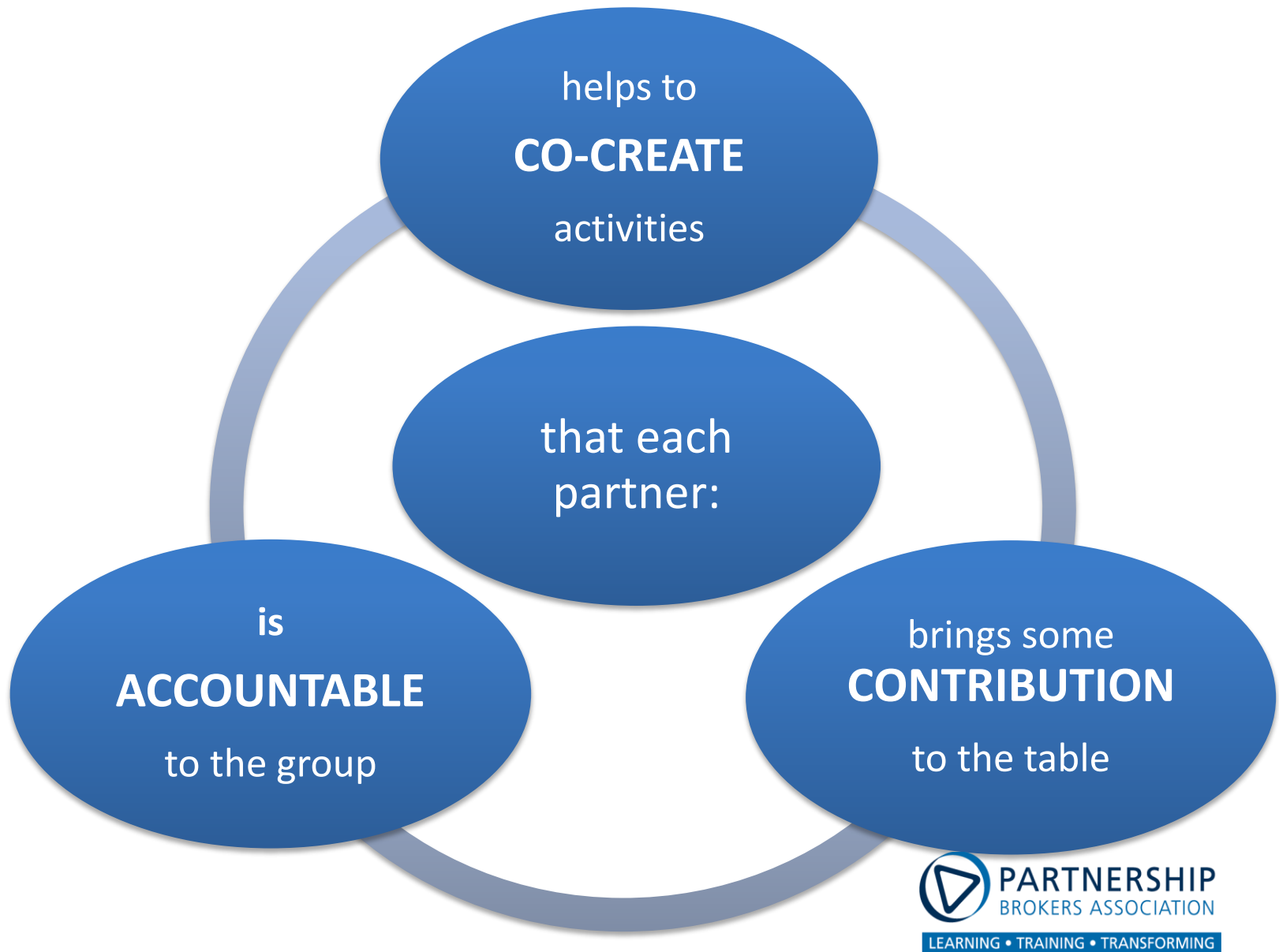
- An ongoing relationship where risks and benefits are shared
- No perfect partnerships



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# Being in line with this definition implies...



# Moving a 'partnership' to where it should be...

Transactional

Collaboration/ Partnership

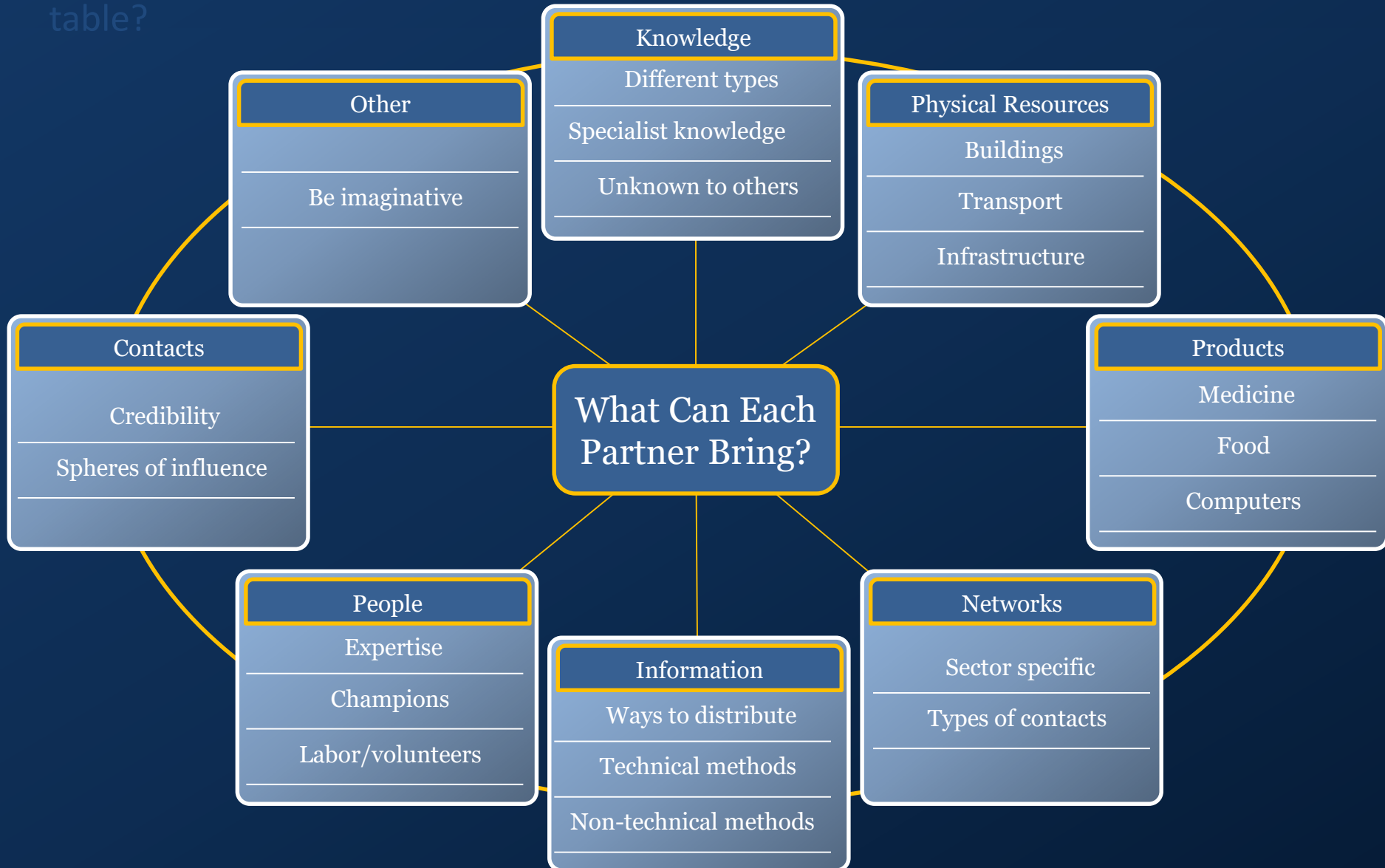


- One party decides the programme
  - One party purchases a service
  - Fixed contractual arrangement
  - Parties not required to reveal their underlying interests
  - Limited engagement beyond the contractual arrangement
  - Low level of integration into partner organizations
  - One-way accountability
- Co-created based on joint knowledge
  - Partners bring complementary resources
  - Collaboration agreement
  - Greater transparency
  - Stronger engagement and buy-in
  - More integrated
  - Mutual accountability

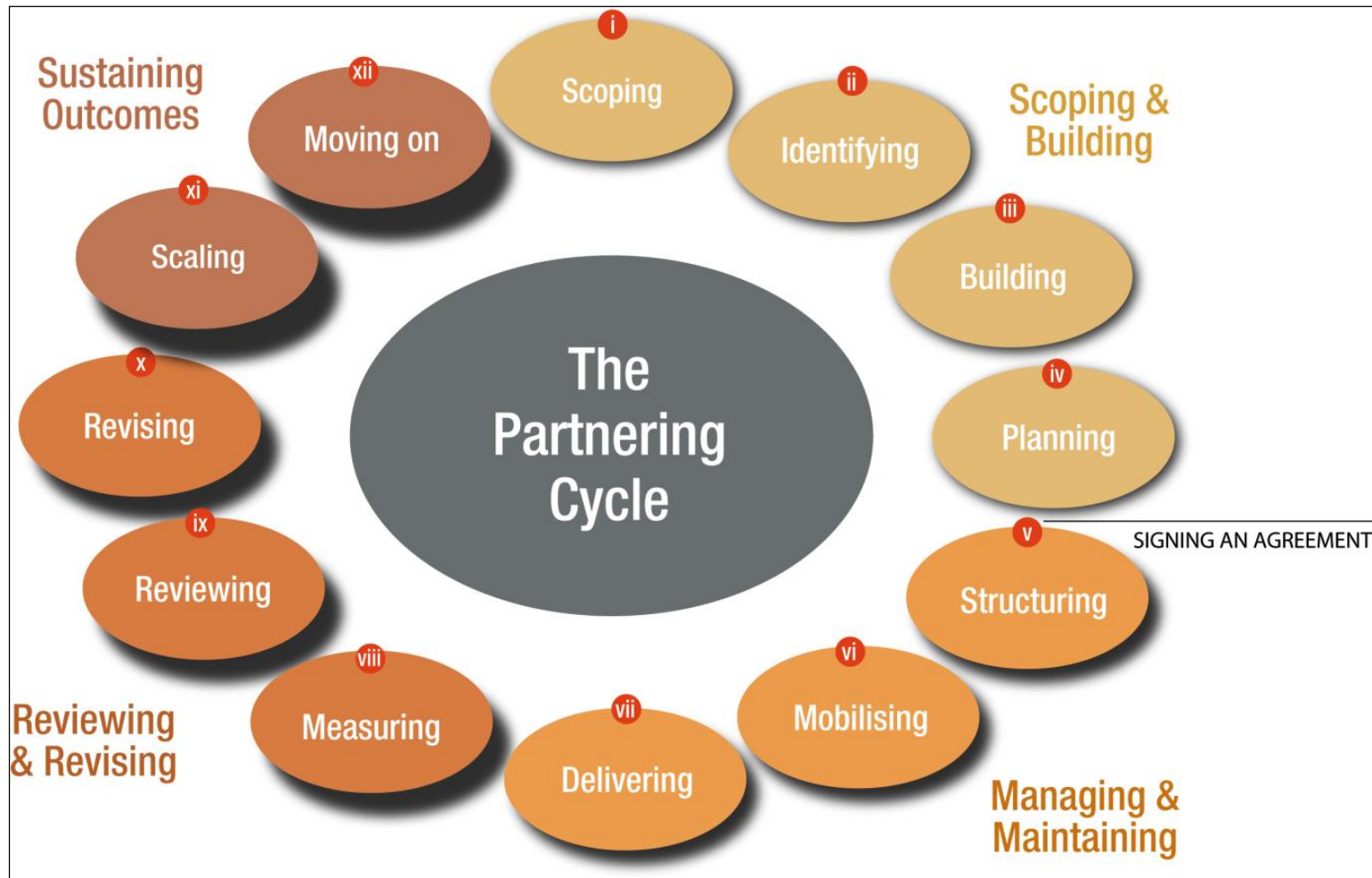
# Building a Partnership – Resource Mapping

What contributions can each partner bring to the partnership?

table?



# Partnerships can / should be developed systematically...



# Partnerships need (at least) 3 core principles to function successfully...

**1. EQUITY**

*because it leads to*

**RESPECT**

for the added value each party brings

**2. TRANSPARENCY**

*because it leads to*

**TRUST**

with partners more willing to innovate & take risks

**3. MUTUAL BENEFIT**

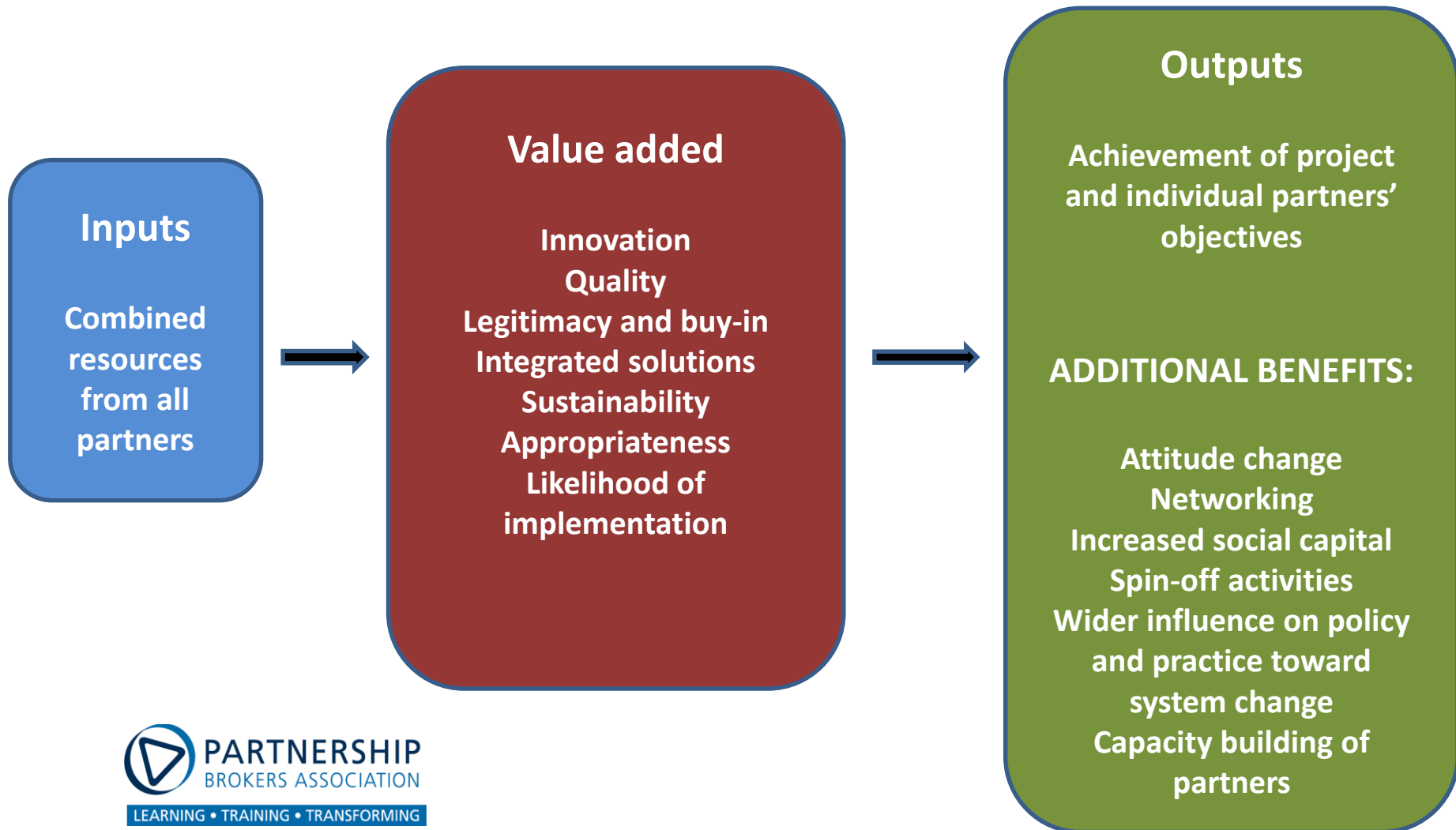
*because it leads to*

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more likely to sustain & build value over time

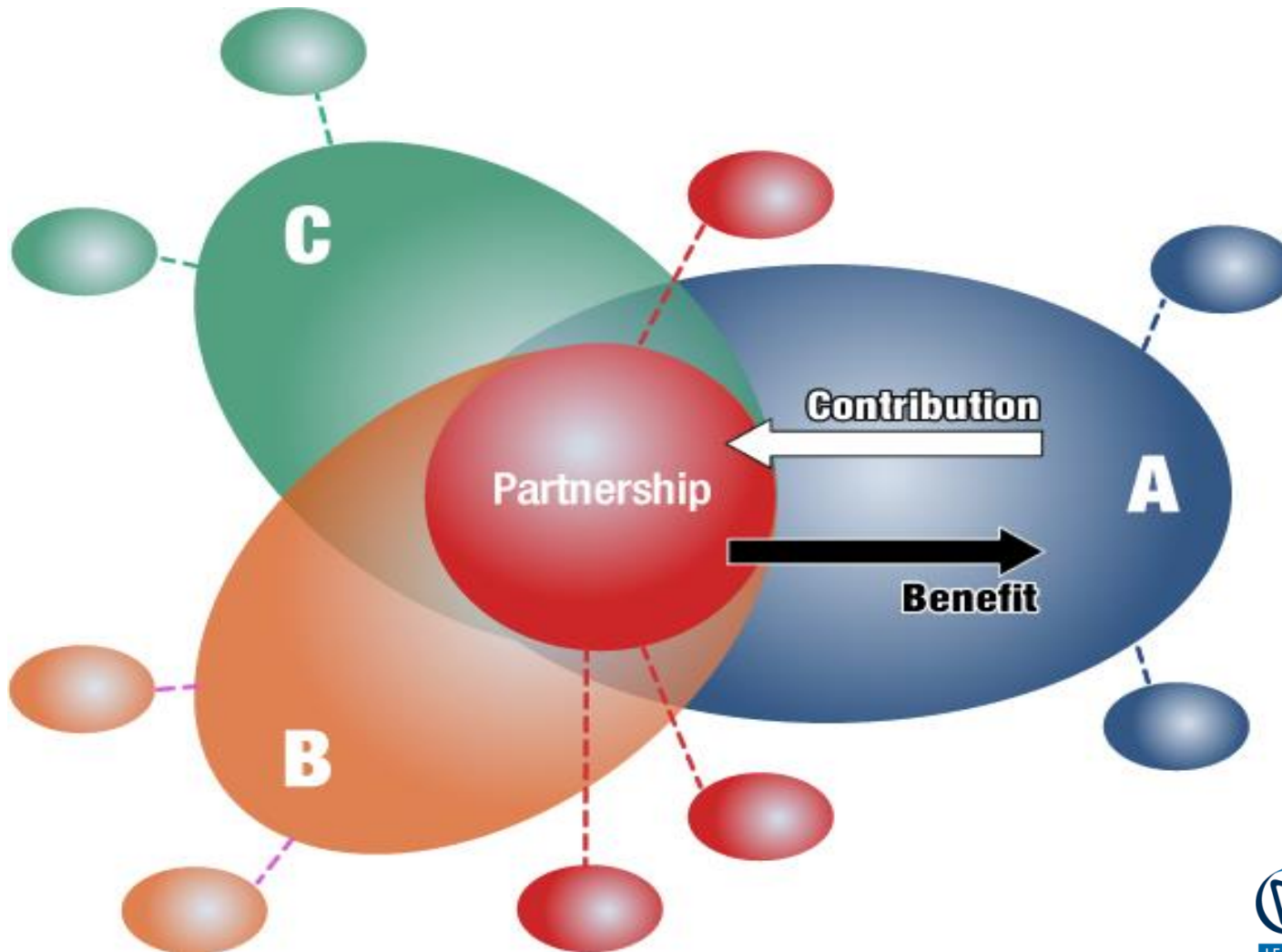
# What is any partnership's real value?

## The 'Benefits' of Partnership





# Deepen partner engagement



# Trouble in collaboration paradise

- Cynicism/skepticism on the rise
- Growing recognition that collaboration can be:
  - Very resource-, time-, and labour-intensive
  - Very difficult to initiate, develop, maintain
  - Can create/deepen existing conflict
  - Difficult to evaluate



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# Typical / global partnering challenges

- Power imbalance
- ‘Difficult’ people
- Language and mindsets
- Diverse interests
- Differing views of ‘success’
- Letting go of (some) control
- Shared accountability
- Communication
- Apathy
- Scepticism



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# Thanks

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GO Engagement



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