

## 7- ALLOW YOUR PARTNERSHIP TO EVOLVE

Partnerships are not static. As they grow and develop, partnerships evolve and typically go through stages of “forming, storming, norming, and performing,” (see **Section 4: Actively Invest in Group Dynamics**).

The lifecycle of a partnership is driven by its vision, mission, goals, and objectives (see **Section 3: Develop a Shared Vision, Mission, and Goals**), and influenced by the experiences and adjustments it makes to the initial plan or group norms along the way.

This section focuses on



When considering sustainability, it may be helpful to revisit and discuss findings from your partnership evaluation to come up with a shared understanding of what sustainability means for your partnership and to begin planning for the longer term.

[Adapted from: Examining Community-





### Case Study: Asphalt Paving Partnership Spin-off Projects

As described in other sections of this toolkit, the Asphalt Paving Partnership was initially created to address workers' exposure to asphalt fumes. The result of their initial effort was the creation of a voluntary agreement that led to the universal adoption of effective engineering controls on highway-class pavers in the United States. This experience of working together laid a foundation for their continued collaboration in two main ways.

First, it proved that a cooperative approach could work and gave them an important success on which to build. The group's efforts garnered recognition including awards for partnership and innovation from the National Occupational Research Agenda and Harvard University's Kennedy School of Government.

Second, the partners developed an infrastructure for future work together, including: the establishment of cooperative, trusting relationships between the diverse partners, shared norms and principles for working together, and a collective identity as an open, innovative, and forward-looking group actively seeking to protect the safety and health of workers.

The partnership chose to build on its success by creating successive "spin-off" collaborations focused on other safety and health issues:

- ™ **Warm-mix:** Promotion of a lower-temperature "warm-mix" asphalt that releases fewer asphalt fumes. This new form of asphalt also requires less energy to prepare, providing environmental and economic benefits as well.
- ™ **Silica/Milling** Testing and development of engineering controls to suppress silica dust on asphalt milling machines.
- ™ **Work-zone safety** The development of training and educational materials to improve roadway work-zone safety.
- ™ **Dermal exposures** Research to assess and characterize workers' dermal exposures to asphalt in the paving industry.

## 7.3 END YOUR PARTNERSHIP

Some partnerships continue indefinitely. Others reach a point where the partners determined that there is no longer the need for or commitment to sustain the partnership. Some partnerships decide to dissolve after they meet their goals and objectives, some conclude when funding for the partnership ends, and others when the partners are no longer effectively working together.

It is important to remember that while the formal partnership may be coming to an end, it is often the case that some or all of the partners may continue to work together in some capacity or work together in the future. Ending a partnership amicably often requires acknowledging the partnership's accomplishments and setting a foundation for working together in the future.

### Sustaining the Issue When the Partnership Ends

One important question partners will have when the partnership ends is: How will the issue that brought us together and the resulting solution be sustained and remain in use? Since the partners have invested time and energy into the partnership's efforts, there will likely be a strong interest in ensuring that attention to the issue does not end with the partnership. Before ending the partnership, it may be advantageous to take inventory of any partner organizations, outside organizations, or governmental agencies that are willing to continue to work on the issue.

#### TOOL 7-B: STEPS OF PARTNERSHIP DISSOLUTION

As the partnership's work winds down, use the remaining meetings to discuss and document the following for the final partnership meeting record:

Steps of Partnership Dissolution	
1	Identify the partnership's major accomplishments and acknowledge those people and organizations who contributed to these accomplishments
2	Determine how to inform people – both inside and outside the partnership – of the decision to dissolve
3	Document the partnership's history and the lessons which can be drawn from its operations (e.g., peer-reviewed papers, on your website, in the newspaper)
4	Recommend an appropriate alternative contact organization or resource for the issue
5	Select a time, place, and event to celebrate what has been accomplished and to move on

[Adapted from: The Collaboration Roundtable. (2001). The Partnership Toolkit: Tools for Building and Sustaining Partnership]