A Guide to Evaluating Your Partnership Using a Network Mapping Approach

Victoria The Place To Be
Department of Planning and Community Development

Prepared by

This report was prepared by Jeanette Pope, Research Manager, Department of Planning and Community Development. It describes a method for evaluating a partnership using a network mapping approach created by Assoc Prof Jenny Lewis of the University of Melbourne.

This work was undertaken as part of a knowledge exchange between the Department and University over 2007-2008.

August 2008

ISBN 978-1-921331-81-7

Citation

This guide and method may be used freely with acknowledgement.

Use of the approach should be cited:
Lewis JM (2005) A network approach for researching partnerships in health. *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*. 2:22

Contact

More information about this guide can be obtained from:

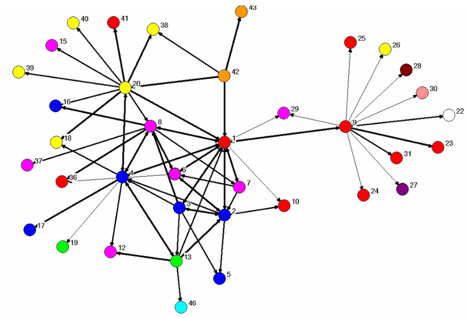
Jeanette Pope
Manager Research
Strategic Policy and Research
Department of Planning and Community Development
03 92083849 or jeanette.pope@dpcd.vic.gov.au

Copyright & Disclaimer

Contents

Evaluating Partnerships with a Network Approach

This guide describes a network approach that can be used for evaluating partnerships. The approach involves interviewing your partners to gather information about achievements (what was delivered), the value-add of the partnership and what has helped and hindered its work (lessons). It will also allow you to map the partnership's network in order to examine the relationships that underpin it.



The network approach can detect the key characteristics of successful partnerships including whether it has:

1) Good facilitation and relationship building;
2) The right decision-makers at the table with a commitment to contribute;
3) A clear purpose;
4) Good process (governance); and
5) Ways to ensure motivation stays high.

In addition, the approach demonstrates how the partnership fits into the broader policy environment, highlighting the quality of existing linkages, and pin-pointing weak points in the network. This allows for an assessment of the sustainability of the partnership and provides a plan for further relationship building.

It is important to note that evaluation is a specialist activity and this approach should be conducted by someone with the knowledge, skills and experience to conduct and analyse interviews.

This guide outlines the method for conducting the evaluation from set up, to preparing and running the interviews, to analysing and reporting the results.

Read more on results using the approach:

Pope J & Lewis JM (in press) Improving partnership governance: using a network approach to evaluate partnerships in Victoria. *Australian Journal of Public Administration.*

Read more on the network approach:

Lewis JM (2005) A network approach for researching partnerships in health. *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*. 2:22

Lewis, J.M., Baeza, J.I. and Alexander, D. 2008. 'Partnerships in primary care in Australia: network structure, dynamics and sustainability', *Social Science and Medicine* 67: 280-291

When should you use this approach?

You can use this approach to collect data:

As baseline data
At the beginning of a partnership to compare to a collection at the end of your initiative.

For an interim assessment of your partnership
At any stage after the first year of operation to check your partnership is working as well as it could and to diagnose problems. These results can also be compared to a collection at the end of your initiative.

As part of a final evaluation
At the end of your partnership to assess whether your partnership has met its objectives – either with or without a previous assessment.

You must have a partnership governance body (from here on in called a Steering Committee) that is fully formed and that has clear membership before you attempt this evaluation – even at baseline.

What is involved?

Using this approach will involve you undertaking:

Individual Interviews
You will interview up to 15 members of your partnership Steering Committee (or equivalent governance body), including the facilitator or broker, if there is one. If the Committee is large, ensure that all organisational types are represented on your interview list (i.e. local government, community health, state government departments, etc).

Analysis
You will analyse the interviews in two ways: to describe key themes; and to create maps of the partnership's networks.

Create a list of all the members of the Steering Committee and their contact details as you sample list. Include a column that indicates if they participated or not. If they did not, make sure you write down the reason (i.e. could not be contacted, refused, etc).

What will you need?

In order to successfully use this approach you will need:

An interviewer
You will need someone to conduct the interviews. This person needs to be a good listener and note taker and should be seen by the partnership as impartial. They will need to be available for approximately 1.5 to 2 hours per interview to organise and undertake the interviews.

It will be best if a single interviewer conducts all the interviews for consistency and easier analysis.

An analyst
You will need someone to analyse the results.

Software
You will need some Social Analysis software. This is easy to find and use and is inexpensive – see the *Creating the maps* section.

You may have someone in house that has the skills to undertake this evaluation or you could use a reputable contractor. Anyone with experience at doing interviews will be able to perform this research.

The costs of the approach are in the time of the interviewer and analyst.

Consider finding a local person to conduct the interviews and do the analysis. This will help build local capacity and the person you select could become a valuable resource for the partnership. A PhD student would be a suitable candidate.

Training

The following sections of this guide will train you, your interviewer and analyst in the use of the approach. They cover:

The interview
Documenting your results
The analysis
Writing up your results

Australia has standards to ensure research is carried out in an ethical way. Before you begin, review the National Statement on Ethic Conduct in Human Research at http://www.nhmrc.gov.au/publications/synopses/e35syn.htm

The interview

A copy of the interview schedule is provided at Appendix A (and a word version can be found in the Templates file on the website accompanying this guide) – please photocopy it now for training and to tailor it to your purposes.

You can use the circles ○ in this section as a checklist of things you need to do.

Preparing for the interview

You will interview up to 15 members of the governance body – from here on referred to as the Steering Committee.

○ Compile a list of the Steering Committee with their contact details.

○ Introduce the partnership evaluation at a Steering Committee meeting and get their consent to undertake the research.

○ Send out an email to remind interviewees about the research and its purpose. Explain it will be confidential and outline what involvement will mean for them (the time and effort it will take). Tell them participation is voluntary and you will be contacting them soon to set up a time.

○ Arrange the interviews. They should be done face-to-face where-ever possible, with telephone interviews being the second option if distance is an issue.

Book thirty minutes if it is a baseline interview (shorter survey) and one hour if it is an interim or final evaluation.

Do not book interviews back-to-back. You will need to take at least 15 minutes after each interview to review your notes and check you clearly documented everything that was said.

○ Mark on your Steering Committee list if they participated, refused or could not be contacted. You will need this information to write up your final analysis.

Write the name, position and organisation of the person on the top of the interview schedule before you go so you do not forget their name. If you have set up your excel spreadsheet for your results (see *Documenting your results*) you can also write their ID number on the top right hand corner.

At the interview

Remind the interviewee why you are there

Introduce yourself and explain why you are there and the types of information you will be collecting during the interview.

- An introduction is provided on the interview – practice it.

Take along a report that has used the tool to show the type of map you will be creating. An example is in the report template at Appendix B or in the published Caroline Springs Partnership report http://www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/Web14/dvc/rwpgslib.nsf/GraphicFiles/Caroline_Springs_FA_PDF/$file/4666-DVC-CAROLINE-SPRINGS-FA.pdf

Conducting the interview

Remember, you have had the luxury of thinking about the interview questions, but your interviewee has not. You need to give them time to collect their thoughts and consider their answers. Follow these four rules:

Do not rush the interview
Allow your interviewee plenty of time to answer the questions and do not rush to fill silences. People have not had an opportunity to think about their answers so they may need a minute to think about it.

Follow the script
The interviewer's role is to collect the same type of information from everyone. Follow the script, but feel free to modify the prompts if it will help someone remember things (i.e. don't be afraid to "chat" a little – just do not give giving strong opinions).

Take clear notes
Your notes will be used to do the analysis so make sure they are clear and comprehensive. Write in their voice.

You are looking for evidence
Make sure you are listening for evidence of what has happened (good and bad). You do not want to record what the person thinks *should* happen or *hopes* will happen.

Check your notes after
After the interview, take 15 to 30 minutes on your own to go through the script and make any clarifications you think will be needed for someone else to understand what was said.

The interview questions

This section reviews the interview questions and gives you tips for tailoring them for your purpose.

Section 1: Relationships in the Partnership

The questions in this section examine how the interviewee views their relationships with other types of organisations in the partnership (Federal, State, Local government, community orgs).

- Review **Section 1** and remove any questions you do not wish to include in your research (i.e. organisational types that are not involved in the partnership). When removing questions, make sure you leave space after the remaining questions for your notes during the interview.

During each interview there will be one question in this section you will not ask – the organisation type that the person being interviewed comes from. You can strike this out with your pen before each interview.

Take particular note of any talk about change in the relationships as a result of the partnership. Have relationships gotten better or worse? Why?

Section 2: Achievements and Lessons

The questions in this section examine how the interviewee views the partnership's achievements and gets them to consider what has helped and hindered it in its work.

- Review **Section 2** and remove all questions the partners will be unable to answer because the partnership has not been in operation very long (for example, not long enough to have had achievements). If you are doing a baseline assessment you might remove this whole section.

Only write down achievements that have happened. What people *think* will happen in the future is not evidence. Prompt for evidence that an achievement has been delivered.

Section 3: Information to create the partnership maps

The questions in this section are used to create the maps. These can be difficult questions to answer "cold" and you will need to prompt the person being interviewed.

In two separate questions you are going to ask:

Over the last six months, who did you go to most when you wanted to get:

- strategic information about the partnership? and
- day to day work for about the partnership?

You will need to record the actual name and position of each person the interviewee identifies. This is so we are clear that each dot in the final maps represents a separate person. Reassure the interviewee that this is only used to differentiate people for making the maps and will not be used in the final pictures that are reported to the Steering Committee. Show them an example of the map from Appendix B or the Caroline Springs Report to illustrate (described in the box on page 8).

You can prompt by getting them to think in increasingly wide organisational circles:

Anyone from your own organisation?
Anyone from within the partnership?
Anyone from other organisations?
Ministers, mayors, anyone like that?

You can cut the list off at 10 to 15 contacts.
If there are no contacts after prompting, that is fine, move on.

Once you have finished the list, go back through it reading out the names and get the interviewee to rank each 1, 2 or 3 depending on how important the relationship is for this aspect of the work (1= reasonably, 2=very, 3=crucial).

- ○ Stop now and practice **Section 3**. Think of a project you are involved in and answer the two questions on the interview schedule you have photocopied. This will give you a feel for how difficult it is and help you understand the importance of the prompting.

Never remove or modify this section. The network mapping questions should always be used and in the way described.

Section 4: Anything else you would like to add

You should always give the person a chance at the end of the interview to make final comments. The interview may have prompted thoughts they would like to express that they were not asked about.

Always thank the person for their participation and let them know how they will see the final results.

Documenting your results

Storing the interviews

- After you have finished the interview and reviewed your notes, secure them in a folder with the other interviews so they do not get lost.
- Store the folder somewhere secure so other people can not access the results.
- Once you are satisfied with your final report you can obliterate the names from the interviews (keep the organisations on them). However, if you are doing a baseline or interim evaluation you may wish to keep them intact for the final evaluation. You may want to seal them into an envelope marked confidential and put them on your evaluation file for use by the final evaluator.

Interview scripts should be stored securely to comply with privacy legislation. Hard copies should be stored in a locked cabinet and soft copies should be password protected to ensure confidentiality.

The partnership maps results

The results from Section 3 need to be logged into an excel spreadsheet in order to be loaded into the mapping software. You will need to create three worksheets in the one file.

Label the first sheet "**Contacts ID**"

- In the first column, create a list of consecutive numbers. This number represents a person's identifier (ID).
- In the second column write the names of everyone interviewed, in the third their position and in the fourth their organisation.

Your sheet should like this:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	1	Bill Smith	CEO	North Warratah Council	
2	2	Jane Doe	Director, Community Services	The Alice Foundation	
3	3				
4	4				
5	5				

- Once all the interviewees have been added continue to add the names of everyone else mentioned in the two questions asked in Section 3 (the "*who do you talk to …*" questions).

Every person that was either interviewed, or mentioned in an interview, should end up with a identifying number on this sheet.

Label the second sheet "**day to day**"

- Label the first column "**Interviewee**", the second "**Contacts**" and the third "**Importance (3=critical)**" as shown below.

- Go through each of the answers to the question "who did you go to most when you wanted to get information about day to day work?" and enter the number of the interviewee (from the first sheet), the number of their contact and their rating in one row. Each interviewee will have as many rows as people they mentioned were important. In the example below, interviewee 1 reported five contacts (numbers 2, 3, 4, 10 and 6 from the first sheet) and therefore has 5 rows. Interviewee 2 reported two contacts (1, 4) and has two rows, etc.

Your sheet should like this:

	A	B	C	D	E
1	Interviewee	Contacts	Importance (3 = critical)		
2	1	2	3		
3	1	3	2		
4	1	4	2		
5	1	10	1		
6	1	6	2		
7	2	1	3		
8	2	4	2		
9	3	1	3		
10	3	9	1		
11	3	5	2		
12	3	14	3		
13					

Label the third sheet "**strategic**"

- Repeat the instructions for day to day work above for the question "*who did you go to most when you wanted to get strategic information about the partnership?".*

The analysis

There are two analysis activities. The first is a thematic analysis of your notes. The second is the creation of the maps.

The thematic analysis

To examine themes that run through the interviews you will need to go back through each of the surveys and summarise the results. Do this is the following order (skipping sections related to questions that were not asked):

Achievements

- Summarise achievements from the Section 2 question: *"What do you see as the biggest successes or the best achievements of the partnership?".*

  Use three separate pieces of paper and divide the results into:
  - **"Achievements"**: concrete achievements delivered (a service, a building, a plan, a program);
  - "**Overall perception of the partnership**": general comments about the success of the partnership; and
  - "**Challenges**": general comments about the lack of success of the partnership.

  On the latter two pages, be specific about how many people reported a theme and what perspective it was reported from. Was the theme reported by all? Was it mainly reported from a particular organisational perspective such as local government? Was it just one voice? You will need to be specific in your report.

Relationships

- Summarise relationships from Section 1. Use a separate piece of paper for each of "**Federal**", "**State**" and "**Local government**" and "**Other organisations**" (see an example for Federal government below).

  Again, be specific about how many people reported a theme and what perspective it was reported from.

  Be particularly attentive to comments about how relationships have changed as a result of the partnership ("we didn't know they existed before", "we understand their organisational context better now", "we have learned they can't be trusted").

Relationships with Federal Government

State government

Good
Very good – have built over time
Good – have established links with a number of sections now

Overall theme = good, have strengthened over time

Local government

Very good – now understand their role in planning
Have just joined the partnership so yet to build
No contact

Overall theme = mixed

Other organisations

No relationship

Overall theme = no relationship

- Summarise who was reported as not involved but that should have been from the Section 1 question: *"Are there organisations or people that should be involved in the partnership who aren't?".*

Include why they were not involved.

Factors demonstrated in effective partnerships

- Summarise any evidence about the five factors demonstrated in effective partnerships using the Section 2 questions: *"What do you think are the three main things that have helped/hindered the work of the partnership?".*

Again, be specific about how many people reported a theme and what perspective it was reported from (see the comment in Achievements).

Use six pieces of paper that divide the results into the five factors identified in Pope & Lewis (see reference page 4) and an "others" page. This is the part of the approach that helps partnerships diagnose whether they are as effective as they could be, so it is ok if nothing is said, or if comments are about the absence of these factors.

- **"A good facilitator/broker to build relationships"**
- "**The right decision makers at the table with a commitment to contribute**"
- "**A clear purpose**" (vision, objectives, etc)
- "**Good process**" for running the partnership
- "**Ongoing motivation**" (through champions, evaluation or other method
- "**Other**"

Value add

- Summarise the value add (if any) from the Section 2 question: "*What do you think has been the value add of working in partnership (what can be achieved that could not have been done by your organisation alone)?".*

Anything remaining

- Summarise anything remaining including comments from the final question: *"Is there anything else that you would like to say about the partnership?"* across the sheets you have created.

Creating the maps

Software for the analysis

The analysis described in this manual uses software from UCINET. You can find it at: www.analytictech.com/ucinet/ucinet.htm You can download it for a 30 day trial or buy for low cost.

This is not the only option for making network maps. For a list of other packages go to www.insna.com/ Click on "software" (right hand side). You will arrive at a list of computer programs for Social Network Analysis, including UCINET.

Most software, including UCINET, includes tutorial information to help you.

The analysis

The analysis is a two stage process. First you will need to turn your excel data files into UCINET files. Second you will make the network maps. There are 5 steps overall and the whole process should take around half an hour to make two simple maps.

Preparing files

Making the network maps will require you to convert your excel files to notepad to UCINET files. This is very easy – just follow the three steps below. It should only take ten minutes.

Step 1. Create an "attributes" file

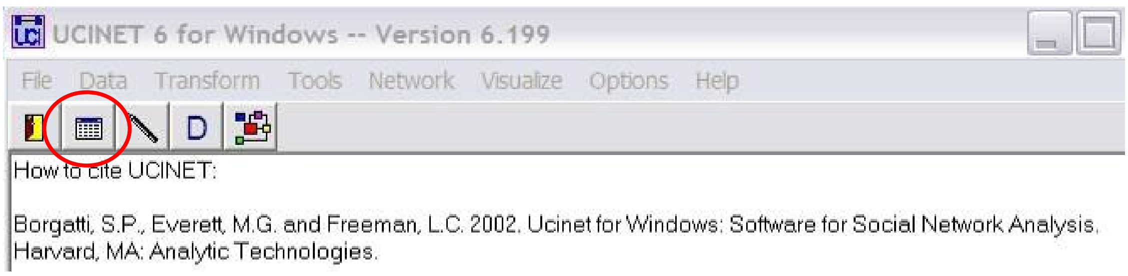
Open your partnership map results excel file. Make a copy of the "contacts ID" sheet in this file and rename it "Attributes" (you excel file now contains four worksheets). In the last column of the "Attributes" sheet give each organisation a unique number (i.e. all North Warratah Council people will be "1", etc):

	A	B	C	D	E	F
1	1	Bill Smith	CEO	North Warratah Council	1	
2	2	Jane Doe	Director, Community Services	The Alice Foundation	2	
3	3	Alex Smith	Director, Planning	North Warratah Council	1	
4	4	Max Walter	Manager, Strategic Projects	Department of Health	3	
5						

Delete columns B, C and D so only the ID number and organisation coded data are left. If you have a headings row, delete it. Your file should look like this:

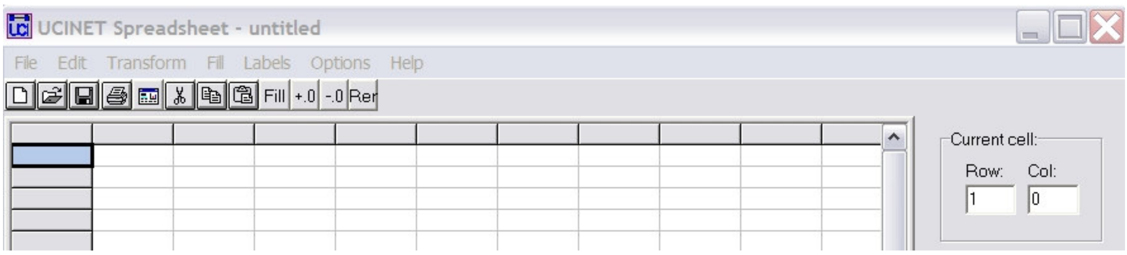
	A	B	C
1	1	1	
2	2	2	
3	3	1	
4	4	3	
5			

Open UCINET and click on the spreadsheet tool.

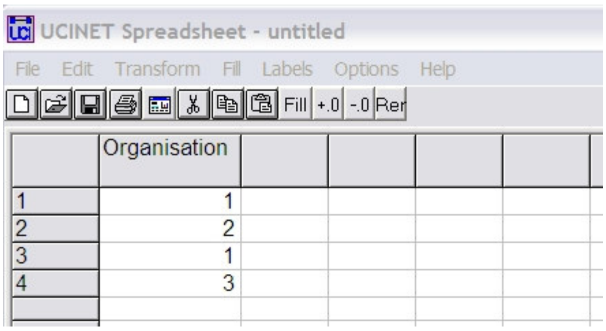


Highlight and copy the data from your “Attributes” excel sheet.

Paste it into the UCINET spreadsheet. Paste it in the grey cell in the first column on the second row.



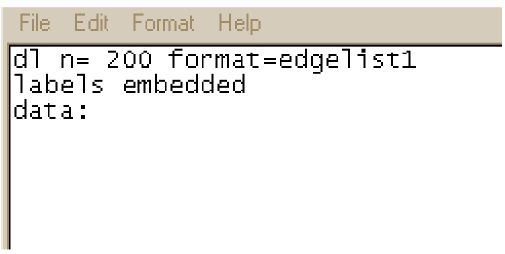
In the first row, leave the first cell empty but type in “Organisation” in the second cell. Your sheet should look like this:



Save this file as “partnershipA” (A is for “attributes”). You can replace the word partnership with a name of your choosing.

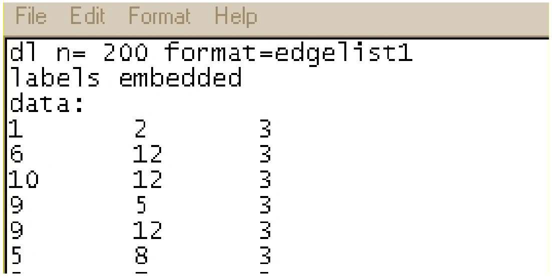
Step 2. Creating two data files in notepad

Open the notepad file attached to this partnership website or open a notepad file and write in the following instructions:



Note: If you have a list of more than 200 organisations (which is unlikely) increase the number in the first line of you instructions so it is greater than your number of organisations (e.g. 300)

Highlight and copy the data from your “day to day” excel sheet. Paste this data into the notepad file on the line following “data”. Your file should look like this:

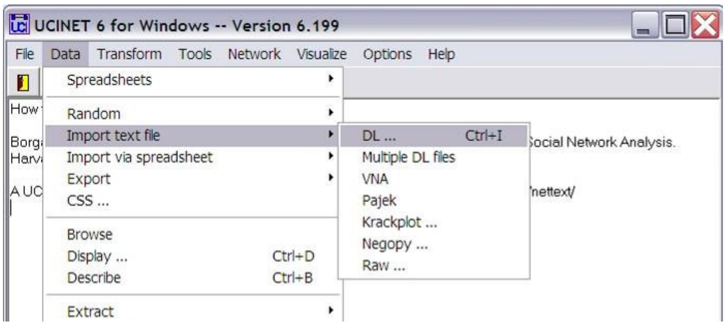


Save this file as “partnershipDTD” (DTD is for “day to day”). You can replace the word partnership with the name you chose for the previous file.

Repeat the procedure using data from your “strategic” excel sheet. Save this file as “partnershipS” (S is for “strategic”).

Step 3. Making UCINET files from your notepad files

Go back to UCINET. From the menu bar at the top select the data menu:
“Data” ⟶ “Import text file” ⟶ “DL”



An “Import DL text file” box will appear.

“Browse” to your “partnershipDTD” notepad file. Leave the “real” setting in the second box and leave the third box to save to the same directory.

Click OK.

A warning will appear telling you how many nodes will appear – this should match the number of people you expect to appear on the maps.

Click OK.

An Output log file will appear with the matrix of data the program will use to make the maps. UCINET has now saved two files to your directory with the endings ##d and ##h. You will need both, even though only those with ##h will appear in UCINET when you browse for files. DO NOT DELETE EITHER OF THEM as you will not be able to retrieve them in UCINET.

Repeat the above procedure using your “partnershipS” notepad file.

You have now created three files in UCINET (one “attributes” and two data files) and can begin to create your maps.

Making the network maps

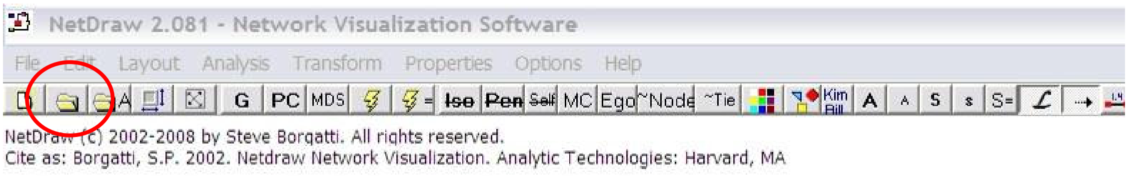
You are now ready to make your maps in UCINET. This process involves two steps: making the map and then attaching your “attributes” file to it to identify different organisations using different colours or shapes.

Step 4. Making the map

Open UCINET.

Click on the “UCINET software for analyzing networks” icon on the tool bar. The icon graphic is of connected boxes.

Netdraw will open. Click on the “Open data file” icon on the tool bar. The icon is of an open folder.

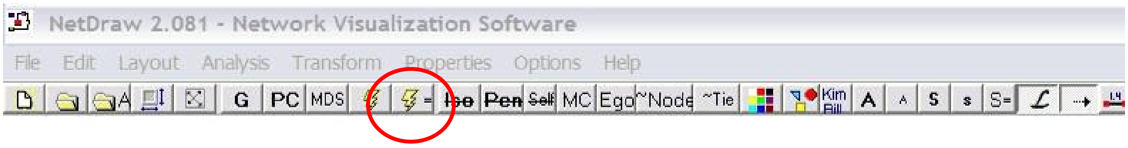


“Browse” to your “##h” file (partnershipDTD.##h).

Click OK.

A network map will appear on your screen.

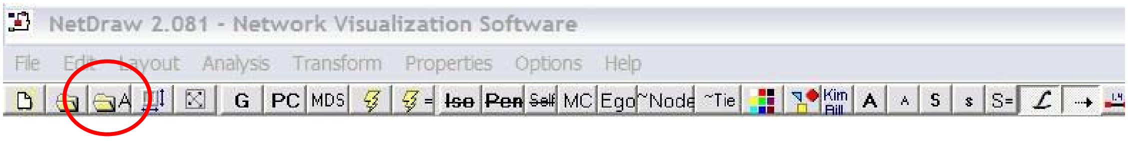
Click on the “Layout with node repulsion and equal edge length bias” icon. The icon graphic is the lightening bolt with the = sign. This will pull any clusters in your data apart to make the maps easier to read. You will also have a chance to do this by hand later.



Note: The first icon on the tool bar clears the screen if you want to start again.

Step 5. Applying your “attributes” file to identify the different organisations and the strength of relationships

Click on the “Open UCINET attribute data set” icon on the tool bar. The icon is of an open folder with an A.



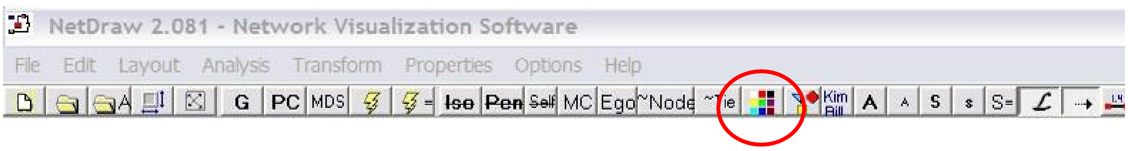
“Browse” to your “partnershipA.##h” file.

Click OK.

A box will appear asking if you would like to open the file. Click open. The file will open – now close the box.

Adding colours/shapes to identify different organisations

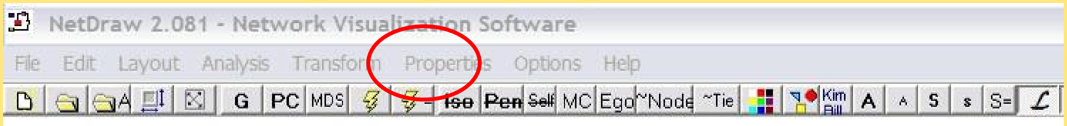
Click on the “Choose node colour according to attribute values” icon on the tool bar. The graphic on the icon is of many colours.



A box has appeared on the right hand side of your map. Change the option under “select attributes” to “organisation” (the heading you gave to data in your “attributes” file).

The symbols in your map will change colours – one colour for each organisation. A box of the selected colours also appears. To change colours double click on a colour in the selected colours box. A colour menu will appear and you can select the new colour. Write down which colours you use for which organizations, so you can use the same colours in the other map ("partnershipS" strategic data).

Note: If you would prefer shapes instead of colours go to the drop down menu "properties" and select "symbols". You can also use this menu to change the labels and the edges (rims) of your symbols.



Click on and drag the nodes on screen to make the maps as easy to read as possible. The arrows will automatically follow any symbols you move. Move nodes away from the outer edges of the picture to ensure they do not get cut off in the final save.

Adding the strength of relationships to the lines connecting symbols

From the menu bar at the top select from the properties menu:
"Properties" ⟶ "Lines" ⟶ "Size"

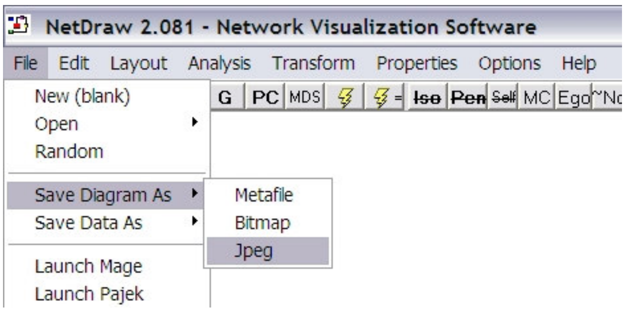
A ties strength box will appear. Leave the first item as is. Set minimum width as 1 and maximum width as 4.

Click OK.

Your maps are complete.

Saving your diagram

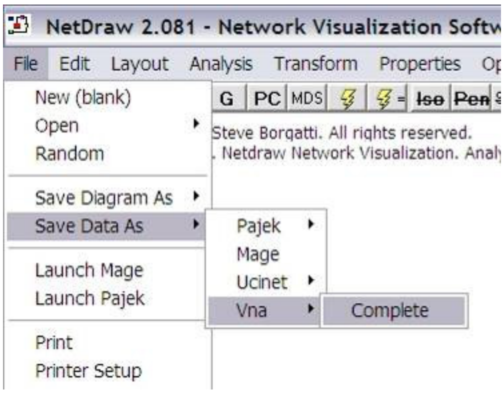
From the menu bar at the top select the File menu:
"File" ⟶ "Save diagram as" ⟶ "jpeg"



Saving your file

Saving your file as a jpeg means you will not be able to continue to work on it. If you think you might want to change the map later, also save it as a vna file:

“File” ⟶ “Save data as” ⟶ “Vna”



Writing up your results

A report template is provided at Appendix B (and a word version can be found on the website accompanying this guide) to help you in writing up your analysis. It is provided as a guide only and includes some examples from other partnership evaluations. It includes sections to describe:

- Your sample and method
- Achievements (if collected)
- Organisations involved and relationships
- Success factors
- Challenges

Appendix A The interview template

INTERVIEW WITH ______________________ ID NUMBER:

POSITION _____________________________

ORGANISATION ________________________

We are trying to get a picture of how the __________________ partnership is working in terms of the relationships between all the different organisations involved.

We are using a approach developed by a researcher at Melbourne University. This approach helps to create a map of a partnership that looks something like this SHOW PICTURE

We will be asking you a short series of questions about relationships within the partnership, achievements and the lessons you have learned.

The information we collect here to today will be analysed for use in your evaluation.

The results will be given back to the <Steering Committee/other governance body> who will make any decisions about how they are used.

Start interview

SECTION 1: RELATIONSHIPS IN THE PARTNERSHIPS

How would you describe your relationship with **FEDERAL** government in relation to the partnership?

PROMPT: What's good about the relationship? What's bad? Can you give me any examples to highlight what's good or bad?

How would you describe your relationship with **STATE** government in relation to the partnership?

PROMPT: What's good about the relationship? What's bad? Can you give me any examples to highlight what's good or bad

How would you describe your relationship with **LOCAL GOVERNMENT** in relation to the partnership?

PROMPT: What's good about the relationship? What's bad? Can you give me any examples to highlight what's good or bad

How would you describe your relationship with **OTHER ORGANISATIONS** in relation to the partnership?

PROMPT: What's good about the relationship? What's bad? Can you give me any examples to highlight what's good or bad

Are there organisations or people that should be involved in the partnership who aren't?

PROMPT: why do you think that is?

SECTION 2: ACHIEVEMENTS AND LESSONS

What do you see as the biggest successes or the best achievements of the partnership?

What do you think has been the value add of working in partnership (what can be achieved that could not have been done by your organisation alone)?

What do you think are the three main things that have helped the work of the partnership?

What do you think are the three main things that have hindered the work of the partnership?

SECTION 3: INFORMATION TO CREATE THE PARTNERSHIP MAPS

Looking back over the last 6 months, who are the people you talked to the most in order to do your day-to-day work in the partnership? (LIMIT TO 15)

AFTER THEY HAVE GIVEN THE LIST OF NAMES:
How ***important*** are each of these people for you in the partnership work on a scale from 1 to 3? (1 = reasonably, 2 = very, 3 = crucial).

We really do need the actual name of each person. This is only needed so we can examine patterns of interaction, and draw network maps. The maps will not identify individuals.

If there are any cases where individuals might be identifiable because of the small numbers involved, we will check with you before presenting any of this information.

Contact name, position, organisation	Importance (1-3)

Over the last 6 months, who did you go to most when you wanted to get ***strategic information about something to do with the partnership***? (LIMIT TO 15)

AFTER THEY HAVE GIVEN THE LIST OF NAMES:
How ***important*** are each of these people for you in the partnership work on a scale from 1 to 3? (1 = reasonably, 2 = very, 3 = crucial).

We really do need the actual name of each person. This is only needed so we can examine patterns of interaction, and draw network maps. The maps will not identify individuals.

If there are any cases where individuals might be identifiable because of the small numbers involved, we will check with you before presenting any of this information.

Contact name, position, organisation	Importance (1-3)

SECTION 4: ANYTHING ELSE YOU WOULD LIKE TO ADD

Is there anything else that you would like to say about the partnership?

Appendix B The report template

<The title of the partnership> partnership evaluation <2008>

Report to the Steering Committee

<June 2008>

Prepared by

This report was prepared by <Preparer, organisation>.

<June 2008>

Acknowledgments

<Acknowledge the person/agency that undertook the research and the organization who funded it>

<Acknowledge use of the approach and guide as cited in this manual>

Contact

More information about the partnership or this report can be obtained from:

<Direct people to a contact person that can give information about the partnership>

Copyright & Disclaimer

Introduction

This document reports the results of a partnership evaluation of <the partnership> initiative. <Summarise purpose of partnership>.

This evaluation was undertaken in <Month, Year> after the partnership had been operating for <X Years>. <This evaluation was part of baseline measurement /interim evaluation /final evaluation>.

Evaluating the partnership

<Describe the partnerships governance structure , your sample and method>
The partnership is governed by a Steering Committee that is supported by working groups focused on priority issues. It employs two project workers funded by X and housed in Council.

The Steering Committee, chaired by the Minister X, includes representatives from the:

- X Council *
- Department of X*
- Department of Y*
- TAFE *
- the Alice Smith Foundation
- private company X
- Residents Association*.

* those with representatives interviewed in this evaluation

Ten people from 12 organisations on the Steering Committee were interviewed for this evaluation (marked with * on the list above). The representative from the Alice Smith Foundation did not wish to interviewed (did not feel they had been involved long enough) and the representative from private company X could not be contacted.

This partnership evaluation was undertaken in June 2008 using a approach developed by Assoc. Prof. Jenny Lewis at the University of Melbourne[1]. The approach is described in a guide on the Department of Planning and Community Development's (DPCD) website[2]. The approach involved interviewing members of the Steering Committee about achievements to date, the partnership that has been built so far, and the factors that have helped or hindered their work.

[1] Lewis J (2005) A network approach for researching partnerships in health. *Australia and New Zealand Health Policy*. 2:22
[2] Department of Planning and Community Development (2008) A Guide for Evaluating Your Partnership Using a Network Approach. www.dpcd.vic.gov.au/partnerships

Achievements to date

<Summarise the achievements analysis. An example from East Gippsland Transport Connections is provided. You may wish to get staff of the initiatives to work on this section further. If you did not ask this question – remove this section from your report>

Overall, the Steering Committee reported *Let's GET Connected* has established some successful transport projects and raised the profile of East Gippsland's transport issues in both State and Local government. They reported transport now forms part of the core business of the two Councils involved.

A detailed audit of the achievements of *Let's GET Connected* can be found in the evaluation of the pilot but the major projects reported as achievements by the Steering Committee in these interviews included:

Buchan Bus 'n' Freight which has organised for freight services to be incorporated into an underutilised bus route to create a viable transport service between the small town of Buchan and the larger town of Bairnsdale. As well as passengers, the service now carries freight for a range of agencies such as the Bush Nursing Hospital, and for residents ordering items from the supermarkets in Bairnsdale.

Dargo Community Bus which has organised joint funding (with the Dargo Primary School and the Department of Human Services program *Best Start*) to buy an 18 seater bus for the community of Dargo. One day a week the bus transports Dargo Primary School students to the Stratford Primary School (95 kilometres away) so they can join their sports and cultural programs. On the days the bus is not being utilised it is available for community hire.

The Aboriginal Driver Education Project which has organised a range of culturally appropriate driver training support and resources to Aboriginal people in East Gippsland after identifying that unlicensed driving, unroadworthy vehicles, financial constraints and a lack of driver education and training were a major social, legal and road safety problem in the area. The program has attracted $450 000 funding for three years from the Federal Government National Community Crime Prevention Program and a further $32 000 from Exxon Mobil specifically to assist the Indigenous community to obtain driver licences. Partners on the program include East Gippsland Aboriginal Co-operative, Ramahyuck District Aboriginal Corporation, Mission Australia, VicRoads, the Transport Accident Commission, VicPolice, TAFE, Bairnsdale Adult Community Education, State Government Departments (Justice, DPCD, DHS and DOI), RACV, East Gippsland and Wellington Shires, Rural Access, Gippsland East Local Learning and Employment Network, Centrelink, Gippsland Lakes Community Health, Gippsland Area Consultative Committee (Federal Government), Traralgon Bus Lines and Exxon Mobil.

Melbourne Medical Transport which has organised a program with Red Cross, Travellers Aid, V/Line and local health services to co-ordinate travel for rural people needing medical services in Melbourne. It utilises volunteers and various organisations fleet vehicles to move people around to local medical appointments and to connect to train services into Melbourne. Once in Melbourne transport is co-ordinated by Red Cross and Travellers Aid.

The Mallacoota to Genoa Bus Service which has created Victoria's first "demand responsive" service from Mallacoota to Genoa. The Department of Infrastructure has contracted a tourist operator to run the service on Tuesdays, Thursdays and Sundays - but the service only runs if there is a booking.

Bemm Rivers School Bus Pilot which has created public transport to allow the small community of Bemm River to access the services, recreational opportunities and employment opportunities in the larger town of Orbost. It has done this by organising public access on the school bus, brokered with the local bus operator, Orbost Secondary School, Department of Infrastructure, Department of Education and Bus Association Victoria.

The Steering Committee's assessment of the partnership

<Summarise the overall perception of the partnership analysis>
Overall, the majority of Steering Committee members interviewed reported they felt the partnership has been ….

Organisations involved

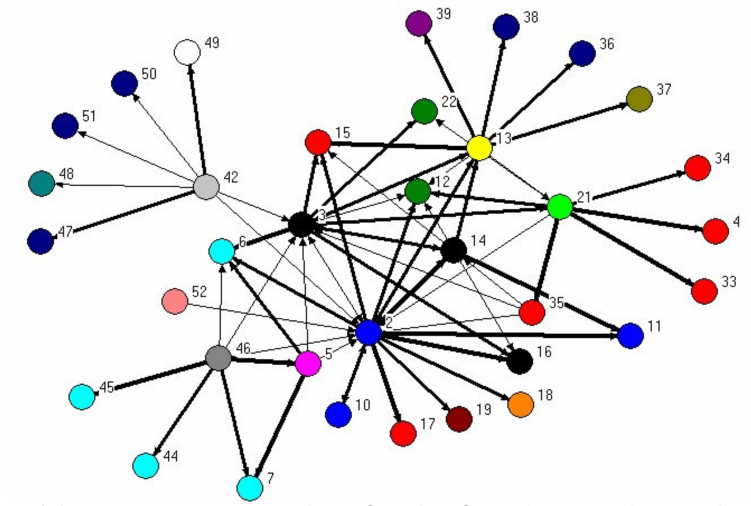
<Summarise the maps. This section uses East Gippsland Transport Connections as an example>
Figures 1 and 3 show network maps that were created from the interviews. The different colours represent the 30 separate organisations that the Steering Committee reported are important for undertaking the work of the partnership. The maps show extensive connections, but they also show that connections extend to decision-making organisations outside the local area, including to five State government agencies (DHS, DOI, DOE, VicRoads, DPCD). It is likely that other organisations are missing because they are involved through the project groups, not the Steering Committee (for example, see the project partners for the Aboriginal Driver Education Project above). Respondents in the interviews reported that *the spectrum of the organisations involved is huge* with one of the project workers estimating that over 200 organisations had been engaged in some way over the past three years.

Figure 1 shows all the people the Steering Committee nominated as important for doing the *day-to-day* work of the partnership, while Figure 2 shows all the people they nominated as important for obtaining *strategic information* about the partnership. It is likely that other organisations are missing because they are involved in the working group projects, not the Steering Committee (for example local schools).

The arrows on the maps indicate who members of the Steering Committee nominated as important for their work. While all lines indicate a relationship is important, the dark lines indicate that the Steering Committee member felt the connection was "critical".

As can be seen the Transport Connections workers (dot 2 and 3) are already central to the partnerships day-to-day activities and strategic thinking. The partnership would be significantly and adversely affected by the removal of these workers…. < or the network is sustainable>

Figure 1. People the Steering Committee speak to, to do their day-to-day work.

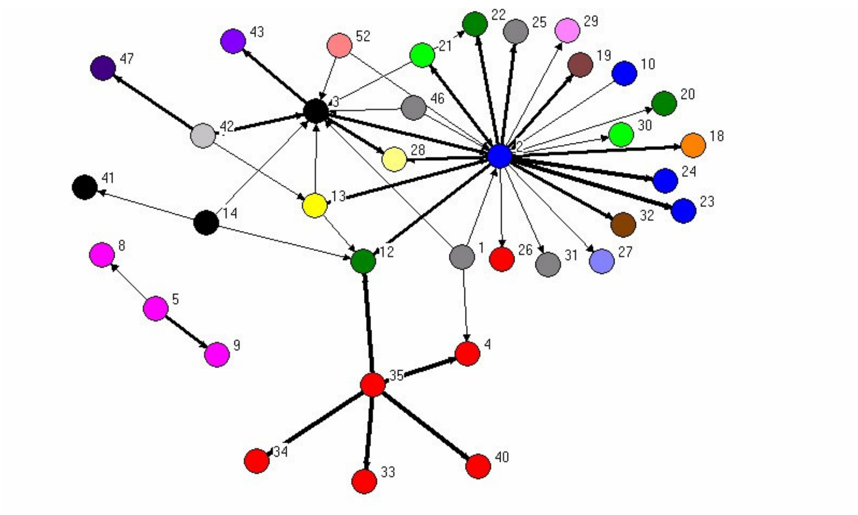


Note: The direction of the arrows represents who a Steering Committee member nominated they spoke to. All connections were “important” but the dark lines were nominated “critical”. Numbers indicate individuals.

Dots 2 (mid blue) and 3 (black) are the project workers.

Colour	Organisation	Colour	Organisation
Red	DPCD	Violet	Regional Management Forum
Mid blue	East Gippsland Shire Council	Light Pink	Taxi Directorate
Black	Wellington Shire Council	Brown	Traveller's Aid
Dark Grey	Department of Human Services	Dark Blue	East Gippsland TAFE
Pink	Vic Roads	Khaki	Naval College
Dark Green	Department of Infrastructure	Plum	Orbost Secondary College
Light Green	Department of Education	Light Grey	RACV
Light Blue	Mission Australia	Purple	Monash University
Yellow	Gippsland East LLEN	Teal	Sale College
Orange	Orbost Regional Health Service	White	Bairnsdale College
Maroon	RedCross	Peach	Kilmany Uniting Care
Light Yellow	Bass Coast Transport Connections		

Figure 2. People the Steering Committee speak to for strategic information.



Relationships

< Summarise the relationships analysis. The examples in this section have been taken at randomly from Departmental reports >

With Federal government

Most representatives interviewed reported their relationship with Federal government was positive but not well developed in the partnership. Those that had positive working relationships reported these either pre-dated or existed outside the partnership. This is evidenced in the network maps by the Federal government being mainly linked to the partnership's networks through the State government representatives.

With State government

Relationships with State government were reported to be more positive and representatives felt more senior people were involved. Organisations found it easier to access State government, in part because they have pre-existing relationships outside the partnership. Some felt relationships with State government were stronger as a result of the partnership but others felt they were still building. High staff turn over was also reported as a problem at the State level but organisations reported that two Departmental representatives had provided consistent and committed representation.

With Local government

All respondents reported that they had a good relationship with local government. They felt there was now more engagement around XX issues from all levels of both Councils and organisations reported they had gained a greater understanding of the way the Councils operate. Local Council representatives also reported the links between the two councils have strengthened, and that as well as working together on XX, they were now partnering around other issues.

With other organisations

The challenges of involvement by commercial organisations were raised by both private operators and others. Private operators reported that they could not see the benefit of being on the Steering Committee and that attending meetings was too time consuming. This has been found in the evaluations of other programs, with business preferring to be involved only once there are concrete projects. However, a lack of involvement in the planning stage can also be problematic for private operators if the solutions developed by the committee are public transport options that are seen to compete for their business and therefore livelihoods. This may mean that different ways of keeping private operators informed during planning stages, for example, through communication channels rather than meetings, are needed.

The relationship with the business representatives was considered to be good. It is less direct than with State and Local government but constructive, with a focus on common issues. There was a sense that the private sector representatives had been good at putting aside their own agenda and differentiating between theirs and Boards responsibilities. One Board member felt having the business representatives on the Board provided a window into, and understanding of, business and economic issues. It was good to get their perspective. Another reported that the business community are important as they bring money and resources.

Are the factors demonstrated by effective partnerships in place?

< Summarise the factors analysis. This section will be used by the partnership to make improvements. If these factors were not mentioned – this should be documented. The examples in this section have been taken at randomly from Departmental reports >

Through its broader evaluation work DPCD has identified five factors that are demonstrated by effective partnerships. This section examines these factors in relation to the XXX partnership.

1. A good facilitator/broker

A highly skilled facilitator or broker has been found to be critical to the success of other partnerships initiatives. They need to be skilled at relationship building, project management and need to be seen by local organisations as authoritative leaders in the local area.

The XXX partnership's facilitator was very well regarded. They were reported to be very focused, with a real understanding of what is required to support the Steering Committee. The professional management of secretariat was noted and the Steering Committee reported they were provided with the necessary information for decision making. …

2. The right decision-makers at the table with commitment and a willingness to contribute

Other successful partnerships have demonstrated the importance of having the right people at the table, with commitment and a willingness to contribute resources.

All Steering Committee members were enthusiastic and committed to working together towards tangible outcomes and understood that commitment was vital for success. As one respondent noted, e*veryone has a genuine commitment to be honest and open in the committee.* In addition to goodwill, many organisations have committed resources towards either the project workers or the various projects. One respondent thought this was quite an achievement given it was a challenge for some small rural organisations to contribute resources of any kind.

Many of the Steering Committee members were senior representatives from their organisations, and this was thought to increase organisational engagement with the initiative. One respondent said that if an organisation is engaged at all levels, it increases the systematic nature of involvement, making it less personality based and more sustainable. Some organisations have only engaged in the Steering Committee through the one representative, and when the representative has left the organisation, contact with the organisation was lost.

3. A shared vision and clear objectives

The third success factor demonstrated by other partnerships is the need for clear objectives and processes.

This group has a clear vision about the need for improved transport in the region and all Steering Committee members could clearly articulate the issues for their organisations of a lack of adequate transport. This common starting point has enabled the group to see the benefits of co-operating to find solutions and they reported the clear and common goal helped keep people motivated and focused. Some respondents reported that it was important that they undertook the detailed planning at the beginning of the initiative so the *partnership goals were clear and focussed early on, which attracted only support and enthusiasm.*

Some respondents also identified the importance of Memorandums of Understanding between the partnering organisations, to ensure that responsibilities and expectations were clearly set out from the start.

One process issue did become apparent from the interviews ….

4. Good Process

The fourth success factor demonstrated by other partnerships is the need for clear processes for how the partnership will run. This includes things such as meeting procedure, decision making rules and processes to ensure transparency.

5. Maintaining motivation: champions and early results

The final success factor demonstrated by other partnerships was finding ways to keep partners motivated and engaged. The two most commonly reported ways to do this have been through champions saying the initiative was worth trying and having early evaluation results reported.

Steering Committee members reported that public support shown by MPs ….

Champions were not specifically mentioned in any of the interviews.

Other partnership evaluations have also identified tangible outcomes, seeing things moving forward (not "quick wins"), as important for keeping people interested. Steering Committee members reported that funding projects and strategies, helped give the partnership credibility … One Committee member felt "these initiatives give hope to the local community".

Several Committee members reported that the local media initially seemed to be against the partnership but this has since turned around and over the last 2-3 years the local press has been very supportive. It was noted that while good news stories are being reported they are not necessarily attributed to partnership.

Challenges

< Summarise the challenges analysis. Some examples of challenges include >

The time needed for change to manifest …

Negotiating joint use agreements ….

Distance in rural areas ….

Conclusion