

Guiding Principles for Multistakeholder Engagement

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The strategies of the United Nations and World Health Organization recognize that achieving zero hunger and good health and wellbeing for all requires a whole-of-society approach and engagement of all stakeholders. This way of working together – in multistakeholder partnerships – is also reflected in Sustainable Development Goal 17 and is seen as critical to achieving the transformative change called for in Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.

A belief in the power of the collective is one of the fundamental principles underpinning the work of the International Food & Beverage Alliance (IFBA). IFBA members have been collaborating with governments, civil society, academia and business for many years in initiatives designed to improve global health. We know from experience that public-private partnerships work. Good partnerships deliver positive change.

We recognize the responsibility and opportunity business has to contribute to a healthy and sustainable future for all and we are committed to working collaboratively with a wide range of partners whose values and efforts align with this goal and who demonstrate a willingness and capability to seek collaborative solutions.

The following principles are inspired by the best practices of others and build on our learnings from the many successful collaborations our members have engaged in over the years, and will guide our work with governments, civil society, academia and business in the coming years.

Principle 1 : A Shared Purpose and Mutual Benefits

Partners need to be aligned around a shared sense of purpose and aligned in their efforts and expectations. Transformative change occurs when all partners are clear on the benefits of involvement in the collaboration in terms relevant to their own organizations, and at the same time, work together in a way that is mutually beneficial.

Principle 2 : An Environment of Integrity, Respect and Trust

Collaboration depends on trust. Building trust and good relational norms among partners of very different natures is challenging. However, it is imperative to create an environment based on openness and inclusiveness where partners act with integrity and mutual respect. Governance mechanisms, guidelines for decision-making and measures to identify and manage potential conflicts of interest will be determined by agreement at the outset.

Principle 3 : A Clear Strategy and Defined Roles

Forging a strong and successful multistakeholder collaboration requires a fundamental understanding of the dynamics inherent in each sector, and the goals and interests of each party. The collaboration will recognize the authority and primacy of governments in policymaking and the role of the partners in implementing the policy objective. A clear goal and strategy with specific objectives, win-win based terms of reference, a robust governance structure, measurable outcomes and clearly defined roles and responsibilities which reflect the shared purpose is an important precondition for an effective partnership.

Principle 4 : A Platform for Innovation, Scale and Sustainability

Identifying and fostering innovative solutions that are replicable and scalable and enable long-term sustainable results is critical. Providing a comprehensive platform for collective co-creation and knowledge transfer, which maximizes partners' complementary areas of expertise, capability and resources will deliver outcomes more efficiently and effectively than one party could do alone.

Principle 5 : A Focus on Impact

The work of the collaboration shall be designed to generate impact. It will be evidence-based, results-oriented and focus on tangible benefits to public health, measurable results and lasting outcomes.

Principle 6 : Accountability and Transparency

Accountability and transparency are fundamental to good governance. Information on the nature and scope of the collaboration; a clear articulation of the role and interests of each partner, including benefits and actual or perceived conflicts of interests; the governance structure, timelines and targets shall be made available to the public. Outcomes depend on the engagement of all partners and all partners are accountable to each other and the public.

Principle 7 : Measurement and Evaluation

A monitoring and evaluation system capable of tracking progress will be jointly developed by the partners and include unbiased, mutually agreed evaluators who will publicly report on progress. A sound evaluation mechanism capable of identifying the success or failure of specific interventions will help to identify solutions which are replicable and capable of delivering long-term results. Successful outcomes will be rewarded through public recognition.

