



BPD Business Plan: 2007-2012

Executive Summary

June 2007

Partnerships are all the rage. The entire water and sanitation sector is either in one or in the process of creating one. Problem solving at the policy level and delivery challenges at the implementation level are all being addressed through “partnerships” of one sort or another. Beyond the more common discourse on the role of public, private and civil society actors in water provision, new partnership forms are being created whereby donors are “harmonising” their approaches, the public sector is teaming up with the public sector, and calls are increasing for partnership approaches to deliver the Millennium Development Goal on sanitation. (Please see *The Current Partnership Context in Water and Sanitation*, also adapted from the business plan, for brief analysis of how BPD fits in the sector.)

BPD’s Vision and Operational Plans

In operation now for 8 years, the broad mission of **Building Partnerships for Development (BPD)** is to promote more effective delivery of safe water and sanitation services in poor communities in developing countries through multi-stakeholder partnership approaches.

Created expressly to assist partnership practitioners to deliver on their goals, BPD has generated a wealth of learning on how and under what circumstances partnerships can make the greatest contribution to meeting the water and sanitation MDGs.

BPD was originally established (as *Business Partners for Development*) to test and promote a triangular approach to service delivery by incorporating the strengths of

the public, private and civil society sectors as legs of a three-legged stool. As the organisation and the sector have evolved, it has become clear that standardising this model would be inappropriate as the contexts in which different partnerships operate are too unique. Another key finding has been that partnership practitioners tend to dedicate too little time to building the space within which their partnerships are meant to operate. **BPD would argue that the scope, purpose, structure and resource requirements of partnerships need to be more rigorously negotiated.** BPD has thus dedicated itself as a learning network to developing and refining a set of tools that creates the space for and facilitates these conversations. It does this in three interlinking ways involving:

1. **Research and Analysis** – Action research programmes aimed at engaging and influencing policymakers and practitioners in how different institutional arrangements add value;
2. **Building Better Partnerships** – Direct support to partnership projects to assist in building more effective relationships; and

HOW BPD DEFINES PARTNERSHIP

Whilst there are many definitions in the literature, the evolving definition (adapted from AccountAbility) that most closely resonates with BPD’s own findings is as follows:

Partnerships involve two or more organisations that enter into a collaborative arrangement based on:

- 1) synergistic goals and opportunities that address particular issues or deliver specified tasks that single organisations cannot accomplish on their own, and
- 2) situations where individual organisations cannot purchase the appropriate resources or competencies purely through a market transaction.

3. Broader Influencing – Broad dissemination of tools and frameworks to influence how the water and sanitation sector applies partnership approaches.

Research and analysis for BPD will continue to be framed in an action research approach, engaging directly with practitioners and policymakers at the local and national levels on issues of pro-poor service delivery. A primary aim for this operational strategy is to gain quick insights into partnership challenges that can then be turned into partnership analysis or dialogue tools for practitioners and policymakers alike. At the outset of the Business Plan period, BPD intends to complete research and analysis on an average of two-three topics per year. This would grow as the organisation grows. (Please refer to the graphic below for lines of inquiry.)

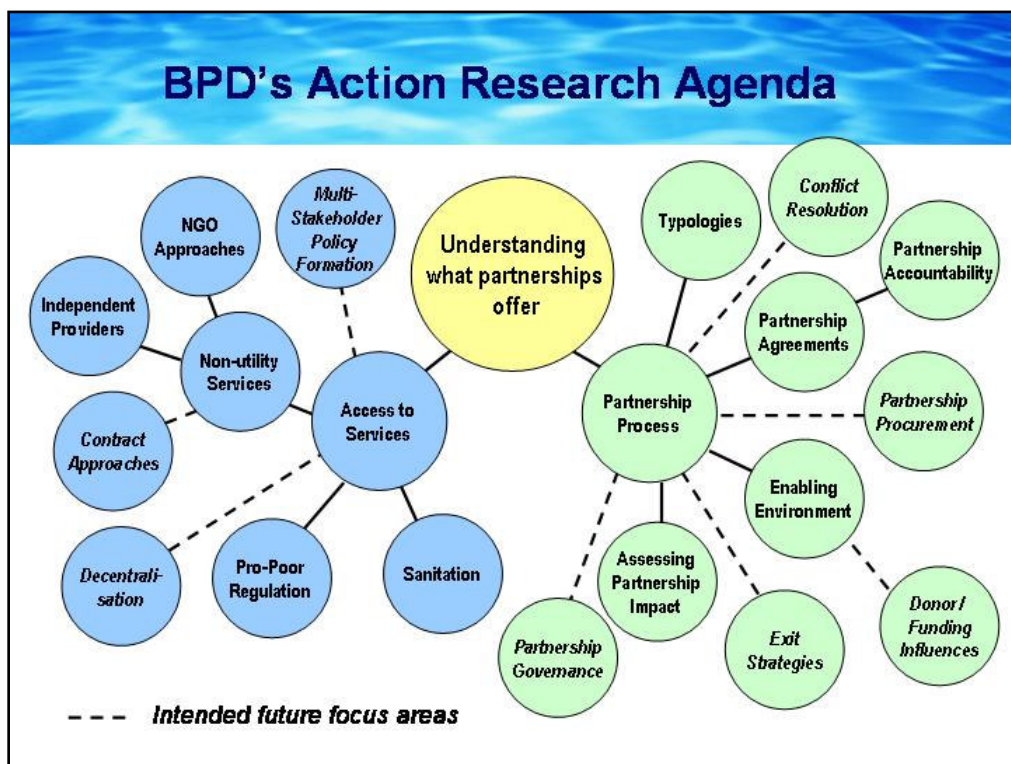
BPD is keen to use the tools and frameworks that it has developed to help **Build Better Partnerships**. This involves working with actual projects on the ground to ensure that the relationships that are being forged are as robust and appropriate as possible. As BPD shall remain relatively small and thereby unable to work at scale, our goal is to influence both consultants (through the *BPDXchange* – see below) and other institutions working with and in partnerships. BPD will continue to work intensively with 6-8 partnerships per year that are pushing the boundaries on new and innovative institutional arrangements.

BPD’s approach to **Broader Influencing** takes two highly inter-related forms which sees 1) the organisation delivering BPD-generated learning (through training courses, publications and attendance at international events); and 2) BPD as a

BPD Principles

- Maintain a clear focus on water and sanitation services for poor people in developing countries. All activities must contribute to this aim.
- Concentrate on BPD’s unique niche of multi-stakeholder partnership.
- Respond to the needs and priorities of the communities in developing countries and the organisations that serve them, rather than to those of external support agencies.
- Be demonstrably neutral and independent at all levels from the local to the global, promoting genuine partnerships rather than specific partners or sector groups.
- Build links and improve mutual understanding between the various stakeholder groups.
- Become a truly multi-cultural and multi-lingual organisation.
- Evaluate and demonstrate the impact of its work, particularly with regard to furthering access to water supply and sanitation services in poor communities.

facilitator that designs forums and spaces through which practitioners and policymakers can learn and influence each other. BPD aims to deliver 3-4 major training skills workshops per year and the invitations to facilitate for other institutions is increasing rapidly.



Each operational strategy feeds off the other two whereby learning generated through research is tested and refined in the partnership support work which then feeds into training and other dissemination activities; training and dissemination work generates new projects with which to work and new problem areas that action research could help to address.

BPD's Organisational Plans

Registered with the Charity Commission in the UK, BPD is an independent institution governed by a 13-person multi-stakeholder Board of Directors that is evenly split among the public, private and civil society sectors.¹ BPD is currently run by a small team of four full-time and one part-time staff hosted by WaterAid in London.

Four years after BPD became an independent institution, DFID, one of BPD's strongest supporters, commissioned an external review into the organisation and its track record. The 2006 findings were unequivocal: "*BPD was clearly doing the right things and doing them well.*" The reviewers recommended unambiguously that the organisation continue. They also recognised, however, that BPD is a small organisation and that the significant demand for its services and skills far exceeds its current ability to deliver.

This new five-year plan responds to those findings, along with a mandate from BPD's Board of Directors to plan for controlled growth of the organisation over the medium-term. This translates into doubling BPD's staff from four full-time and one part-time staff to 8-10 staff with more emphasis on specialised skillsets to deliver BPD's mandate (including, for example, a dedicated training officer and dedicated regional staff). BPD shall also hire a senior programme officer that can deputise for the Director. BPD shall also help boost capacity through the creation of the *BPDXchange*, an "accredited" and expanding pool of

consultants that are familiar with BPD's approach. Beginning with a small pool of 12-15 and expanding by 5-7 per year, the *BPDXchange* would be convened at least once per year for masterclasses aimed at expanding on BPD's findings and refining BPD's tools.

BPD also intends to foster discussions between the more progressive elements of the water and sanitation sector through the BPD Research and Development Lab. The *BPD R&D Lab* would bring together a revolving mixed stakeholder group of practitioners and policymakers to debate trends in the sector.

BPD's intention is to devote more energy to meeting specific demands in Africa, Asia and Latin America, ultimately with a modest number of core staff actually based in the regions, housed in carefully selected organisations. To date, much of the organisation's emphasis has been on supporting projects, conducting action research and building capacity in Sub-Saharan Africa. This next five-year plan hopes to redress the balance towards other parts of the developing world where important partnership approaches continue to develop.

BPD is attempting to sharpen its understanding of the organisation's impact. Organisations like BPD that specialise in processes and ideas are notoriously difficult to "measure". We believe that the vision (that more robust partnerships require more dedicated attention to partnership operations and maintenance) and the theory of change (that lasting change comes about where spaces are created that generate mutual understanding between different stakeholders) should help us to assess where we are having the greatest impact. Clear qualitative and quantitative indicators of success have been developed for each of the operational strategies.

BPD has projected the funding requirements to be roughly UK£570,000 for the first year, growing to just over UK£1,000,000 in the fifth year. As BPD is a people-intensive organisation, approximately 45-50 percent of

¹ Four seats on the Board of Directors are dedicated to each sector with the 13th seat dedicated to an "other" category that includes academics, professional associations, consultants, etc.

annual budgets in the first years would go towards professional staffing costs. This figure, however, is easily misinterpreted as the staff in fact do the bulk of the research, training and facilitation. Overheads, governance and administration costs are estimated at 11-12 percent in any given year. BPD seeks to fund the organisation through core grants from key donors and contracts for specific pieces of work from a variety of organisations.

Given the widespread appreciation for BPD as an intimate, progressive and focused organisation, our goal has been to maintain these qualities. The challenge has been to mesh the existing spirit of the organisation with aspirations that BPD could do more to meet demand for its approach to learning, support to projects, and findings. The table below lays out the programmatic and organisational capacity targets aimed at achieving maximum impacts whilst still maintaining the spirit of the organisation.

PROGRAMMATIC TARGETS

- Cutting-edge action research programmes on 2-3 major topics per year aimed at engaging and influencing policymakers and practitioners in how different institutional arrangements add value;
- Direct and intensive support to 6-8 partnership projects per year to assist in building more effective relationships;
- Broad dissemination of tools and frameworks to influence how the water and sanitation sector applies partnership approaches (through general and tailored training courses, publications, public appearances, etc.).

BPD'S ORGANISATIONAL TARGETS

Within BPD, our goal is to be more able to meet demand by:

- Doubling the staff from 4 full-time staff to 8-10 staff by the end of the plan;
- Further strengthening our staff skill-sets to ensure that team members are charged with more specific functions (training, communications, brokering and research);
- Creating more of a regional emphasis with positions dedicated to meeting the needs of specific geographic regions;
- Through the BPDxchange, BPD shall create an "accredited" pool of consultants with sufficient diversity trained in BPD's methodologies and findings whereby BPD can confidently recommend non-BPD staff to work with specific projects and programmes (starting with 12 consultants in year one and expanding to over 30 by year five); and
- Through the BPD R&D Lab, BPD shall bring together a diverse set of stakeholders through a revolving virtual process of generating new ideas and refining BPD's problem-solving approaches

Regularly reviewed by the Board, the key risks to the organisation relate to quality assurance, staff retention, loss of funding, and trends in the sector. As evidenced by the comprehensiveness of this Business Plan, BPD is addressing these challenges via a number of measures.

Building Partnerships for Development in Water and Sanitation (BPD) is a not-for-profit membership organisation that supports public, civil society and private sector decision-makers and practitioners engaged in partnerships that provide water and sanitation services in poor communities. Active since 1998, BPD focuses on how best to structure, manage and assess such multi-stakeholder collaborative arrangements.

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