



# Partnerships

Partnerships involve the closest and most extensive interactions with stakeholders. In a true Partnership as described here, forest or woodland managers and staff work with members of partner organisations as integral parts of their team, sharing planning and decision-making activities fully. Such a commitment to share responsibility requires dedication from both or all parties to the idea that joint action produces a more satisfactory outcome for all. True Partnerships require considerable time commitments from all parties. Although there are likely to be many more hours spent in meetings and discussions than if a single person did an analysis and made a decision, the process of sharing that responsibility is likely to produce a plan and a decision that is more acceptable to stakeholders. In order to ensure that all interest groups can be involved, the mechanisms for developing Partnerships and accepting new partners should be as open and inclusive as possible.



Forestry Commission staff working in Partnership with Highland disabled ramblers.

## Resources and requirements

### Skills

- Good interpersonal skills are essential to making full Partnerships work.
- Meeting facilitation, active listening and mediation techniques are all important.
- An ability to share the power of decision-making with other stakeholders is a prerequisite.

### Equipment

- Basic office facilities for small group meetings are needed.

## Level of engagement

INFORMING:

CONSULTING:

INVOLVING:

PARTNERSHIP: ★★ ★

## Strengths

- Full Partnerships are the best way to ensure that all parties will endorse outcomes from joint activity.
- Partnerships are the best means of building trust among stakeholders.
- They provide opportunities to access new resources, as partner organisations may be able to contribute time and resources for their share of the effort.
- Working in Partnerships may enable new funding opportunities to be accessed.

## Weaknesses

- The time commitment is the primary cost of Partnership.
- Difficulties may arise if some interested parties feel excluded by Partnerships that include others with different interests and goals.

### Time

- Considerable time commitments are needed in order to make a Partnership work.
- Partnerships that work well are maintained through time at whatever level of activity is needed to meet current needs.

## Useful sources of information

### Books

- Building effective local partnerships. Local Government Management Board (1993). LGMB, London.
- Good practice in rural development, No. 1: Effective partnership working. B. Slee and P. Snowdon (1997). Scottish National Rural Partnership, The Scottish Office Central Research Unit.
- The guide to effective participation. D. Wilcox (1994). Partnerships Books, London.

### Web

- The Guide to Effective Participation by David Wilcox: [www.partnerships.org.uk](http://www.partnerships.org.uk)
- USDA Forest Service's guide on partnerships: [www.fs.fed.us](http://www.fs.fed.us)

### Training

- The Prince's Foundation: tel. 020 7613 8500 or [www.princes-foundation.org](http://www.princes-foundation.org)
- Scottish Community Development Centre: tel. 0141 248 1924 or [www.scdc.org.uk](http://www.scdc.org.uk)

### Case study

- Ae Forest District maintains partnership arrangements on several of their forest design plan areas, such as Mabie Forest and Cairnhead Forest.

This toolbox is designed to assist Forestry Commission staff when they are considering which tools they could use to involve the public in the forest and woodland planning process. For more information please visit the website at: [www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox](http://www.forestry.gov.uk/toolbox)