



IBIS global Partnership Strategy

Approved by IBIS Board, August 2008

Introduction

IBIS' Vision 2012 underlines the importance of establishing partnerships with different types of civil society organisations in the developing countries in order to strengthen their capacity to claim and use individual and collective rights to improve the life of underprivileged people. Today, all IBIS' development programmes and projects in Africa and Latin America are organised in close partnership with a range of civil society organizations and change agents working within IBIS' focus areas.

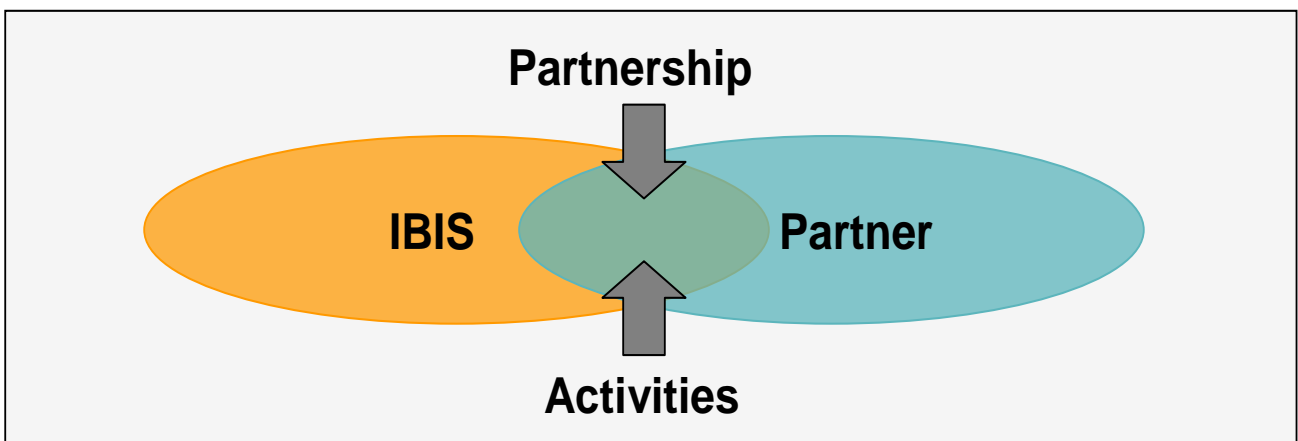
This strategy aims at providing IBIS globally with a clear and shared strategic understanding of partnership, a shared set of fundamental values and principles for sound partnerships in order to continuously improving the quality of IBIS' interrelation with change agents in the developing countries. The strategy also includes a concrete action plan, which outlines specific issues to address and concrete tools to be developed during the period 2008 – 2010.

IBIS defines partnership as a relationship between parties where a **mutual agreement** has been established **committing** each organisation to a set of **agreed principles and actions** over an **extended period** of time.

IBIS believes that the success of a partnership depends on the extent to which **ownership, commitment and power are shared with the partners**. Although IBIS takes the final decisions regarding financial issues related to programme implementation, IBIS consciously seeks the highest possible degree of **mutuality, participation and commitment** between IBIS and south partners and between partners, and equality in decision-making, rights and responsibilities.

For IBIS to involve in a partnership it needs to take point of departure in a shared overall claim for rights, social change and a shared understanding of the specific objective and strategies related to the programme or project level. Having stated this, IBIS profoundly respects that a partnership builds on diversity in visions, histories and cultures and that strengthening of a partner's own organisational identity, **mission, strategies and values** are very important elements for the successfulness and sustainability of a partnership.

Graphically, the shared space of the partnership and the mutual respect for diverse visions and identities of IBIS and the partner can be illustrated as follows:



Objective

The objective of IBIS' Partnership Strategy is that it provides a clear strategic guidance to IBIS staff and partners about the interaction in a partnership of high quality, which is decisive for the joint programme work to produce concrete social and economic changes to the benefit of poor and marginalized men and women. Further, the objective is that the strategy reflects the heterogeneity and complexity of the different contexts and types of partnerships that IBIS is working with globally..

1 Partnership principles

- IBIS establish partnerships with change agents or partners that have the potential to become change agents and to contribute to social and economic justice.
- IBIS pursue strategic dialogue with partners on programme design, strategies, and implementation and include partners actively in monitoring of programmes.
- Partnership and activities take point of departure in the **interface between IBIS' and partners' own strategies** and priorities based on local needs and opportunities. IBIS' strategic framework is adapted and contextualised to each country of operation.
- IBIS **align** to partners' formats, reporting systems and procedures to the extent possible.
- In cases where IBIS and other international organisations collaborate with the same organisation, **harmonisation** around the partner's strategies and procedures will be pursued to the extent possible.
- IBIS sees **complementarity** and openness towards mutual learning as very important fundamental principles for a sound partnership.
- Partnership is building on **mutual accountability** implying that each part can hold the other to account for roles and responsibilities in the partnership.
- IBIS' partnerships are based on **predictability** and **long term commitments** supporting the overall organisational goals and missions of the partner and the core function and development of the partner organisation.
- IBIS will take immediate action if identifying any kind of corruption. Guidelines on anti-corruption for use in all IBIS programme countries will be developed and annexed to this strategy.
- IBIS and partners show full **transparency** of strategies, activities, economy and constituencies.
- IBIS' partners must actively work toward the perspectives of **gender equality** and sustainable **environmental** practises at both the strategic level and at an operational level.
- IBIS and partners strive towards **cost effectiveness** and **efficiency** in all interventions.

2 Different types of Partnership

IBIS engage in partnerships based on a context analysis of the strategic field of intervention and the actors that can have the potential to promote social change for marginalized men and women. The different types of actors that IBIS will typically establish partnership with are as follows:

- **Constituency based organisations**; e.g. movements, community groups, traditional structures, trade unions, student groups and networks/alliances, these being local, national or international, are considered as the primary and legitimate agents of change.

- **NGO's**; e.g. local or national NGO's providing services, capacity building or supporting advocacy, research institutions and other actors can be agents of change and important supporters of constituency based organisations.
- **Government institutions**, local or national level state institutions and other government entities, international institutions can be important **operational partners** if conducive for promoting citizens' rights, participation and delivering services.

Based on IBIS' vision 2012 and the analysis that a well organised civil society plays a crucial role for achieving sustainable social change and building up sound democracies, IBIS will prioritise to partner with and support constituency-based civil society organisations. Likewise, in all programmes, it is of strategic importance for IBIS to ensure focus on gender perspectives through prioritising the establishment of at least one partnership with a women's rights organisation and/or an organisation with special focus on gender equality in each programme.

Further, IBIS will actively seek to engage with a variety of different partners in our programmes. Some partnerships concentrate exclusively on the specific project or programme activities, while other partnerships can develop to include joint initiatives related to international campaigns and/or advocacy processes. Civil society partner organisations are, according to their time, capacity and resources, invited to participate in partners' forum, which is a strategic and operative space that ensures synergy between partner organisations and IBIS. The partners' forum is involved in joint context analysis, programme monitoring and concrete action planning at the thematic programme level. The comparative advantages of having different partners within a thematic programme can create an important space for strategic coordination and synergy that holds the potential to promote durable social change that would not be possible if done by a single organisation. An example could be an Education Programme where the following actors constitute the partner group:

- **Two local CBO's**; piloting new practices on learner centred and mother tongue teaching methodologies to decrease drop out rate.
- **A women's organisation**; promoting gender related methodologies in the classroom and girls access to education.
- **Two local school boards**; promoting parents' participation and budget monitoring.
- **Two NGO's**, one at national level and one at local, working with capacity building within practice based advocacy in relation to quality education and girls' access.
- The **national teacher association**; works with teacher professional development and national level advocacy.
- **A research institution**; working with statistics on budget allocation, budget monitoring and international aid to the education sector.
- **A network engaged in advocacy and monitoring of education policies**
- **The ministry of education**; an operational partner to the programme having an important role as dialogue partner and for replication of best practices developed within the programme.

It is important, though, to underline that the contexts of IBIS' fields of operation are diverse and complex and influence directly on the type of partnerships that IBIS can establish. Where in one context the teachers' union is the most important change agent within the education sector, IBIS will at times find it selves in post conflict or fragile situations with activities within e.g. education in emergency, where the only entrance to strengthen the rights and every day life of citizens,

exclusively goes through IBIS implementing activities, cooperation with government institutions or international humanitarian organisations.

Therefore, IBIS acknowledge and respect the importance that context and characteristics of civil society have for partner choice and intervention mode. What is common for all types of IBIS interventions and partnerships is that they seek contributing to the fulfilment of individual and collective rights and strengthening of civil society’s own voice and capacity. The below matrix of generalized typologies illustrates that IBIS’ partnership approach and mode of intervention changes according to the specific context we are operating in.

Matrix of interrelationship between context, partner typologies and intervention mode

Context	Weakly organised civil society	Emerging civil society.	Well established civil society
Main partners	Gov. Institutions International org. NGOs Emerging CBOs and networks	CBO/CSOs, NGOs as intermediaries. Government and local government institutions Networks/Alliances	Constituency based CBO/CSOs Networks/Alliances
Intervention mode	IBIS implements directly. Incipient activities with emerging NGO and CBO	Close facilitation by IBIS. Capacity building within specific IBIS competency areas. Capacity building through local NGO’s.	Core funding to partners own strategic plans. Accompaniment by IBIS. Capacity building within specific IBIS competency areas.

The Partnership development plan

As part of the operational level of the present strategy, IBIS will make a joint organisation/partner assessment with all civil society partners. The assessment should be based on participation and extract both strengths and weaknesses related to internal and external aspects of the organisation. The joint assessment will show that some partners already perfectly manage own change processes. These partners can fully concentrate on the objectives of their work. Other partners have capacity building needs and/or different kinds of challenges to pay special attention to in order to improve their performance in relation to the objectives of their organisations.

The assessment serves as a fundamental instrument to establish a **partnership development plan**, which will constitute an essential part of the partnership agreement between IBIS and the partner. The development plan will typically include issues related to the existing partnership between IBIS and the partner, as well as concrete thematic and organisational challenges of the partner.

A partnership development plan can for example include some of the following elements:

- **Capacity building within specific themes:**
 1. Education methods and policy
 2. Participatory governance methods and policy
 3. Individual and collective rights
 4. Gender equality
 5. Advocacy skills

- **Components of organisation development:**
 1. Leadership
 2. Networking, learning south - south and alliance building
 3. Constituency building
 4. Strategy development
 5. Internal and external communication.
 6. Financial administration
 7. Facilitation of South-South coordination
 8. South – North solidarity links and advocacy
 9. Planning, monitoring and evaluation

A clear division of tasks and responsibilities between IBIS and the partner in relation to the above elements will constitute a central part of the development plan. As part of **IBIS' added value to the partnership**, IBIS staff will directly provide or facilitate specific elements of the capacity building stated in the development plan, others will be provided through intermediaries.

The agreed development plan is monitored and renegotiated periodically and will establish the basis for the partnership agreement that IBIS formulate with each partner. IBIS considers the assessment and the partnership development plan as a strategic improvement of the interrelationship between IBIS and the partner. It represents a tool to monitor progress and to ensure that the partnership is constantly adding concrete value to both the partner organisation and IBIS. It also constitute an instrument for the partnership to decide a gradual phasing out of the interrelationship (exit strategy) if the desired results are not reached.

Action Plan Sept. 2008 – 2010

When	What	Who
Sept. 2008	Develop new domain for the OPS reporting as well as concrete monitoring criteria for the Partnership Strategy at both project and programme level, including indicators.	HO in coordination with directors
Sept. 2008	Development of an IBIS methodology to assessment of civil society partner organisations.	HO in coordination with directors and staff
Sept. 2008 -	Proactive efforts from IBIS' side with the aim of coordinating programmes and partner support with other national or international donors.	Directors and programme staff
Sept. 2008 – Dec. 2008	Communicating the new partnership strategy to all IBIS staff and partners and capacity building of programme staff in how it is implemented.	Regional directors and HO resource persons.
Oct. 2008	An anti-corruption guideline for use in all IBIS programme countries is elaborated and annexed to the Partnership Strategy	HO in coordination with directors
Jan. 2009 – June 2009	Joint assessment of partners and formulation of a Partnership Development Plan for all programme partners in the South.	Programme staff and with support of HO resource persons.
Jan. 2009 – June 2009	Joint conceptualisation of partners' forum/programme committees and joint strategic use of them in all new thematic programmes.	HO in coordination with directors and programme staff.
Continuously/ Annual	IBIS' partnerships and capacity building of partners is monitored as part of the yearly programme monitoring and OPS reporting as this is established as one of IBIS' overall organisational goals negotiated with DANIDA.	Programme staff/partners
Sept. 2009	Reporting to Danida regarding implementation of the partnership strategy as one of the IBIS' three organisational goals.	HO