



## EPA Evaluation of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV) Lead Campaign:

### Summary of Findings on Design Principles for Successful Voluntary Global Partnerships

## Fact Sheet

### Introduction

In 2011, the US Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA) sponsored a third-party evaluation of the design and implementation of the Lead Campaign of the Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles (PCFV). PCFV is a voluntary, global, public-private partnership that promotes the reduction of air pollution from vehicles in developing and transitional countries through promoting use of lead-free and low sulfur fuels, and clean vehicles. A key purpose of the evaluation was to identify the characteristics of a successful partnership that could inform other voluntary partnerships. Through a qualitative analysis and review of the literature on voluntary partnerships, the evaluation identified the elements of PCFV's Lead Campaign that contributed to its success and found it was particularly well conceived, timed, designed, and implemented.

This Fact Sheet highlights the evaluation findings on design principles that could support successful voluntary partnerships. While the basis for these observations came from a targeted assessment of the PCFV Lead Campaign, they are consistent with the broader literature on partnership best practices.

### Partnerships in Context

In the past ten years, actors from non-governmental organizations, civil society, and the public and private sectors have launched hundreds, if not thousands, of partnerships in the arenas of the global environment and sustainable development. From an international perspective, the 2002 World

Summit on Sustainable Development (WSSD) in Johannesburg, South Africa, sparked a dramatic increase in emphasis on voluntary approaches, as evidenced by the launch of over 200 such partnerships at the WSSD. Not all of these partnerships have succeeded and some have been discontinued, while others have continued and even expanded their efforts.

Partnerships address a broad array of issues. A common factor, though, is the belief that bringing separate parties and sectors together can be a powerful way to advance the public interest and contribute to the common good of the parties involved. Yet the term "partnership" is often not clearly defined or understood, and partnership design considerations, operating practices, and results differ substantially.

#### WHAT IS A PARTNERSHIP?

The term "partnership" has several definitions. The following definition from the United Nations applies in this context:

*"Voluntary and collaborative relationships between various parties, both public and nonpublic, in which all participants agree to work together to achieve a common purpose or undertake a specific task and, as mutually agreed, to share risks and responsibilities, resources and benefits."*

– United Nations General Assembly Resolution 60/215 "Toward Global Partnerships"

<http://www.epa.gov/evaluate>

For more information on completed evaluations at EPA or the Evaluation Support Division, visit the above link.

Opinions vary widely on the efficacy of voluntary partnership approaches compared to other methods of achieving a desired outcome, such as binding, formal agreements between governments or initiatives within civil society or private industry to enact a particular change. This study did not evaluate or compare the benefits of these different approaches.

The timing of this evaluation coincides with preparations for the 2012 WSSD, also known as Rio+20, and corresponding reflections on what has (and has not) been accomplished in the past two decades since the first WSSD in 1992. Lessons from PCFV and other observations on voluntary partnerships may help to provide insight on when an optimally conceived and designed voluntary partnership approach may be effective to achieve global sustainable development goals.

*“Addressing global challenges requires a collective and concerted effort, involving all actors. Through partnerships and alliances, and by pooling comparative advantages, we increase our chances of success.”*

– UN Secretary-General, Ban Ki-moon



## Partnership Design Principles

The following design principles can provide guidance for structuring and implementing a partnership to maximize its chances for accomplishing its goals. Though not a guarantee for success, these principles can help a partnership engage its partners productively and avoid some of the risks often associated with a voluntary approach, including uncertainty of commitment, lack of initial partner trust, misunderstandings about process, and fear of lack of progress due to the voluntary nature.

- **Develop clear goals:** Develop clear, specific (and preferably measurable) goals that define the objective of the partnership and focus attention and action on mutually beneficial results over a sustained period.
- **Build a strong core membership:** Carefully choose initial core membership to include stakeholders who have a strong interest in the outcome, who can bring required expertise to establish early credibility, and contribute to early demonstrable progress that can attract additional partners over time.
- **Thoughtfully design the partnership and utilize this process to engender buy-in and trust:** Take the time needed to carefully design the partnership, including roles and responsibilities, governance rules, membership criteria, partnership duration and exit strategy, decision making process, financial responsibilities, and monitoring and reporting. During the design phase, build critical buy-in and establish trust among the partners.
- **Make clear the power and authority of each partner:** As part of the governance rules, clearly identify partner status if it is deemed necessary to differentiate among partners for legitimate reasons such as safeguarding against unfair advantage of any partner or partner group.

- **Maximize voluntary and comprehensive participation:** Determine what motivates key stakeholders to participate and design accordingly, emphasizing the comprehensive and inclusive nature of the partnership.
- **Ensure neutral management:** Consider establishing a secretariat or similar function housed in an organization or institution that is seen as “position neutral” to facilitate the work of the partnership in an efficient and trustworthy manner and manage resources in a way that optimally leverages funding.
- **Secure commitments for funding sufficient to launch the partnership, while also identifying long-term funding opportunities:** Acquire a sufficiently stable source of funding for the partnership to successfully launch with, at a minimum, strong indications of future support for longer-term funding commensurate with the partnership’s scope and duration. Securing long-term funding is an acknowledged challenge, and in some cases depends on demonstrating results early on to garner or justify additional support over time.
- **Build in the ability to adapt and course correct:** Accept that adaptability in strategy and implementation will likely be required to maximize effectiveness; learn from experience and adapt to changes in the external landscape.
- **Empower sustained change in the field:** Utilize the partnership to build capacity and empower those who will routinely implement the change on the ground after the partnership ends its work.
- **Guarantee transparency and accountability:** Build in transparency, reporting, and accountability around decision making, implementation, and progress. Third-party monitoring and evaluation can be a helpful tool in this regard.



## What Lies Ahead

Pursuing a voluntary partnership approach, even when the conditions are particularly well suited to that approach and the partnership is well designed and implemented, does not guarantee success. The above considerations and principles can nonetheless increase the chances that governments, non-governmental organizations, civil society, and business interests can effectively work together for the common good.

Learning from the collective experience of voluntary partnership efforts can increase the likelihood that future partnerships be pursued wisely to maximize the ability of partners to work together toward a common interest. As the global challenges faced become more complex and interdependent, enhancing the ability to conceive, select, design, and operate voluntary partnerships will support the collective need to meet those challenges.

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

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The EPA Evaluation Report, *Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles: Evaluation of the Design and Implementation of the Lead Campaign*, December 2011, EPA-100-R-11-008, is available at: [www.epa.gov/evaluate/reports.htm](http://www.epa.gov/evaluate/reports.htm)

A 2010 study conducted by California State University assessed the global benefits of phasing out leaded fuel. The study found that, among other benefits, over one million deaths are avoided each year and over US \$2 trillion (or 4% of global GDP) is saved by eliminating lead from fuel. For more information, see: Tsai, Peter L. and Thomas H. Hatfield, "Global Benefits from the Phase out of Leaded Fuel" *Journal of Environmental Health*, Volume 74, No. 5 December 2011

The United Nations Environment Programme's (UNEP's) independent Evaluation Office commissioned an evaluation to assess the impacts of the PCFV Lead Campaign in Sub-Saharan Africa and to learn lessons from the PCFV public-private partnership model. This evaluation, entitled *Outcome and Influence Evaluation of the UNEP Based Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles*, was published in 2010. The evaluation found that, as a very conservative estimate, it would have taken ten years rather than five to achieve the elimination of lead from fuel in Sub-Saharan Africa in the absence of PCFV. It further found that the role of PCFV contributed in several ways to the phase out. This report is available at: <http://www.unep.org/transport/pcfV/PDF/leadphaseoutreport.pdf>

Information on the **Partnership for Clean Fuels and Vehicles** is available at: <http://www.unep.org/transport/pcfV/>

Information contained in this document is based on materials provided to EPA by Ross & Associates Environmental Consulting, Ltd. under subcontract to Industrial Economics, Inc. for the US EPA Evaluation Support Division and the Office of International and Tribal Affairs. Anna Williams, the lead evaluator for this project, can be contacted at [anna.williams@ross-assoc.com](mailto:anna.williams@ross-assoc.com).