

**NAVAL FACILITIES  
ENGINEERING  
COMMAND**



**CONSTRUCTION PROJECT  
PARTNERING  
SYSTEM**

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## **1. PARTNERING OVERVIEW AND GOALS**

Partnering is a collaborative effort and a long-term commitment between two or more organizations for the purpose of achieving specific business objectives by maximizing the effectiveness of each participant's resources in delivering the client's requirements. This requires changing traditional "individualized" relationships to a "shared culture" relationship without regard to organizational boundaries. The partnering relationship is based upon trust, dedication to common goals, an understanding of each other's individual expectations and values, and a full commitment to success. Benefits include improved communication, efficiency and cost effectiveness, increased opportunity for innovation, and the continuous improvement of product quality and services.

The NAVFAC Construction Project Partnering System applies these concepts to the construction delivery process. By employing partnering on our projects, we seek to maximize the opportunity to achieve client success. Client success is measured by how well the project meets the client's operational requirements ("scope"), financial constraints ("budget"), schedule constraints ("time"), and quality needs ("quality"), as well as meeting everyone's desires to employ appropriate levels of Operational Risk Management ("safety").

All NAVFAC construction projects will use partnering.

## **2. NAVFAC CONSTRUCTION PROJECT PARTNERING SYSTEM**

**PARTNERING = ATTITUDE + COMMITMENT + PROCESS**

The NAVFAC Construction Project Partnering System involves an attitude, a commitment, and a process. The attitude component of partnering is consistent regardless of the project's characteristics. The commitment component assures that the project is completed to the client's requirements. The process component deals with the steps or activities that support the government-contractor-client partnership during performance of the construction contract. The partnering process will vary depending on the characteristics (e.g. scope, value, complexity, etc.) and needs unique to the specific construction project. Partnering does not begin or end with the formal partnering sessions. It is a philosophy on how our business is managed through the collaborative efforts of the ROICC, the contractor, the client, the user, the EFD/A and our consultants.

The attitude, commitment and processes that you use to conduct the day-to-day management of your contracts is where the agreements made during the formal partnering sessions are really put to the test.

**a. PARTNERING ATTITUDE**

“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress, working together is success.”

-Henry Ford

The NAVFAC team has great influence over the outcome of the project, the level of client satisfaction, and the success of the contractor. The team members, who work in the construction project delivery process, must maintain an attitude that is committed to the goals of partnering. This means that the NAVFAC team must take the lead in working with the other partners to remove unnecessary roadblocks that stifle success. To a great degree, this is accomplished through effective communication, proactive contract administration, mutual trust, honesty, integrity, cooperation, open-mindedness, and the courage to do the right thing. The NAVFAC team has the responsibility to ensure that the contract terms are met, that the contractor is fairly compensated and evaluated, and that the client fully participates as a stakeholder in the partnership. Our contractor partners must always be treated fairly and with respect. We want our contractor partners to make a reasonable profit and be successful so that they can help us achieve client success now and in the future. Legal and ethical principles are never compromised.

**b. PARTNERING COMMITMENT**

By preparing and signing the PARTNERING CHARTER at the initial partnering session, the stakeholders commit to the stated, and agreed to, requirements; i.e. building a quality project in accordance with the contract, delivering on time, staying within the available budget, protecting the environment, minimizing inconvenience to the public, communicating openly and honestly on all issues, trusting each other, building a strong partnership, resolving problems quickly and at the lowest level, and assuring a safe worksite. A partnering commitment entails a long-term dedication to the partnering principles and processes at all times and on every project.

**c. PARTNERING PROCESS**

At NAVFAC, all construction projects will be done using a partnering process. To accomplish this goal, three distinct partnering process levels, A through C, have been established. A project's characteristics determine the process level to be used. In addition, there are several partnering actions for the entire team that shall be used for all projects, regardless of the process level. These are: a) meet periodically to review the contractor's performance of project requirements; b) to assess the Government's performance of its responsibilities; c) to provide information on the project's progress to the client; d) check for any concerns.

(1) Project Partnering Levels

One of the following process levels shall be used based on the characteristics of the project. If the partners have an existing, highly effective relationship, built on recent partnerships, they may agree to use a more appropriate process level.

***Level A:*** (Generally, for projects with one or more of these characteristics - high risk, high visibility, compressed performance period, technically complex, over \$3M)

Level A partnering is facilitated by a consultant facilitator. Different facilitators should be used as frequent use of one particular facilitator, with the same client and contractor, may limit the synergy of the partnership due to an over-familiarity with points of view and expectations. The process consists of an initial session and follow-on sessions; see Initial and Follow-on Partnering Sessions paragraphs for details.

***Level B:*** (Generally, for projects with average risk and visibility, non-compressed schedule, and a value between \$100K and \$3M)

This level of partnering requires an in-house facilitator who is not a member of the ROICC team that will administer the contract. The facilitator could be an employee of the EFD/A, another ROICC, another government agency, or from a contractor association. Should an in-house facilitator not be available, a consultant facilitator could be used. If either the client or the contractor is new to NAVFAC, Level A partnering should be considered even though the characteristics of the project may indicate Level B. All project stakeholders will meet for an initial session of sufficient duration for everyone to reach an understanding of the partnering principles, see Partnering Overview and Goals. The initial session can be held in conjunction with the preconstruction conference or as soon as possible after the

preconstruction conference but before construction work begins; see Initial and Follow-on Partnering Session paragraphs for details.

***Level C:*** (Generally, for projects with a value less than \$100 K; i.e. small delivery orders, task orders, job orders, BPAs, and other small contracts)

This level of partnering is an informal introduction to partnering concepts and benefits. It should become a part of the preconstruction conference. The senior ROICC person present will lead the discussion. Brief follow-on sessions should be held, as needed, to discuss issues relevant to the execution of the project, to resolve problems that have surfaced since the last session, and to discuss contractor performance; see Initial and Follow-on Partnering Sessions paragraphs for details.

(2) PRE-AWARD

(a) Project planning:

The ROICC must be an active participant on the project planning team and ensure that the requirement for partnering is in the specifications.

The following text is for **Levels A and B** partnering:

*“In order to most effectively accomplish this contract, the government requires the formation of a cohesive partnership with the contractor and its subcontractors. In addition, other key personnel, including the client who will occupy the facility, the designer-of-record, principal individuals from the Government, the project sponsor, and representative(s) of the facility owner will also be invited to participate in the partnering process. The partnership will strive to draw on the strengths of each organization in an effort to achieve a quality project done right the first time, within budget, on schedule, without any lost-time mishaps, and with the contractor making a reasonable profit. It should be anticipated that the initial session will be one-day minimum and the follow-on sessions, held once every three months or as agreed to by the partners, will be half-day minimum. Although subject to bilateral agreement before the initial session, it may prove beneficial to hold the partnering sessions away from the project site location. This will minimize interruptions during the sessions and allow the members of the partnership to enhance working relationships through discussions and interaction.*

*All participants should consider the cost of meals, lodging and transportation if an out-of-town site is selected. Participation by key members of the prime and subcontractor teams,*

*including senior management, is required. Costs associated with the partnering effort, including facilitator, meeting room, audio-visual equipment, costs of refreshments and working meals, will be paid for by the contractor. The cost of other meals, lodging, and transportation, not directly associated with the formation and maintenance of the partnership, will be the responsibility of each of the partnering participants.”*

The following text is for **Level C** partnering:

*“In order to most effectively accomplish this contract, the government requires the formation of a cohesive partnership with the contractor and its subcontractors. This partnership will strive to draw on the strengths of each organization in an effort to achieve a quality project done right the first time, within budget, on schedule, without any lost-time mishaps, and with the contractor making a reasonable profit. The location, length, and frequency of the initial and follow-on sessions will be determined by the partners. Partnering sessions shall be held at or near the location of the ROICC office.”*

### (3) POST AWARD

#### (a) Starting the process

The AROICC/AREICC should contact the contractor, client, activity, designer-of-record, and EFD/A team to discuss implementation of partnering. Compensation to the designer-of-record for participation may be appropriate and the expense therefore should be borne by the party responsible for the project design; i.e. by the government if the project is D-B-B or by the contractor if the project is D-B. Check with the EFD/A Project Leader (PL) since the fees for participating in partnering may be included as an option to the designer-of-record's contract. When Level A or B partnering is specified, commence discussions with the contractor to select a facilitator and a location that is acceptable to both partners. The initial session must be scheduled as soon as possible after award of the contract. A partnership agreement, The Charter, should be in place as early as possible so issues arising, even before work begins, can be resolved using the issues resolution process.

#### (b) Paying for partnering

Partnering will ultimately benefit the project and the client. Therefore, the requirement to partner will be included in the contract. The contractor must bid this requirement and must pay all the costs of partnering including the facilitator, the facility (room, A/V

equipment, etc.), amenities, and refreshments. The cost for travel and per diem will be the responsibility of each organization.

(c) Setting up the partnering facility

The meeting room set-up, audio-visual equipment, other accessories, and schedule must be coordinated with the facilitator. The meeting room set-up is very important and must be given thorough consideration. The objective is to enable all participants to partake in the discussions in a comfortable setting that enhances communication and participation.

(d) Participants in partnering

Most partnerships consist of representatives from the ROICC office, the NAVFAC EFD/A, the contractor and major subcontractors, the client, the designer-of-record, and the activity. The Core Project Management Team, who will be working together daily during the course of construction, must be present during the initial and all follow-on partnering sessions. Individuals considered for attendance include:

[NOTE: For all levels, in bold type “**must attend**”, in normal type “recommend attend”]

**Level A:**

For NAVFAC: Officer in Charge of Construction (OICC), **Resident Officer in Charge of Construction (ROICC)**, Supervisory General Engineer (SGE), **AROICC/AREICC**, Supervisory Quality Assurance Representative (SQAR), **Quality Assurance Representative (QAR)**, **Administrative Contracting Officer (ACO)**, **Contract Specialist (CS)**, **EFD/A Project Leader (PL)**, EFD/A ROICC Advocate (RA), EFD/A Activity Liaison Officer (ALnO)

For the Contractor: **President** or **Vice President (VP)**, **Contractor Project Manager (KRPM)**, **Superintendent**, **Quality Control Manager (QCM)**, **Safety Manager**, representatives from major subcontractors

For the Client: Commanding Officer (CO), Executive Officer (XO), **Facility Manager**

For the Activity: Commanding Officer (CO), Executive Officer (XO), Public Works Officer (PWO), **Facility Manager**, representatives from affected tenants

For the Designer: **Principal, Architect-in-Charge/Engineer-in-Charge (AIC/EIC)**, representatives from critical consultants

**Level B:**

For NAVFAC: OICC, ROICC, SGE, **AROICC/AREICC**, SQAR, **QAR**, ACO, **CS**, **EFD/A PL**, EFD/A RA, EFD/A ALnO

For the Contractor: President or VP, **KRPM**, **Superintendent**, **QCM**, Safety Manager, representatives from major subcontractors

For the Client: CO, XO, **Facility Manager**

For the Activity: CO, XO, PWO, **Facilities Manager**, representatives from affected tenants

For the Designer: Principal, **AIC/EIC**, representatives from critical consultants

**Level C:**

For NAVFAC: OICC, ROICC, SGE, **AROICC/AREICC**, SQAR, **QAR**, ACO, **CS**, EFD/A PL, EFD/A RA, EFD/A ALnO

For the Contractor: President or VP, KRPM, **Superintendent**, **QCM**, Safety Manager

For the Client: CO, **Facility Manager**

For the Activity: CO, PWO, Facilities Manager, representatives from critical tenants

For the Designer: Principal, AIC/EIC, representatives from critical consultants

(e) Initial partnering sessions

The initial session is attended by representatives of all partners interested in the outcome of the project, called stakeholders. For Design-Bid-Build (D-B-B) projects, the initial session should be held within 30 calendar days following the preconstruction conference but before construction work begins; for Design-Build (D-B) projects, the initial session should be held within 30 calendar days following award of contract but before design work begins. The designer must participate. For task order contracts, the initial session, starting partnering for the whole contract, will follow the guidelines for Level A. A lower, appropriate level will be used for task orders issued against the contract. OCONUS activities have the discretion to adjust the level of partnering to accommodate local situations, available resources and security requirements. However, as a minimum, Level C partnering will be conducted on every project. Project security requirements must always be taken into consideration. A Partnering Charter (see sample outline, Attachment A) will be written during the initial session. This charter, signed by all stakeholders indicating agreements reached, will become the foundation of the partnership. Agreements on the use of the partnership evaluation and rating forms (see Attachment B and C), a problem resolution process (Attachment D), a plan of action for specific project problems, and a specific plan for continuing the partnership process are also reached.

- Agenda:**
1. Introductions, getting to know one another, developing relationships and learning job relationships. Will include some of the following:
    - a. Common sense communication
    - b. Negotiation and conflict resolution
  2. Discussion of the intent of partnering to ensure all parties have the same expectation and develop mission statement using goals and objectives
  3. Overview of project requirements by government personnel to include:
    - a. Basis of design
    - b. Requirements in the RFP
    - c. Critical items to assure a successful project
  4. Identify significant events, problems, issues, and opportunities by soliciting input from each stakeholder
    - a. Prioritize significant events, problems, issues, and opportunities
    - b. Discuss and resolve, or
    - c. Develop action plan
      - (1) Significant event, problem, issue, opportunity
      - (2) Responsibility for solution
      - (3) Date solution needed
  5. Develop problem resolution/escalation process
    - a. Identify lateral authority levels
    - b. Establish vertical authority levels
    - c. Development of ground rules (Five rules:)
      - (1) Resolve problems at the lowest level
      - (2) Either party escalates unresolved problems upward in a timely manner before delaying the project
      - (3) No jumping levels of authority
      - (4) Ignoring the problem or “no decision” is not acceptable
      - (5) Don’t make a decision you’re uncomfortable with, escalate upward
  6. Identify the core project management team
  7. Develop evaluation factors and process
  8. Sign charter
  9. Establish time and place for follow-on sessions

For Level A and B partnering process, the facilitator can make use of group dynamic techniques, like team building exercises, during the initial session and throughout the life of the partnership.

(f) Follow-on partnering sessions

A successful partnership depends on maintenance throughout the life of the contract. The initial session focused on changing the attitudes of the stakeholders from the traditional “us” versus “them” to the team-spirited “we”. These lessons need periodic reinforcement. Follow-on sessions for maintaining and nurturing the partnership must be planned to reinforce team-building skills, address significant issues, and to assess the health and progress of the partnership. These sessions are vital and must be attended by all members of the Core Project Management Team (stakeholders who attended the initial session and manage the project day-to-day; i.e. AROICC/AREICC, QAR, CS, KRPM, Superintendent, QCM, Facility Manager for the client, et al (see PARTICIPANTS IN PARTNERING)) to assess the health of the partnership, to solve issues that have surfaced since the last session, and to discuss contractor performance. If a facilitator was used for the initial session, the same facilitator should be used for the follow-on sessions. One follow-on session every three months is a good frequency to use. Flexibility is necessary. During the follow-on sessions, the partners will use the attached evaluation form (Attachment B) to rate each other's performance. If the contractor prefers, DD Form 2626, Performance Evaluation (Construction), can be used. All ratings will be read and discussed before the end of the session. These periodic ratings will become the foundation for the final performance rating of the contractor that will be prepared in accordance with NAVFAC Instructions 4335.4, Construction Contractors Performance Evaluation. This process will prevent any "surprises" at the end of the project. For D-B-B projects, they are held quarterly or as needed; for D-B projects, they are held quarterly or as needed during design and during construction with one special session held before construction begins.

(g) How to ensure that partnering efforts are successful

Some key points to help get the most out of Partnering:

1. Find Champions: Each organization in the partnership must have a champion. This person should fully embrace the partnering concept and is responsible for keeping his/her organization in the win-win mind set. Without champions, the partnership may flounder.

2. **The Right People:** Make sure that only the critical stakeholders attend, no more. Level A or B partnering should rarely exceed 20 people. However, do not turn anybody, who wants to attend, away.

3. **Pleasant Environment:** Find a location that is suitable for the task. Telephone calls, interruptions, noise, poor temperature control and other distractions are highly undesirable. Many partnerships elect to meet at locations that are remote from each other's places of business so that the partners can stay focused.

4. **Strong Facilitator:** For Level A and B partnering, a facilitator who has a good track record and is familiar with the construction business should be selected. Ask others, who have partnered, about their experiences with a potential facilitator. Regardless of the facilitator's background, a pre-session brief is desirable to familiarize the facilitator with the particulars of our processes. The pre-session brief for the facilitator should be presented by both the ROICC and the contractor. Select a variety of facilitators to avoid the appearance of preferential treatment.

5. **Follow-on:** Once you start the partnering process, you need to keep the ball rolling. Meet regularly and gather insight into the partner's successes and failures for future reference.

6. **Observe Standards of Conduct:** Although we are trying to develop a better relationship with our contractors during partnering, we must always observe the bedrock standards of conduct. Do not accept or encourage gifts, gratuities, or fraternize with contractors in a way that might be viewed by the public as a conflict of interest. Partnering is not a license to break rules. Be particularly sensitive to the selection of the meeting facility and location to avoid the appearance of misuse of funds.

7. **Realistic Expectations:** Do not expect partnering to be a panacea. Partnering a contract does not mean that the contractor should be expected to perform anything for free, nor does it mean that every change that the contractor might suggest will result in additional funding to the contract. A few people will never fully accept partnering concepts and relationships can deteriorate regardless of the level of effort and money invested. Partnering is a tool that is available to help us perform better. Partnering does not replace the contract documents.

8. **Buy-in:** Make sure that all partnering agreements made by the various sub-groups are submitted to the entire partnering group for adoption and that they conform to the requirements of the contract. Confidential agreements work against trust among the stakeholders.

9. Communicate openly with all stakeholders and ensure that the current status of the partnership is known by all.

(h) The benefits of partnering

There are many benefits that result from partnering, some monetary and some of aesthetic value. A few are mentioned here:

1. Reduced costs and exposure to claims
2. Timely delivery due to improved responsiveness and efficient utilization of resources
3. Expedited decision making with issue resolution process
4. Improved safety
5. Reduced rework and improved quality of product
6. Improved responsiveness
7. Joint evaluation process of the partnership
8. Periodic evaluation of all stakeholder's performance of each other
9. A final performance appraisal that is no "surprise"

(i) Where to get help with partnering

Each EFD/A has a designated point of contact (POC) for partnering. The ROICC Advocate/Construction Director will be the POC unless someone else has been named. A library of partnering references and a list of facilitators are available on the web should there be nothing available in the office. Here are a few sites:

<http://www.cecos.navy.mil> (Civil Engineer Corps Masters Theses)

<http://www.construction-institute.org>

<http://www.adr.org>

Talk with other people who have participated in partnering to obtain their personal insight.

**3. CHANGING THE DOCUMENT**

Recommendation for changes to this document should be addressed to NAVFAC EOC/OCR at (202) 685-9218.

## **SAMPLE PARTNERING CHARTER**

The mutual goals and objectives of the stakeholders form the partnering charter. The charter for each project, therefore, will be unique to that project. The charter may be a simple statement about communication and cooperation in all matters affecting the project and resolution of conflicts at the lowest level. The following sample provides an idea of objectives that might be included in a charter.

### ***The Charter for (Project)***

We are a team dedicated to providing a quality project in accordance with the contract. We are committed to honest and open communication, trusting each other, building of a strong partnership, resolving problem issues quickly and at the lowest level, a safe work site, producing a quality project, timely completion, protection of the environment, and minimizing inconvenience to the public.

#### **1. COMMUNICATION OBJECTIVES**

We intend to deal with each other in a fair, reasonable, trusting and professional manner including:

- a. Communicate and resolve problems within the terms of the contract
- b. Decision making at lowest possible level
- c. Open, honest communication
- d. Treat each other with mutual respect, resolve personal conflicts immediately, and avoid personal attacks
- e. Timely notification of future meetings
- f. Support of all meetings
- g. Not allowing grudges to interfere with professionalism

#### **2. CONFLICT RESOLUTION SYSTEM**

Step 1. When conflict is not resolved at the originating/lowest level within a set number of days, it will be taken to the next level of supervision.

Step 2. When conflict is not resolved at this level within the set number of days, it will be taken to the next higher level of supervision.

Attachment A (1 of 2)



**SAMPLE EVALUATION FORM**

Partnering Status Evaluator (Form to be filled out by the core project management team at the beginning of each follow-on session. Completed evaluation forms are reviewed and discussed as the last agenda item of the session.)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

<b><i>ITEMS</i></b>	<b><i>EVALUATIONS</i></b>			
	Contractor	ROICC	Client	Others
1. Quality of work				
2. Timeliness Meeting schedule RFIs Invoices Submittals				
3. Resolution of jobsite issues				
4. Communication Progress meetings Correspondence Oral (face-to-face)				
5. Safety program				
6. Partnership relations				

**PARTNERSHIP RATING FORM**

(To be used at every follow-on session)

Date \_\_\_\_\_

(Contract number, project title)

Ratings:

- 1 - Adversarial, forcing, avoidance, self interest
- 2 - in between 1 and 3
- 3 - Accommodating, compromising, moderate positions
- 4 - in between 3 and 5
- 5 - Synergistic, collaborative, win-win, team interest

**PARTNERING FACTORS**

**RATING**

- |  |       |
|--|-------|
| 1. Communication                             |       |
| a. Open, honest, timely                      | _____ |
| b. Active, empathetic, timely                | _____ |
| c. Number and tone of letters                | _____ |
| 2. Problem solving                           |       |
| a. Win-win synergistic                       | _____ |
| b. Solved at lowest level                    | _____ |
| c. Immediate escalation when not responsible | _____ |
| 3. Overall trust / candor                    | _____ |
| 4. Progress on goals                         | _____ |

OVERALL RATING \_\_\_\_\_

Key issues:

- 1. \_\_\_\_\_
- 2. \_\_\_\_\_
- 3. \_\_\_\_\_
- 4. \_\_\_\_\_
- 5. \_\_\_\_\_

**Sample Issue Resolution Ladder**

