

Partnering for success

Innovation is never a linear, straightforward process. It requires continuous rethinking, redesign and sometimes starting all over again. This process requires an enormous amount of courage and determination, and sometimes outside support.

Many VIA Water-supported innovations worked with different partners from the start to jointly

develop solutions to tackle urban water challenges.

Forging strong partnerships and collaborations with others from different sectors and backgrounds can facilitate the exchange of much needed expertise, resources and knowledge to help an innovation thrive. However, working successfully in partnership with others can be a

challenge, requiring a certain methodology and know-how.

To help guide other innovators embarking on a similar innovation journey, we have gathered the experiences and best practices from our innovators on how to effectively work with partners.

Key lessons learnt



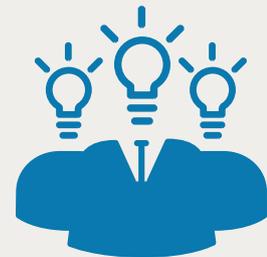
Select the right partners

based on their added value to the innovation and on a shared interest



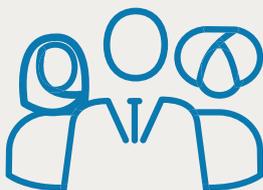
Be open to learning and sharing knowledge

with each other to get a fresh perspective and new ideas



Engage different types of partners

to provide support and expertise at different stages of an innovation



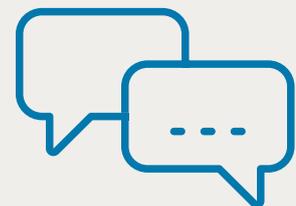
Acknowledge cultural differences

to foster a partnership based on understanding and synergy



Establish a signed agreement at the start

to define each partner's roles, expectations and responsibilities before, during and after a project



Communicate regularly

on progress and challenges to keep all partners engaged, involved and motivated

The *Innovator Insights* series shares valuable best practices from our VIA Water-supported innovators to help guide other innovators embarking on a similar journey. This series will provide practical input in relation to different themed topics that are important to the success of early-stage innovators.

Tips from our innovators

More project updates at www.viawater.nl/projects



Innovators: TriMark
Aquaculture Centre, Kumasi
Metropolitan Assembly, Waste
Enterprises Ltd.

Country: Ghana

Using wastewater to improve sanitation and produce fish

- Involve a public institution on your project to help tailor your goals to suit local/national interest
- Establish a signed partnership agreement at the start with all partners to define roles and responsibilities



Innovators: RAIN Foundation,
NIA, Acacia Water, AMREE,
SASOL Foundation, MTTI

Country: Kenya

Sponge City Kajiado

- Limit the number of partners: involving many partners for a small project is a challenge
- Identify partners with their own added value and knowledge of the local circumstances that the innovation is active in

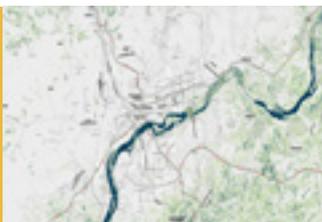


Innovators: Kaicedra
Consulting, Akvo Mali, Aikio
Corp, ADR Bamako

Country: Mali

Map Action

- Communicate to partners whenever there is a problem to jointly find a solution
- Be transparent on progress to keep everyone engaged



Innovators: FloodTags, Akvo,
Satelligence, Radboud
University, Mali Meteo

Country: Mali

Mapping and monitoring flood developments in Niger Delta

- Be really clear on each partner's input and output: what are everyone's roles and responsibilities?
- Select your partners wisely – only partner up if you believe in the cooperation



Innovators: Annemarieke
Mooijman Consulting, LCS
Promotion Int, CITT

Country: Mozambique

Biological Urban Sanitation (BUS) project

- Recognize your strengths and find support for the parts in which you are not strong
- Make sure that all partners clearly understand their role and responsibilities and put this in contracts and signed agreements
- Even if there is no innovation yet, make sure to have an agreement on intellectual property, patenting and copyrights

About VIA Water:

VIA Water supports projects with innovative solutions for water problems facing cities in eight African countries. Through the programme, these solutions can be brought to life: with financial support, but also with the help of the (online) learning community. At the moment, VIA Water has a full portfolio: over 60 projects are being implemented in Mali, Benin, Ghana, Rwanda, Kenya, Ethiopia, Senegal and Mozambique.

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