



# **Partnership and Coordination Framework**

Multi-Sectoral | Development-Humanitarian | Government-Led | Performance-Oriented

**Version Prog1.0  
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## Approval, Control, and Statement

### Approval

SN	Name	Position	Role	Signature	Date
2	Dr. Adamu Umar Usman	Managing Director/CEO	Final review/Recommendation		06 July 2024

### Document Version Control

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1	Version SI1.0	06 July 2024	NA	Dr. Adamu Umar	First Version

### Distribution List

SN	Location
1	AHNI HQ – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
2	AHNI Project Offices – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
3	AHNI State Offices – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
4	AHNI Cluster Offices – all Directorates, Departments, and Units
5	Donors
6	Board of Trustees

### Statement

***“This Partnership & Coordination Framework is approved to facilitate mutually beneficial partnership and networking between AHNI, GoN, Implementing Partners, Donors, CBOs/FBOs, and Communities effective 06 July 2024.”***

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## 1. Introduction

Achieving Health Nigeria Initiative (AHNi) is a national non-governmental organisation dedicated to strengthening Nigeria's health system and improving population health outcomes, particularly among vulnerable and underserved populations. AHNi designs and implements multi-sectoral programmes across HIV, tuberculosis, malaria, maternal and newborn health, nutrition, health security, livelihoods, climate governance, and health systems strengthening. These programmes are frequently delivered in fragile, hard-to-reach, and high-risk contexts that demand robust governance, accountability, and ethical standards.

This Partnership and Coordination Framework sets out how **AHNi** builds, manages, and governs partnerships with government institutions, funders, implementing partners, communities, and other stakeholders to deliver effective, accountable, and sustainable results across development and humanitarian contexts.

The framework reflects AHNi's multi-sector mandate and is anchored in government-defined national and state priorities, existing planning and budgeting instruments, and established coordination mechanisms. It provides a clear approach to partnership formation, role definition, decision-making, coordination, and accountability, ensuring that all engagements strengthen local systems, support continuity of services in fragile settings, and contribute to long-term institutional ownership and resilience.

## 2. Partnership Objective and Value Proposition

**Achieving Health Nigeria Initiative (AHNi)** builds and manages partnerships as a strategic mechanism for delivering measurable, sustainable impact across development and humanitarian contexts, guided by its organisational culture and values, encapsulated in **RIDAR — Respect, Integrity, Dedication, Accountability, and Responsiveness**. These values shape how AHNi engages with government institutions, implementing partners, communities, and other stakeholders, ensuring that partnerships are principled, mutually accountable, inclusive, and performance-oriented.

Through partnerships, AHNi advances government-defined development and humanitarian priorities by working respectfully within established national and state leadership structures, plans, and coordination mechanisms. Alignment with public policy frameworks, planning cycles, and budget instruments reflects AHNi's commitment to integrity and dedication, while promoting transparency and predictability in the use of public and partner resources.

AHNi leverages partnerships to deliver effective, context-appropriate interventions across sectors, combining technical expertise with deep community engagement. In development settings, partnerships focus on strengthening systems and improving service quality. In humanitarian and fragile contexts, they prioritise life-saving continuity, stabilisation, and early recovery. Across all contexts, AHNi embeds social accountability mechanisms, including community participation in planning and feedback, grievance redress, citizen monitoring, and routine disclosure of programme information, to ensure that services remain responsive to the needs, rights, and expectations of affected populations.

A core element of AHNi's partnership value proposition is the strengthening of institutional, community, and system capacities, grounded in accountability and mutual respect. Government institutions are supported to plan, coordinate, and deliver effectively; implementing partners contribute complementary expertise within clearly defined roles; and communities are engaged as active partners in design, delivery, and oversight. Social accountability approaches strengthen the link between communities and public institutions, enabling communities to voice concerns, track performance, and influence corrective actions through structured feedback loops.

Finally, AHNi structures partnerships to ensure sustainability beyond external support, demonstrating accountability to both public institutions and the communities they serve. This includes integrating interventions into government systems, supporting budget absorption and workforce readiness, institutionalising community engagement and accountability mechanisms, and defining clear transition and handover milestones.

In this context, partnerships are not an end in themselves, but a values-driven, socially accountable delivery mechanism through which AHNi translates priorities into results, strengthens trust between citizens and institutions, and advances durable, nationally aligned development and humanitarian outcomes consistent with its RIDAR culture.

### 3. Partnership Lifecycle: Building and Managing Relationships

AHHi applies to a structured and deliberate partnership lifecycle across all sectors and operating contexts to ensure alignment, effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability. This lifecycle provides a consistent framework for initiating, governing, adapting, and transitioning partnerships, while remaining flexible to contextual realities in both development and humanitarian settings.

#### a. Strategic Alignment and Partner Selection

Partnerships are initiated only where there is a clear and demonstrable alignment with national and state priorities, sector strategies, humanitarian response frameworks (where applicable), and locally articulated needs. This ensures that AHNi's engagements reinforce government leadership and contribute directly to agreed-upon public objectives, rather than to parallel or ad hoc initiatives.

Partner selection is guided by an assessment of comparative advantage, including technical expertise, operational capacity, geographic presence, institutional credibility, and demonstrated ability to work within government-led systems. Attention is given to a partner's transition potential, including their willingness and capacity to support system strengthening, local ownership, and eventual handover.

For community partnerships, AHNi prioritises legitimacy, representativeness, and social trust. Community structures and organisations are engaged based on their acceptance by the community, inclusiveness, accountability to their constituencies, and meaningful participation in planning, delivery, and oversight. This approach strengthens social accountability and ensures interventions are grounded in local realities.

#### b. Co-Design and Role Definition

All partnerships are established through a **co-design process** involving government institutions, implementing partners, beneficiaries/communities, and other relevant stakeholders. Co-design ensures that interventions are context-appropriate, feasible, and aligned with existing plans, systems, and capacities.

Roles and responsibilities are explicitly defined to **complement rather than substitute** government or community functions. Government institutions retain stewardship and decision-making authority over public systems, while AHNi and its partners provide technical, operational, or catalytic support within clearly agreed boundaries. Community roles are defined to enable participation, feedback, and oversight without transferring statutory responsibilities.

From inception, partnerships incorporate **sustainability considerations**, including capacity transfer, institutional strengthening, and clear pathways for integration into government or community-led systems. Expected handover arrangements, milestones, and responsibilities are articulated early to avoid dependency and ambiguity.

#### c. Formalisation and Operationalisation

Partnerships are formalised through appropriate instruments such as **Memoranda of Understanding (MoUs), co-implementation agreements, teaming agreements, technical assistance frameworks, or community compacts**, depending on the nature of the relationship. These instruments provide clarity and predictability, and typically define:

- Scope and objectives of the partnership
- Roles and responsibilities of each party

- Decision-making authority and escalation pathways
- Coordination and communication arrangements
- Financial, programmatic, and fiduciary accountabilities
- Monitoring, reporting, and review expectations

Operationalisation is achieved through jointly agreed workplans, timelines, and performance indicators that align with government planning cycles, operational plans, and available resources.

#### d. Performance Management and Adaptation

Partnership implementation is accompanied by **routine performance management**, including joint reviews, supportive supervision, and learning forums. Performance is assessed against agreed outputs, outcomes, and system-strengthening milestones rather than activity completion alone.

AHNI promotes a culture of **adaptive management**, whereby partnerships are adjusted in response to evidence, contextual shifts, emerging risks, or changes in system readiness. In humanitarian and fragile settings, this includes rapid adaptation to evolving needs while maintaining alignment with longer-term recovery and development objectives.

Social accountability mechanisms, such as community feedback, grievance redress processes, and participatory monitoring, inform performance reviews and corrective actions, ensuring responsiveness to affected populations.

#### e. Transition, Institutionalisation, or Exit

Each partnership includes **clear criteria and triggers** for transition to government or community ownership, institutionalisation within existing systems, or orderly exit. These criteria may relate to capacity thresholds, system functionality, funding arrangements, or changes in context.

Transition and exit decisions are **planned, communicated, and managed** to protect service continuity, maintain stakeholder trust, and safeguard gains. Where full transition is not immediately feasible, phased approaches are adopted, with progressively reduced external support and increased local ownership.

Through this lifecycle approach, AHNI ensures that partnerships remain purposeful, accountable, and time-bound, supporting immediate delivery needs while systematically strengthening systems and relationships for sustained impact.

## 4. Partnership Typology and Management Approach

AHNI applies a differentiated partnership typology to reflect the distinct roles, mandates, and comparative advantages of its partners, while ensuring coherence, accountability, and sustainability across all engagements. Each partnership type is managed with a clear purpose, defined roles, and tailored governance arrangements, consistent with AHNI's values and nationally anchored approach.

#### a. Government Partnerships (Primary Stewardship)

**Purpose:** Policy leadership, planning, budgeting, and system ownership. Partnerships with government institutions form the cornerstone of AHNI's engagement model. Government entities at the federal, state, and local levels retain **primary stewardship and decision-making authority** over public policy priorities, standards, and systems. This includes leadership in planning, budgeting, regulation, and oversight across sectors.

AHNI's role in government partnerships is to provide technical assistance, implementation support, and capacity strengthening that reinforce, rather than replace, public institutions. Support is delivered through co-design, embedded assistance, mentoring, and joint implementation, with a deliberate focus on strengthening government systems, workforce

capacity, and coordination functions.

Joint planning processes explicitly link AHNi-supported activities to **State Development Strategies, sector plans, Annual Operational Plans (AOPs), and budget frameworks**, including Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs) where applicable. This ensures that interventions are fiscally aware, operationally feasible, and aligned with government priorities and timelines.

**Sustainability contribution:** Government partnerships lead to institutionalised systems, improved public-sector capacity, stronger stewardship, and greater integration of interventions into government plans and budgets, enabling continuity beyond external support.

#### b. Implementing and Technical Partners

**Purpose:** Complementarity, scale, and technical depth. AHNi engages implementing and technical partners to complement government systems and enhance delivery through specialised expertise, operational reach, or innovation. These partnerships are structured to optimise scale and quality while avoiding duplication and fragmentation.

A **clear division of labour** is established based on comparative advantage, with roles explicitly defined as lead, supporting, or advisory. Responsibilities, deliverables, and decision rights are articulated upfront to ensure clarity and accountability.

Coordination with implementing and technical partners is operationalised through **joint workplans, harmonised tools, and shared indicators**, aligned with government-led priorities and reporting structures. Regular coordination and performance reviews ensure alignment among partners operating in the same geography or sector.

**Sustainability contribution:** These partnerships support harmonised delivery, efficient resource use, knowledge transfer, and reduced fragmentation, while reinforcing government-led coordination and system coherence.

#### c. Community and Civil Society Partnerships

**Purpose:** Ownership, access, accountability, and resilience. Community and civil society partnerships are central to ensuring that interventions are locally relevant, inclusive, and responsive. AHNi engages communities, CSOs, FBOs, and community-based structures as **active partners**, not merely beneficiaries.

Communities participate meaningfully in **planning, implementation, and monitoring**, contributing local knowledge, facilitating access, and supporting behaviour change and service uptake. CSOs and community structures serve as critical bridges between public institutions and populations, particularly in underserved, fragile, or hard-to-reach settings.

Structured **feedback and social accountability mechanisms**, such as community dialogues, participatory monitoring, and grievance redress processes, ensure that community perspectives inform government and partner decision-making, enabling corrective action and continuous improvement.

**Sustainability contribution:** These partnerships strengthen demand creation, trust, social accountability, and community resilience, supporting continuity of services, local ownership, and long-term institutional legitimacy.

### 5. Roles, Decision-Making Authority, and Accountability

A clear definition of roles, decision-making authority, and accountability is central to the effectiveness, coherence, and sustainability of AHNi's partnerships. These arrangements are designed to reinforce government leadership, ensure disciplined execution, and promote mutual accountability across all partners and communities.

## a. Roles

- **Government:** Government institutions at federal, state, and local levels provide **policy leadership and stewardship**. Their roles include setting priorities, approving plans and budgets, defining standards, coordinating actors, and ensuring regulatory oversight. Government retains long-term ownership of public systems and outcomes, including responsibility for sustaining interventions beyond external support.
- **Achieving Health Nigeria Initiative (AHNi):** AHNi acts as a **convener and technical partner**, supporting government and other stakeholders to translate priorities into results. Its roles include technical leadership, capacity strengthening, facilitation of coordination, quality assurance, performance monitoring, and support for transition and institutionalisation. AHNi also plays a catalytic role in aligning partners, promoting learning, and embedding accountability and social accountability mechanisms.
- **Implementing and Technical Partners:** Partners are responsible for the **delivery of agreed functions** in line with defined scopes of work and comparative advantage. This may include implementation support, technical assistance, innovation, or specialised services. Partners are accountable for achieving agreed outputs and outcomes, adhering to standards, and contributing to joint learning and system strengthening.
- **Communities:** Communities play an active role through **participation, oversight, feedback, and local action**. They contribute to planning, support implementation, monitor service delivery, and provide structured feedback through social accountability mechanisms. Community engagement strengthens relevance, trust, and responsiveness, and reinforces the legitimacy of public institutions and partner interventions.

## b. Decision-Making Authority

- **Strategic decisions**, including policy direction, priority setting, and alignment with national and state plans, rest with **government-led structures** and coordination platforms.
- **Operational decisions**, such as sequencing of activities, implementation modalities, and routine adjustments, are made **jointly** by government, AHNi, and partners within the scope of approved workplans, AOPs, and agreements.
- In **emergency or humanitarian contexts**, limited and time-bound delegated authority may be applied to enable rapid response. Such arrangements are explicitly defined, documented, and subject to clear timelines and conditions for reversion to routine government-led systems as stability improves.

## c. Accountability

AHNi's partnerships operate on the principle of **mutual accountability**, supported by clear, transparent, and enforceable mechanisms:

- Accountability is defined through agreed indicators, milestones, and review schedules, aligned with government monitoring frameworks and planning cycles.
- Financial, programmatic, and performance accountabilities are articulated in formal instruments such as MoUs, co-implementation agreements, and technical assistance frameworks.
- Routine joint reviews, supervision, and performance dialogues provide platforms for tracking progress, identifying risks, and agreeing on corrective actions.
- Clear escalation pathways are established to address underperformance, fiduciary risk, safeguarding concerns, or contextual shocks, ensuring timely resolution and protection of service continuity.

## 6. Coordination and Governance Mechanisms

AHNi's coordination and governance mechanisms are designed to ensure alignment with government priorities, coherence across partners and sectors, disciplined execution, and sustained performance in both development and humanitarian contexts. These mechanisms intentionally build on **existing government-led structures and processes**, reinforcing national and sub-national leadership, avoiding parallel systems, and enabling effective coordination, oversight, accountability, and learning across sectors.

#### a. Strategic Governance

Strategic governance is anchored in **government-led coordination forums** at national, state, and local levels. These forums are aligned with established development plans, sector strategies, and fiscal frameworks, including **State Development Strategies, Medium-Term Expenditure Frameworks (MTEFs), and annual budgets**. They serve as the primary platforms for priority setting, alignment of partner contributions, and stewardship of public systems.

Through these structures, **Achieving Health Nigeria Initiative (AHNi)** supports periodic **strategic reviews** to assess alignment with government priorities, progress against agreed objectives, performance trends, and sustainability considerations. These reviews also provide structured opportunities to identify and manage emerging risks, recalibrate priorities in response to contextual or fiscal shifts, and reinforce mutual accountability among government, partners, and communities.

#### b. Operational Coordination

Operational coordination focuses on translating strategic priorities into effective, timely execution. AHNi supports **Joint Reviews of Annual Operational Plans (AOPs)**, routine supportive supervision, and the development, implementation, and follow-up of remediation plans to address operational bottlenecks, capacity gaps, and performance shortfalls.

Where interventions span multiple sectors, AHNi facilitates **cross-sector coordination** to ensure coherence and synergy, for example, aligning livelihoods, health, nutrition, WASH, education, social protection, and related interventions within the same geographic or community context. This approach reduces fragmentation, improves sequencing and complementarities, and maximises collective impact at the frontline.

#### c. Technical Coordination

Technical coordination is achieved through **sector-specific and cross-sector technical working groups, task teams, and communities of practice** convened or recognised by the government. These platforms enable harmonisation of technical approaches, standards, tools, and implementation modalities, while providing space for joint problem-solving, peer learning, and innovation.

AHNi promotes the use of **shared tools, standards, and learning platforms** to strengthen consistency, quality, and comparability across partners. Evidence generated through implementation experience, routine monitoring and evaluation, and community feedback is systematically channelled into these technical platforms to inform continuous improvement, adaptive management, and policy-relevant learning.

#### d. Humanitarian Context Adaptation

In humanitarian and fragile contexts, AHNi fully integrates into government-recognised emergency coordination mechanisms, such as incident management systems and sector coordination structures, where available. Coordination arrangements are adapted to enable timely, life-saving action while maintaining a clear line of sight to government leadership, accountability, and longer-term recovery objectives.

AHNi deliberately **avoids establishing parallel governance structures** beyond what is required for immediate life-saving response. Where temporary arrangements are unavoidable, they are explicitly time-bound, clearly governed, and designed to transition into routine government systems as conditions stabilise.

**Early transition planning** is embedded within humanitarian coordination from the outset, linking emergency response activities to recovery, development planning, and existing state systems. This approach ensures continuity of services, protects system integrity, strengthens institutional ownership, and accelerates the shift from humanitarian response to sustainable, government-owned delivery.

## 7. Performance Assurance and Learning

AHNI's approach to performance assurance and learning is designed to promote accountability, continuous improvement, and long-term sustainability across all partnerships and sectors. Performance management is embedded within routine coordination and governance processes, ensuring that delivery remains aligned with government priorities, responsive to contextual realities, and focused on results rather than activities alone.

**Routine performance reviews** are conducted at both operational and strategic levels. Operational reviews focus on implementation progress, service quality, risk management, and resolution of bottlenecks, while strategic reviews assess alignment with national and state priorities, progress toward intended outcomes, system-strengthening milestones, and sustainability. These reviews are conducted jointly with the government, partners, and, where appropriate, community representatives, reinforcing mutual accountability.

AHNI supports the use of **joint dashboards, scorecards, and transition readiness tools** to provide timely, transparent, and evidence-based insights into performance. These tools track agreed indicators, milestones, and capacity benchmarks across sectors and contexts, enabling early identification of underperformance, informed decision-making, and targeted corrective action. Transition readiness tools are used to assess system maturity, institutional capacity, and preparedness for handover or scale within government and community systems.

A strong emphasis is placed on **learning and institutionalisation**. Lessons emerging from implementation experience, performance reviews, evaluations, and community feedback are systematically documented, synthesised, and shared through coordination platforms and technical working groups. These lessons inform adaptive management, guide policy dialogue, and support the institutionalisation of effective practices within government systems, partner operations, and community structures.

## 8. Partnership Risk Management Matrix

Risk Category	Risk Description	Potential Impact	Prevention / Mitigation Measures	Remediation / Corrective Actions	Risk Ownership
<b>Strategic Alignment Risk</b>	Misalignment of partner activities with national or state priorities, planning cycles, or fiscal realities	Reduced government ownership, low sustainability, weak relevance	Mandatory alignment to State Development Strategies, AOPs, MTEFs; government-led strategic reviews	Joint reprogramming; redesign or suspension of non-aligned activities	Government / Achieving Health Nigeria Initiative (AHNi)
<b>Donor / Funder Verticalization Risk</b>	Donor insistence on vertical, stand-alone implementation models	Parallel systems, fragmentation, weak institutionalisation	Early donor engagement; implicit integration by design; evidence-based justification of system-aligned approaches	Time-bound verticality with transition triggers; parallel reporting not delivery; documented transition plans	AHNi (with donor engagement)
<b>Government Capacity and Ownership Risk</b>	Limited institutional capacity or competing priorities reduce engagement	Delayed implementation, weak transition readiness	Co-design; embedded TA; phased capacity strengthening	Extended transition timelines; targeted capacity support; escalation to higher-level forums	Government / AHNi
<b>Partner Fragmentation and Duplication</b>	Multiple partners operating without coordination	Inefficiency, overlap, conflicting approaches	Clear partnership typology; division of labour; joint workplans and indicators	Role rationalisation: consolidation or reassignment of responsibilities	AHNi
<b>Role and Decision Ambiguity</b>	Unclear roles, authority, or escalation pathways	Delays, conflict, and accountability gaps	Explicit role definition and decision rights in MoUs and agreements	Formal amendment of agreements; mediation through governance structures	AHNi
<b>Performance and Quality Risk</b>	Underperformance or failure to meet agreed standards	Poor outcomes, reputational risk	Joint dashboards; routine supervision; performance milestones	Time-bound performance improvement plans; reallocation or disengagement	AHNi / Partners
<b>Community Exclusion and Weak Social Accountability</b>	Inadequate community participation and feedback	Low uptake, mistrust, inequitable outcomes	Structured community engagement, feedback, and grievance mechanisms	Corrective engagement plans; strengthened feedback-to-action loops	AHNi / Communities
<b>Humanitarian–Development</b>	Emergency response creates parallel systems	Weak recovery, erosion of public systems	Integration into government-recognised	Structured handover to routine systems; recovery-	AHNi / Government

<b>Disconnect</b>			emergency coordination; early transition planning	focused reprogramming	
<b>Fiduciary and Compliance Risk</b>	Financial mismanagement, safeguarding, or compliance failures	Loss of funding, reputational damage	Strong fiduciary controls; due diligence; compliance clauses	Investigation; sanctions; suspension or termination of partnership	AHNI
<b>Political, Security, or Contextual Shock</b>	Political instability, insecurity, or disasters disrupt delivery	Service disruption, staff risk	Context analysis; flexible planning; contingency measures	Adaptive reprogramming; phased re-entry or transition	AHNI / Government