



TIPS OF THE TRIANGLE

EXPLORING THREE-WAY PARTNERSHIPS
FOR ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT



This publication is part of a series of MAVA learning products developed to reflect on and share the foundation’s learnings about institution processes and ways of working at foundation level, including challenges faced in carrying our conservation actions – to inspire donor strategies and best practices.

This briefing was produced by the MAVA Foundation and Stone Soup Consulting.

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INTRODUCTION

The MAVA Foundation was born of the passion and vision of its founder, Dr Luc Hoffmann, a naturalist and philanthropist who believed fiercely in the protection of the planet's wild splendour. As a foundation, we do [much more than simply funding conservation partners](#). We actively accompany our partners on their conservation journey, helping them to develop the skills they need, and strengthening their ability to deliver positive impact.

With MAVA ceasing its funding at the end of 2022, our legacy relies on our partners being able to continue delivering conservation. That is why MAVA's Strategic Plan 2016-2022 has focused in part on the organisational development (OD) of our partners, and why over the past six years, we have devoted a significant amount of time and energy to ensuring the resilience, autonomy, and sustainability of our partners and their projects. Partners considered critical to meeting our conservation goals have received OD-specific grants in addition to funding for conservation. A number of these have supported three-way OD partnerships between MAVA, the partner, and a dedicated consultant.

Successful OD partnerships depend on a fine balance being struck between multiple factors. And in this briefing, after six years of implementing a wide variety of OD partnerships with different types of partners and consultants, we offer reflections from MAVA, our partners, and consultants, and share lessons and insights for the wider philanthropic community. We have produced it with invaluable support from Liliana Dias and Agustina O'Farrell of [Stone Soup consulting](#) (see the Methodology box on p.6).

First, we present three-way OD partnerships as a signature approach. Then we describe the OD process, its holistic nature, and the specific principles used by MAVA. And then we discuss the main dimensions of three-way OD partnerships: operational, ethical, and relational, and explore questions of exit and impact. Based on concrete experiences from partners, consultants, and MAVA as a donor, we explore challenges and advantages from each party's perspective. Finally, we offer key recommendations for successful three-way OD partnerships to inspire fellow donors to deliver solid and effective OD support.

We strongly believe that investing in OD is a smart move. Strengthening the sustainability and effectiveness of the organisations they fund enhances and sustains donor impact. Further insights on supporting OD can be found in a sister briefing from MAVA and four other foundations: [Funding Organisational Development: a smart investment to multiply impact \(2020\)](#).



It is important to understand how OD is different from capacity building. Where capacity building focuses on strengthening specific organisational areas and developing technical knowledge, OD takes a holistic view of an organisation and its broader context. OD seeks to improve an organisation as a whole, and done properly, its impact is more profound than a series of separate capacity building interventions. OD does not target individual employees and should not be seen by staff as an audit, performance evaluation, or assessment process.

THREE-WAY OD PARTNERSHIPS – A MAVA SIGNATURE APPROACH

We developed our signature approach to three-way OD partnerships in pursuit of systemic impact. It is a dynamic, hands-on approach through which MAVA, partner organisations, and consultants work together to guarantee an OD process that delivers positive impact for both organisations and society. We wanted to proactively address challenges and difficulties often encountered in traditional OD work, such as lack of funding, lack of continuity of support, and lack of flexibility in dealing with changing partner needs and priorities. Bringing in dedicated consultants to support OD implementation, and building a three-way approach, appeared to be a promising option.

By using this approach, we wanted to temper the direct influence we might have, as a donor with a partner. By adding a consultant to the OD partnership, we sought to balance the power dynamic between all three parties, and to create a safe space for the partner to be more comfortable to share weaknesses and challenges with the consultant, and with us only if needed.

At MAVA, our OD Manager, Simon Mériaux, leads all OD activities. Part of the cross-cutting Impact and Sustainability Unit, he is independent from but in close contact with our regional programme teams. In partner organisations, OD activities are typically led by the CEO, with involvement of staff and Board members. All consultants are independent, accompanying partners over several years. Working closely together, the three parties build open, transparent relationships which form the basis of strong and sustainable three-way OD partnerships.

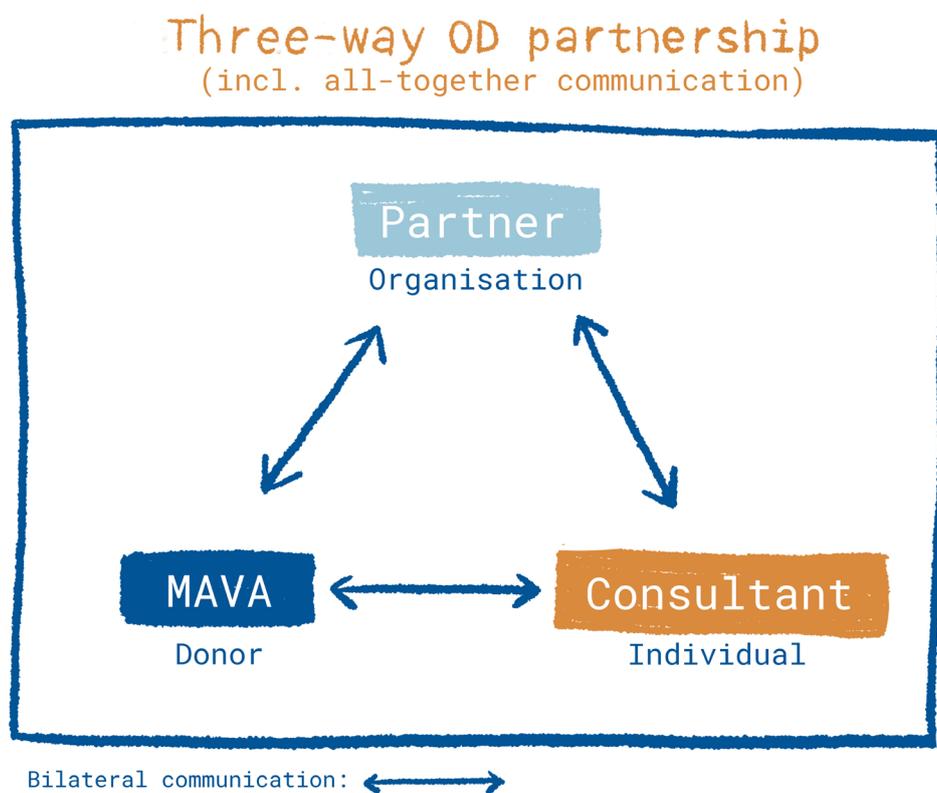


Fig 1. Three-way partnership



In this briefing, ‘partner’ refers to an organisation that implements projects with the financial support of a ‘donor’ (in this case, MAVA). A ‘consultant’ refers to an expert, independent from both donor and partner, who supports the partner in building and implementing its OD action plan.

Since 2016, we have developed about 20 OD partnerships. Five of these were long-term, three-way partnerships, each implemented over a period of roughly six years, and each involving a different consultant. The other 15 OD partnerships focused on specific OD needs through time-limited interventions and did not require either the engagement of a consultant throughout or a three-way partnership.

“There is no single way to do OD and it is very interesting to capture the advantages but also the challenges of the OD three-way partnerships, as a specific approach!”

Liliana Dias, Stone Soup Consulting - Principal Consultant



Methodology

The insights in this briefing draw on an in-depth desk review, and interviews with all parties involved in three different three-way OD partnerships. Key lessons were developed during a workshop with all parties in November 2021.

The review focuses on three partner organisations, Turtle Foundation, Fundação Tartaruga, and Fundação Maio Biodiversidade, each of whom were accompanied by three different consultants, Cláudia Pedra, Mathilde Bullot, and Rosa Matos. All parties are presented at the end of this briefing.

Although the review focuses specifically on three partnerships, the discussion also draws on the breadth of experience gained by MAVA and consultants working with other organisations in different contexts.

“The opportunity to have partners, the donor and the consultants together in one room was a powerful way to draw insights from our experiences”

Agustina O’Farrell, Stone Soup Consulting Consultant



OD AS A HOLISTIC APPROACH

OD consists of activities designed to strengthen an organisation’s core functions such as operations, governance, fundraising, impact management, communication, and human resource management. Crucially, activities are delivered through a process led by the organisation itself.

OD provides an opportunity for a partner to take the time to reflect on and clearly define or redefine its vision and mission – what it wants to become, where it wants to go, and how it envisages getting there. It is a holistic approach that explores and clarifies an organisation’s *raison d’être* and how it operates so that it can better fulfil its purpose.

Developed and delivered in partnership, OD also provides an opportunity for open and transparent discussion between partner, consultant, and donor, on structural and strategic matters.

At MAVA, OD is typically delivered through a structured partnership based on four distinct stages:

1. carrying out a baseline study (organisational ‘health-check’);
2. developing an OD action plan;
3. implementing and monitoring the OD action plan;
4. reporting on progress and results.

Please see the Fig. 2 Overview of MAVA’s OD process on page 8.

An OD ‘health-check’ forms part of a needs assessment period, allowing a partner and consultant to prioritise areas in need of further development. This baseline analysis takes time – two months on average – and can take different forms like a self-assessment or a participatory organisational health-check facilitated by the consultant. This process is not an audit, nor does it judge an organisation. It is a practical process that enables all three parties to understand where an organisation stands at a particular point in time and what might be done to improve and move forward.

Having together identified a partner’s OD needs and developed an action plan, we assess which activities we will fund, and which may present an opportunity to attract and involve other funders, who may be able to contribute to a partner’s medium to long-term sustainability.

MAVA's OD process overview

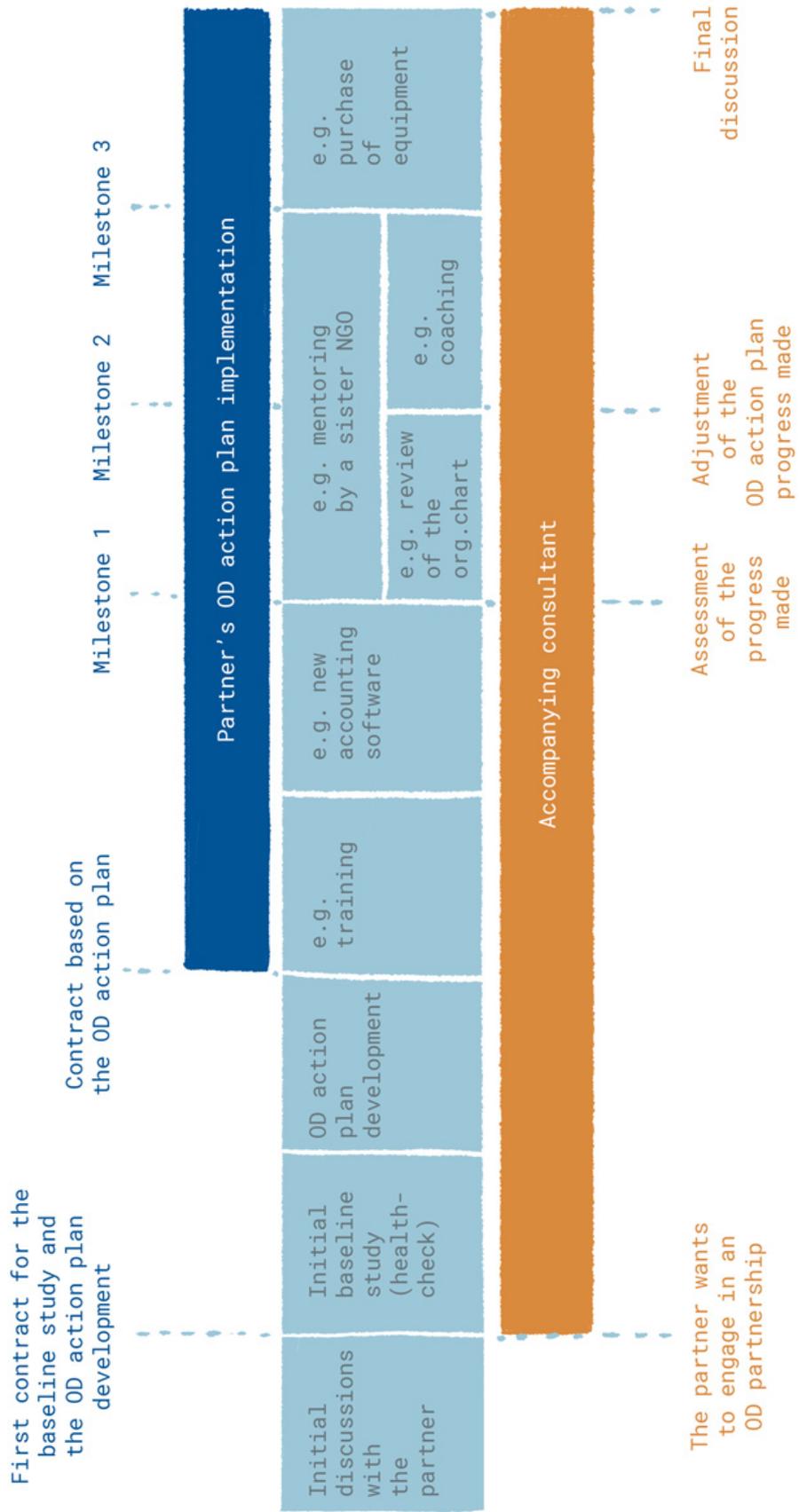


Fig. 2 – Overview of MAVA's OD process

This OD assessment process is run independently from technical discussions around conservation projects undertaken in parallel by MAVA programme teams. While we ensure coherence between OD and conservation project funding, this separation creates a safe space for discussion focused on organisational and strategic matters.

MAVA'S OD PRINCIPLES

- 1. Tool for Impact.** OD is not an end in itself but a tool for conservation impact. In addition to project funding provided by MAVA's other programmes, OD support is offered to eligible partners who contribute to achieving MAVA's conservation objectives.
- 2. Owned by the Partner.** A partner is fully responsible for and the driving force behind their own development. MAVA supports the implementation of OD plans but the partner sets the direction, defines their own future, and implements proposed activities.
- 3. Tailormade Support.** MAVA tailors OD support to a partner's needs, and their development goals, culture, and working style. The OD action plan can address all aspects of an organisation (leadership, management, fundraising, etc.), and is designed to meet needs in a pragmatic and realistic way, rooted in a partner's specific context.
- 4. Readiness.** MAVA provides OD to partners who are committed, ready, and eligible to benefit from support. A partner should be open enough to share challenges, acknowledge weaknesses, and where necessary, discuss sensitive issues.
- 5. Commitment.** OD requires self-awareness and openness to examination, and partners should be prepared to change their way of working where necessary. A desire to improve must underpin the process – an OD partnership requires full involvement from a partner who will need to devote the necessary time and resource to succeed, in particular human resources.
- 6. Contractual Agreement.** MAVA and a partner agree on objectives, expected outcomes, a way of working, timeframe, funding, and monitoring in a formal contract. Based on this, an OD partnership requires transparency and mutual recognition of each party's responsibilities.
- 7. Organisation-wide Participation.** OD is a holistic and participatory approach that requires the involvement of an organisation's management team and often also its staff and Board. Within an organisation, each member must understand their role and responsibilities.
- 8. Equal Relationship.** An OD partnership is based on collaboration, trust, and reciprocal learning. It demands equal and transparent relationships, and regular sharing of all relevant information.
- 9. Measurable Action Plan.** An OD action plan is defined jointly, indicates expected outcomes, and includes regular monitoring and evaluation, and an exit strategy. Means for evaluating progress must be in place from the start to facilitate adaptive management where it is needed.

PERSPECTIVES ON LONG-TERM THREE-WAY OD PARTNERSHIPS

Drawing on concrete experiences from our partners, the consultants, and MAVVA as a donor, we set out below the main dimensions of three-way partnerships. Key learnings appear in blue italics.

OPERATIONAL PERSPECTIVE

Taking an operational perspective, we examine how three-way OD partnerships can be implemented successfully, and explore communication, time management, and roles and responsibilities in executing plans and activities.

- **Communication**

Communication is a key ingredient of successful three-way OD partnerships that supports trust, transparency, mutual understanding, and a safe space. Although communication is often bilateral (i.e., between partner and consultant, or partner and MAVVA, or MAVVA and consultant), three-way communication is common, especially at the beginning of the OD process, and after completion of key milestones.

In general in our partnerships, all parties met several times a year to discuss OD action plan implementation and specific issues, and to share information on the evolution of the process.

At the beginning of the process, the consultant met with the partner, sometimes more than once. This first face-to-face meeting was critical for several reasons. It enabled consultants to understand a partner's context, team, logistics, and its work. It allowed all parties to find a common language. And it began to build trust and the basis for a strong relationship and bond that would sustain their work together.

The organisational health-check, conducted in the field over several days with the partner's whole team and the consultant, was an excellent opportunity to build the relationship between the consultant and the partner, and to lay the foundations for smooth communication.

In one case, four or five face-to-face workshops took place at a partner's headquarters, as well as two field trips to local partner offices. These workshops were conducted in an open, collaborative manner, always focusing on the partner's needs and objectives. As the project evolved, the consultant became more closely involved with the partner's local offices and communications were adapted accordingly.



“Keeping the communication alive all along such long-term OD three-way partnership can be challenging... but it is so important!”

Rosa Matos, Stone Soup Consulting Founding Partner

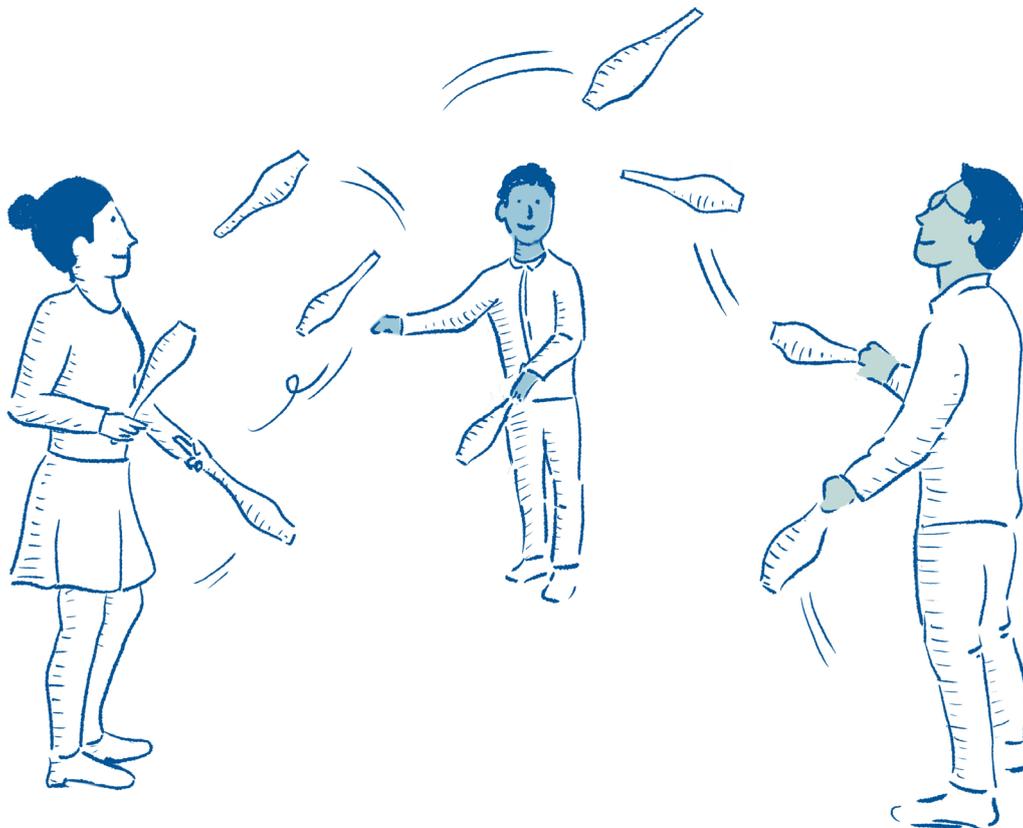
Most organisations felt comfortable about openly sharing questions and concerns with MAVA and the consultant. If they were unable to implement a particular activity, MAVA and the consultant sought to be supportive, shared their opinions, and offered suggestions on how to move forward.

Although most communication was informal, to ensure OD delivered results, some had to be formal and in writing. ***It also proved crucial from the beginning to agree jointly with each partner how to share information, and avoid imposing any particular format unilaterally.***

Most partners considered MAVA to be an engaged and ‘real’ partner with whom they had a strong, dynamic relationship, and with whom they worked in a communicative and collaborative way.

In addition, during the COVID-19 pandemic, continuous communication and regular updates from all parties were critical in maintaining support for each partner and keeping OD plans moving forward. Although field visits were not possible during 2020 and 2021, all partners and consultants remained in close contact.

In some cases, it was critical to focus very deliberately on keeping communication alive and to continue investing in relationships for three or four years, especially during the pandemic.



Three-way communication is challenging...
... like juggling.

- **Time Management**

While all partners agreed that ‘time is always a challenge’, most recognised that in the longer-term, three-way partnerships supported good time management. And when activities did not go as planned – especially due to COVID-19 – adaptations were easy to make and, in most cases, all parties adapted well to the unexpected.

In some cases, significant delays in OD plan delivery meant flexibility was critical. Understanding, interest, and advice from MAVA, as well as from the consultant, were essential in overcoming time constraints and managing priorities. Flexibility was vital for partnerships running for more than three years.

“*OD is a learning process...
you need time!*”

Cláudia Pedra, Stone Soup Consulting Managing Partner



There is no ideal duration for an OD partnership. OD is a complex process, and the duration of each partnership has to be tailored to each partner organisation. Sometimes, in the face of unexpected events or challenges, three years was not enough, and timelines and deadlines had to be renegotiated.

A key lesson that emerged was the importance of maintaining momentum in OD plan delivery, even when unexpected events put the plan at risk. Fostering an early commitment to any changes necessary, and focusing on new priorities for partner support, enabled successful adaptation.

- **Roles and Responsibilities**

All partners agreed that they felt very comfortable working with each other and that working relationships were professional but friendly, dynamic, and inclusive. **Key reasons for this were that all partners had worked with MAVA before engaging in OD, and that they had chosen the consultant together with MAVA.** In fact, all partners had the opportunity to choose the consultants with whom they would work based on a shortlist provided by MAVA.

Despite efforts to clarify OD support from the beginning of the process, some timelines, and roles and responsibilities had to be adapted later to meet partner needs. **Irrespective of changes being made or not, all parties agreed that roles and responsibilities were clear in theory and practice thanks to all parties being transparent with each other.**

“The role of the consultant is to guide the partners, to help them to find their own solution”



Hiltrud Cordes, CEO of Turtle Foundation

In one case, to fully implement all OD activities, a partner needed additional support from the consultant due to limited management capacity and other organisational priorities. To share the emotional burden of an organisation’s OD journey, expectations were clarified between all parties and matched to meet the evolving needs of each manager or organisation.

ETHICAL AND RELATIONSHIP PERSPECTIVE

- **Trust**

Trust was a fundamental issue raised by all parties involved in OD. *For MAVA, OD partnerships could only emerge from already well-established relationships with partners and collaboration with proven and experienced consultants.*

Trust is a dynamic process, and as relationships evolved within each three-way OD partnership, sensitive topics and challenges were raised and addressed, increasing trust between parties.

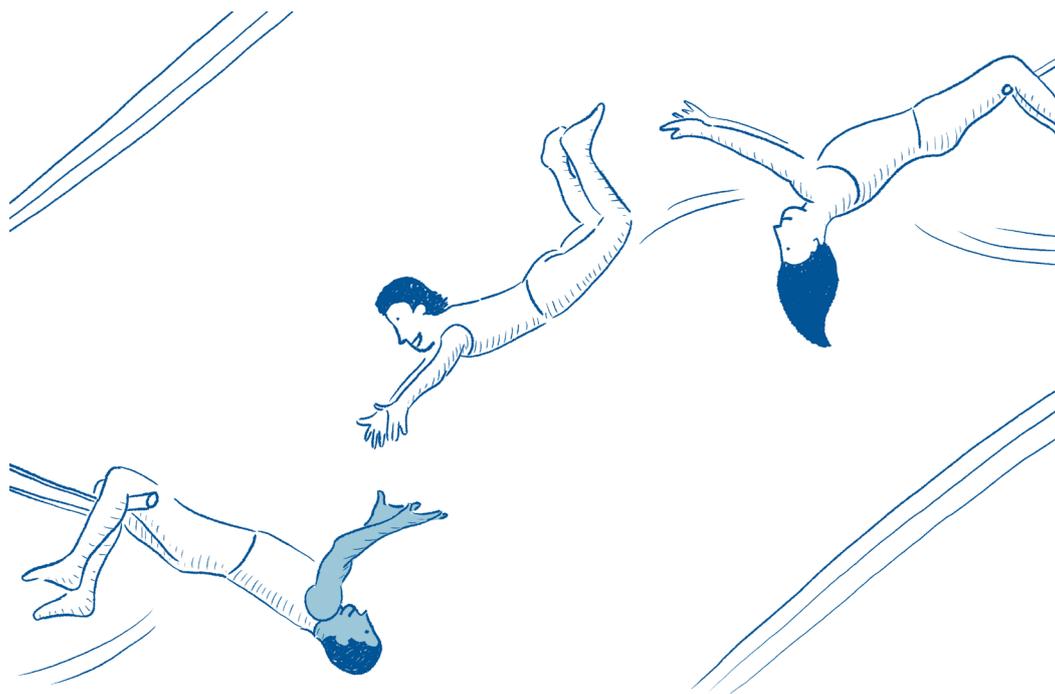
All partners felt trust in MAVA was fundamental, and that building trust with the consultant was also essential. *Once partners felt able to trust the consultant, they saw the consultant as an ‘independent facilitator’ rather than as a representative of MAVA.* This created a safe space within which it was easier to share information, establish rich and honest professional relationships, and make the OD process both useful and enjoyable.



“Building the trust between us, the partner, the donor, the consultant could take time... but it is so impactful!”

Mathilde Bullo, consultant

All three parties in partnerships were careful to involve their Boards in OD discussions from the beginning. Together, they prepared a formal OD request and approval letter – to be signed by the President or a Board member of each organisation – to ensure Boards were at least aware of if not actively involved in OD.



Trust as a prerequisite of a three-way partnership.

- **Transparency**

Transparency is vital for successful partnerships – but exercising it effectively and appropriately, including how and when to share information, is essential.

Consultants in these OD partnerships regularly checked with partners whether they were comfortable sharing information with MAVA, and sharing feedback with partners first, before sharing it with MAVA, was critical in building partner trust in consultants.

Access to information should always be formalised and all parties should be comfortable sharing information. To support full transparency, partnership contracts could include specific terms addressing which information should be shared, when, how, and by whom (e.g., the partner must always review and check all documentation sent to the donor by the consultant).

Sensitive topics included reporting on strengths and weaknesses, or on deliverables or milestones that were not achieved on time, and it was critical that partners did not feel unduly exposed, and that they were in control of what information was being shared with the funder.

It was important that a partner receiving OD support kept control of the flow of information concerning internal processes and challenges. Three-way OD partnerships should not require total and radical transparency between partner, consultant, and funder. And creating ‘safe spaces’ for partners and consultants to share information was essential in delivering appropriate levels of transparency.



“While our aim was to create a safe space for our partners to discuss difficult issues, we found out that three-part partnerships also increased mutual trust, allowing for meaningful discussions about our common objectives.”

Thierry Renaud, Director of the Impact and Sustainability Unit,
MAVA Foundation

- **Ethical Issues**

No critical ethical issues arose in our three-way OD partnerships. However, because OD support was being provided alongside conservation project funding, it was important to recognise the possibility that some organisations might accept or apply for OD support in the expectation that doing so would be more likely to also secure project funding from MAVA.

For each partner, it was critical to clarify from the beginning, the relationship between OD support and project funding. Establishing clear criteria around the extent to which one might influence the other is important. In these partnerships, MAVA never made a decision on project funding based solely on partner commitment to OD or its outcomes. Engagement in OD showed a partner’s willingness to improve but from a MAVA perspective, was never sufficient grounds on its own for securing project funding.

Where some organisations sought simply to access as much support as possible when considering engagement in OD, consultants had to help them focus on core needs rather than the adoption of a ‘shopping list’ approach to OD.

Lastly, from MAVA’s point of view, the balance of power in relationships with grantees was an important ethical issue to consider. Entering into a long-term OD partnership gives a funder access to privileged information about a partner, and the opportunity to influence their development. ***Here, the independence of consultants from MAVA was critical in mediating the potential for MAVA to have undue influence over a partner.***

EXIT AND IMPACT PERSPECTIVE

Upon starting a three-way OD partnership, all parties must set an overall timeframe for the partnership and agree on an exit strategy for phasing out and ending OD support (such partnership can last for several years).

For MAVA, given all grant-making by the foundation will finish in 2022, it was critical to ensure that partner organisations could increase their own capacity, resilience, and sustainability, and work towards independence and autonomy within that overall timeframe.

• Consultancy Redundancy

All partners understood OD consultants were there as facilitators who asked the ‘right’ questions – such as, ‘What is your vision?’, ‘What do you want to achieve?’, ‘What do you need to accomplish your goals?’ – and that they would ‘not do the work for them’ but rather ‘unlock their ideas, and their minds’.

An OD consultant should always act as a facilitator, providing input and support, listening deeply, working bottom up, and acting as a guide. ***They should also keep OD on track, encouraging the partner organisation to continue to engage in OD even when priorities shift, or operational demands become overwhelming.*** At the same time, they must maintain full independence and avoid being perceived as a representative of either the partner or the donor.

The consultant can also play a coaching role, through developing close and supportive relationships with one or two key people (e.g., the executive director) in a partner organisation.

If a consultant becomes too involved or becomes a ‘confidant’, and the partner becomes too dependent, an organisation may feel an acute loss of support that could become counterproductive once OD is completed.

Some MAVA partner organisations experienced this sense of loss later in the OD process. Sometimes, consultants had other priorities and did not respond within the timeframes partners had agreed or come to expect. While this could be frustrating, it also meant that partners came to realise they did not ‘need’ a consultant anymore, and could work perfectly well independently. Although always professional and good-natured, partner-consultant relationships inevitably wound down as partners felt empowered to achieve goals set in the OD process and move forward alone.

In some cases, partners expressed the need for consultants to engage in concrete tasks and deliverables, revealing not only the need for further capacity building but also for support in implementing an OD plan. This raised the question as to whether it was legitimate for partners to use the consultant as a temporary staff member to deliver on a specific time-limited task. This can work – but only if explicitly acknowledged and acceptable to both partner and consultant. But generally, partners and consultants all agreed that consultants’ scope of work was clear from the beginning of the OD process. And that if the need arose for another type of support, it should be addressed as implementation took place.

In summary, consultants were critical in building capacity in partner organisations, enabling them not only to conceive and implement OD plans, but also to move beyond them.

MISSION:IMPOSSIBLE

How will we end this
OD partnership in three weeks?



• Funding Dependency

In providing funding, especially for things for which funding is not usually easily secured, such as capacity building, office and IT equipment, salaries, etc., OD support proved very important for most partners. To provide more flexibility, partners had the opportunity to include budgets for human resources in OD plans (e.g., for the salary of a programme coordinator, or part of the salary of the CEO). Moreover, many partners designed a fundraising strategy together with the consultant that enabled them to expand funding sources, hire paid staff for fundraising (rather than relying on fundraising volunteers), and explore local fundraising opportunities.



“Through OD three-way partnership, the partner gains in self-confidence and feels stronger to discuss with new donors and to do more fundraising.”

Simon Mériaux, Organisational Development Manager,
MAVA Foundation

For MAVA, a key priority for all three-way OD partnerships was helping partners diversify their funding base and become much less dependent on MAVA by the end of 2022. Here, OD delivered good results, through facilitating access to both international and local funding sources. Further detail can be found in the recent [OD partner perception survey 2020](#).

- **Impact**

The impact of three-way OD partnerships was without doubt incredibly important for all organisations, resulting in clear, diverse, and tangible outcomes.

“Through this OD three-way partnership, we had the opportunity to review our organisational chart, with a new position hired”



Rocio Moreno, Director of Fundação Maio Biodiversidade

The recent [OD partner perception survey 2020](#) showed high levels of satisfaction with OD partnership grants (i.e., size, duration, eligible activities, etc.), and that in the main, OD focused on strategy, communication, and fundraising, via the provision of external expertise and covering personnel costs and training. Reflecting on OD support, 92% of partners were pleased with outcomes in terms of increased capacity and stability. For these partners, subsequent growth in conservation efficiency was an added, indirect benefit of OD support. It was also clear that all partners planned to pursue OD beyond their initial action plans, with fundraising, communication, and governance coming out as top priorities for continued effort.

“This OD support helped us in our local fundraising efforts”



Euclides “Ukie” Resende,
Executive Director of Fundação Tartaruga

Below are some select examples of the main outputs and outcomes identified by the partners involved in this reflection exercise:

- detailed organisational chart available to anyone working in the organisation;
- building a stable and capable team in the organisation;
- developing a fundraising strategy, including targeting local funding for the first time, and increasing overall funding opportunities;
- opportunity to hire paid staff, such as a project manager, and be less dependent on volunteers;
- acquisition of an office (headquarters);
- knowledge management (e.g., uploading documents and pictures, using Microsoft Office);
- ‘makeover’ of corporate design, including, but not limited to, printed products and web design;
- staff technical training;
- developing a communication strategy;
- creation of a Tandem Support System – a senior staff member guides a junior staff member, who eventually takes over the role;
- theory of change training;
- coaching and leadership training to develop management and leadership expertise for the director;
- emotional support and effective advice to navigate complex conflicts and situations that affected the organisation.

On top of these results, partners supported by OD gained increased self-confidence, which among other things encouraged them to seek new donors and consider taking more ambitious strategic action.

We acknowledge it is difficult to draw a direct line from OD support to increased conservation impact. Even if we are confident that strengthened organisations deliver more, it is tough to ‘prove’.

A WIN-WIN-WIN PARTNERSHIP!

Having conducted an in-depth desk review, interviews, and an interactive workshop with three organisations that undertook three-way OD partnerships, we can state with confidence that this innovative approach to OD has many advantages for partners, as well as for donors and consultants involved in the process.

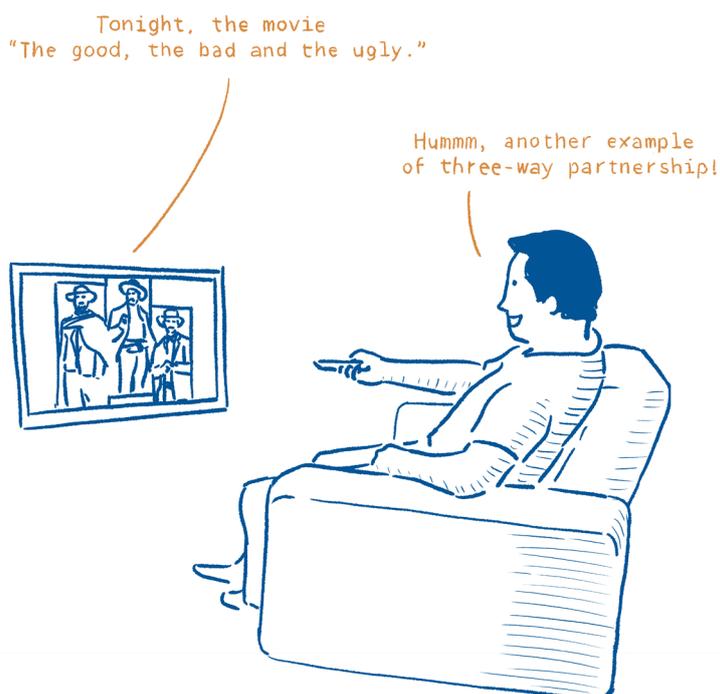
Critically, we also recognise that solid foundations, such as a shared understanding, willingness to participate, trust, transparency, and appropriate timeframes, are all essential for the success of the OD process.

First and foremost, three-way OD partnerships benefit the partner, offering dedicated support and a safe space for its OD journey, and flexibility to adapt to emerging needs and priorities.

For the donor, these partnerships are an enriching experience that deepen relationships with, and level of support being given to partner organisations, and that deliver increased impact through OD funding. Introducing a consultant into the partnership also helps balance relationships by insulating the partner from an exclusive OD relationship with its funder that could compromise the ultimate success of OD support.

Finally, for consultants, such partnerships represent a fantastic opportunity to work closely with an organisation (and with a funder) over the longer-term. And they help to create favourable conditions for deeper engagement, learning, and impact in OD consultancy.

Based on our experience, we invite other donors, consultants, and partner organisations to consider three-way OD partnerships – to help partners become more effective and sustainable, to strengthen and encourage collaboration on OD, and to deliver greater impact in the field.



KEY RECOMMENDATIONS FOR SUCCESS IN THREE-WAY OD PARTNERSHIPS

Ensure all parties understand OD. Before engaging in OD, everyone involved in a partner organisation – from Board members to staff and volunteers – should fully understand the need for, and benefits of OD. Clarify what OD means, why is it necessary and useful, and what the positives outcomes for the organisation will be. Ensure any new staff or Board members are also apprised on joining of and involved in the OD process.

Clarify roles and responsibilities. Ensure formal clarification of the roles and responsibilities of each party and their engagement in OD from the very beginning of the process, and review and/or detail them when moving from one phase or task to the next.

Design the partnership. Thoroughly discuss the proposed partnership model, approaches, and methodologies to align language and understanding, and facilitate effective and active collaboration.

Base OD on existing relationships. Previous experience with and trust in the funder, and hence in the consultant assigned to a partner organisation by the funder, are essential for effective OD support and a successful three-way OD partnership.

Visit the partner. Both the donor and the consultant should visit a partner organisation in the field during the initial organisational health-check made prior to OD beginning to understand a partner's context, team, challenges, and available resources. Continuing in-person visits during OD implementation will also build trust and enhance communication.

Clarify funding implications. Clarify from the beginning whether other types of funding provided by the same funder could be affected, directly or indirectly, by OD support.

Let the partner choose. Partners should actively participate in the selection of their OD consultant to ensure they feel entirely comfortable working closely with them for an extended period of time.

Ensure consultant readiness. Supporting an OD partnership is a long-term commitment that requires dedication and flexibility from consultants over an extended period of time which lasts well beyond a typical organisational consultancy process.

Keep communicating. Maintain regular communication to sustain effective collaboration – clarify interests and expectations, update plans, and always be open and frank in dealing with difficulties. Regular online or in situ meetings will build trust, maintain information flows, and ensure a coordinated response to emerging challenges.

Manage communication flow. Support and facilitate both bilateral and three-way discussions. Clarify when to widen discussions and strengthen the learning process by involving additional partner or donor staff.

Be supportive and flexible. On occasion, a partner's principal need may be for emotional support or practical advice on navigating internal or external challenges. Funder and consultant need to align efforts and support a partner to adapt to challenges rather than sticking to original OD plans in the face of changing circumstances.

Navigate difficulties and timelines. The donor should understand the challenges a partner may encounter during OD, remain flexible, and adapt to unforeseen circumstances and evolving timelines while also pushing for completion of OD plans.

CONTRIBUTORS

PARTNER ORGANISATIONS



- **Turtle Foundation**

The [Turtle Foundation](#) supports the worldwide protection of sea turtles by supporting projects that are achievable and offer promising results.

The Foundation's vision is a future where sea turtles and their habitats are protected in a sustainable, healthy, and safe way from the threat of extinction and destruction. Its mission is to contribute to the conservation of sea turtles through projects, cooperating with local communities where sea turtles and people can live together harmoniously.

The organisational development processes for both the Turtle Foundation and Fundação Tartaruga were implemented together by the same consultant, Mathilde Bullo. For the Turtle Foundation, the OD partnership focused on setting up a professional and efficient headquarters in Germany, with a clear objective to improve public relations and fundraising.

- % of OD funded activities in relation to Turtle Foundation entire annual funding (all donors): 2% (2021)
- % of OD funded activities in relation to entire annual MAVA funding to Turtle Foundation: 23% (2021)



- **Fundação Tartaruga**

[Fundação Tartaruga](#) is a member of the international network of the Turtle Foundation.

The sea turtle conservation project in Boa Vista, Cabo Verde, implemented by Fundação Tartaruga with the involvement of the island's local population, began in 2008 in response to the large-scale slaughter of nesting female loggerhead sea turtles (*Caretta caretta*). The project operates in nine different nesting areas on the island, where teams of local staff and national and international volunteers conduct night patrols and daily data collection during the nesting season from June to October.

The organisational development processes of both Turtle Foundation and Fundação Tartaruga were implemented together by the same consultant, Mathilde Bullo. For

Fundação Tartaruga, the main objectives of the OD partnership were to strengthen general and financial management, external relations, and cooperation between Turtle Foundation and Fundação Tartaruga.

- % of OD funded activities in relation to Fundação Tartaruga entire annual funding (all donors): 11.3% (2021)
- % of OD funded activities in relation to entire annual MAVA funding to Fundação Tartaruga: 36% (2021)



- **Fundação Maio Biodiversidade**

Fundação Maio Biodiversidade (FMB) is a Cape Verdean non-profit organisation dedicated to biodiversity conservation and environmental protection. Since 2010, the foundation has worked to protect the island of Maio and its biodiversity while creating sustainable economic opportunities for local communities.

FMB works with key local authorities and partners to achieve better management and enforcement of the Protected Areas Act, as well as supporting partner analysis of the impacts of major construction projects on Maio island. FMB also runs an internationally recognised community-based conservation programme to ensure local community participation and help secure a healthy environment where species and local communities thrive side by side.

FMB's organisational development process, which started in 2017 in partnership with MAVA and Fauna and Flora International (FFI), and with support from Rosa Matos of Stone Soup Consulting, focused on increasing organisational capacity and contributing to its technical, administrative, and financial sustainability.

- % of OD funded activities in relation to FMB entire annual funding (all donors): 7.91% (2021)
- % of OD funded activities in relation to entire annual MAVA funding to FMB: 16.3% (2021)

CONSULTANTS

- **Mathilde Bullo**

Mathilde Bullo is an organisational development practitioner based in France. She has extensive experience working with civil society organisations and networks in various African countries. Working first with French institutions, and then with NGOs for 12 years, since 2017 she has worked as a freelance consultant and facilitator. She practices collective and individual coaching, training, and mentoring to support civil society organisations and networks in organisational and strategic development. She also specialises in women's empowerment and leadership development in civil society.

Mathilde supported the Turtle Foundation and the Fundação Tartaruga together throughout their OD journey.

- **Rosa Matos**

Rosa Matos is a Stone Soup Consulting founding partner. With an academic background in Sociology, Development Management, Applied Ecology and Biology, Rosa has 26 years of international experience in sustainable development and biodiversity, and has held leadership positions in civil society and philanthropic organisations, as well as consultancy focused on increasing social impact and institutional strengthening in Europe, Latin America, and Africa.

Rosa engages in the design of collaborative and inclusive approaches in strategic planning and management, organisational development, stakeholder management, and networking, and in building strategic alliances and partnerships which promote the effectiveness of entrepreneurs and organisations, and systemic social change.

As a Stone Soup Consulting founding partner, Rosa participates in the continuous virtuous development of the company, and its international expansion in Europe and Latin America. She has also been responsible for the development of consulting and training projects in collaboration, monitoring and evaluation, knowledge management, and scaling. She acts as an advisor, facilitator, mentor, coach, and bridge builder.

Rosa supported Fundação Maio Biodiversidade in its OD process. She is also involved in OD with another MAVA partner working on conservation in Cabo Verde.

- **Cláudia Pedra**

Cláudia is a Founder and the Managing Partner of Stone Soup Consulting. She has a Bachelor's degree in International Relations, a Master's in Strategy, and has undertaken training in Interpersonal Relationship and Teamwork, as well as Humanitarian Aid Project Management. She has over 25 years' experience working with different organisations in the environmental, social, and cultural sectors.

Cláudia worked as a Consultant for the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (1998-1999), was a researcher on Asia for the Institute for Strategic and International Studies IEEI (1999-2001), and a project Coordinator at the International Organization for Migrations (2002). She was the CEO of Amnesty International Portugal (2002-2008). In 2012, Cláudia helped found a think tank on human rights, the Network for Strategic and International Studies (NSIS), that created the first specialised course on human rights in Portugal.

In 2008, with four other partners, Cláudia founded Stone Soup Consulting. She leads a team of over 60 people who work remotely and live in 12 countries in Europe, Africa, the USA, and Latin America. As a consultant, she has worked in many different locations and cultural settings on over 100 consultancy projects with local government, foundations, companies, NGOs of all sizes, and entrepreneurs. She has worked on issues such as strategic planning, impact and project evaluation, fundraising and financial sustainability, organisational assessment, governance, and scaling.

Cláudia acted as an external advisor at the beginning of the MAVA OD strategy and has been directly involved in an OD partnership with a MAVA partner working on conservation in Portugal.



Founded in 2008, [Stone Soup Consulting](#) is a proactive and forward-thinking consultancy with a social heart. Organised as a network of consultants, the company works with different types of organisations interested in boosting their social value. Acting in partnership rather than in a purely advisory role, Stone Soup Consulting employs shared processes for strategy creation and implementation that identify possible paths for an organisation's growth and development.