




Expanding Opportunities Worldwide

Private Sector Engagement Toolkit



**Conducting
Partner Exit
Interviews**

January 2021

About this Series

The Private Sector Engagement (PSE) Toolkits draw upon insights from USAID guides, ACDI/VOCA staff experiences, and other PSE resources.

The toolkits are intended to be living documents and will periodically be updated.

Purpose of the Exit Interview

As the partner approaches the end of its partnership agreement with an ACDI/VOCA activity, plan to schedule an exit interview with them to assess the impact of the partnership on their business. These exit interviews focus on:

- 1) Understanding the partner's experience engaging with an activity.
- 2) Understanding what behaviors the partner changed and why
- 3) Understanding how the activity's funding and other assistance supported the partner in reaching both development and business goals; and
- 4) Understanding what elements of the partnership the partner will continue to do and/or invest in going forward.

These exit interviews work best when complemented with periodic surveys throughout the life of the partnership that check in on the health of partnership relationship. You can refer to the Partnership Health Guide & Tool for that survey template.

Conducting the Exit Interview

To ensure more candid responses in the exit interview, consider having the activity's main person responsible for overseeing learning conduct the interview instead of the partnership manager. On the partner's end, consider encouraging senior leadership and the person directly responsible for overseeing the partnership activities to attend. Secondly, try to complete the interview in person or over the phone as partners tend to share more information in those formats and the interviewee can ask clarification questions. If necessary, the interview can also be completed in writing. Thirdly, share the questions with partners prior to interviews, noting that some questions may require getting specific information/data about the partnership impact on their business and those within their supply chain.

The interview should cover the partner's experiences, including what behaviors the partner changed as a result of the partnership and why, lessons learned in strengthening gender and social inclusion within their business practices, lessons in the partner's business growth and market success, and future efforts that could help the partner expand its market reach even further.

At the end of this guide is an illustrative set of questions you can use in these interviews. You should always tailor the questions below based on the mechanism through which the partnership happened and the intended outcomes of the partnership. Focus the conversation on the activity intervention or outcome that the project supported.

Using the Insights from the Exit Interview

The exit interview results should be shared with the team for lessons learned and included in the partner's partnership file. In addition, it is helpful to review the interviews in batches to see if there are

any trends or common issues that could inform the activity's future implementation. These exit interviews are useful material for any pause & reflect sessions the team conducts on the partnership funds.

Illustrative Partner Exit Interview Guide

Below is an illustrative guide for you to use for the exit interviews. You can tailor this guide based on the nature of the partnerships and partners your activity is supporting.

COMPANY NAME:	
COMPANY REPRESENTATIVE(S) PARTICIPATING IN INTERVIEW:	
ACDI/VOCA REPRESENTATIVE(S) CONDUCTING INTERVIEW:	
DATE:	

INTRODUCTION:

Thanks for taking the time to do this. Insights from these interviews help us to better understand look at the impact of our investments in your business and to identify ways in which we can make improvements to our processes for making these investments. These insights will be shared across our team. If there is any sensitive information that you prefer to share anonymously, please let me know.

We are going to start with questions about your overall partnership experience, then move into questions about the benefits to your company from the experience, and finally ask about impact of our program to your business and your supply chain.

OVERALL EXPERIENCE (PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT)

- 1) What were the key aspects or most critical components of your partnership?
- 2) What practices/behaviors did you change to reach your intended partnership objectives?
- 3) What parts of the partnership worked well? How did that impact your business?
- 4) What parts of the partnership were frustrating? How did that impact your business?
- 5) What would have made this partnership easier to manage? What could ACDI/VOCA have done differently?
- 6) Did the co-creation process, negotiating milestones, and/or addressing due diligence issues change your strategic approach at all? How?

7) How did ACIDI/VOCA's funding and other assistance affect your ability to achieve something you would otherwise not be able to do on your own [describe shared value/inclusive business goal: sell your product and/or service into rural markets, include more youth or women in your business model, source from targeted geographic areas, expand into new markets etc]. Please provide examples.

a. Without this partnership, would it have taken more or less time to do that? How much more/less time?

b. Based on your experience, does it make financial sense for you to continue to [describe inclusive business model above]? Will you increase, maintain, or reduce emphasis/funding to [describe inclusive business goal]? Explain rationale.

8) What recommendations or feedback would you give to other companies that are [describe inclusive business goal] through a partnership with ACIDI/VOCA through either targeted technical assistance or receiving grant capital?

INCLUSION:

9) How did the project help you think about integrating women and youth into your operations in a way you were not previously doing? To what do you attribute this change?

10) How have you engaged or integrated women, youth, or other marginalized groups into your business model? Could you share any strategies or approaches that worked well? What were some of the challenges? How has this impacted your business?

11) To what extent do you plan to keep engaging with women, youth, and other groups in the future?

BUSINESS AND MARKET IMPACT

12) How have the aspects of your business that ACIDI/VOCA supported changed since the partnership began? Note that this should be tailored based on the focus of the partnership. Below are some examples.

For partnerships focused on sales: What is your unit cost of production for the product and/or service supported with ACIDI/VOCA funding? What is your unit sales price for these products and/or services? If possible, can you also provide us with your unit cost of goods sold? What is the current annual sales revenue of the product/service? The current annual net income? How does this compare to the year prior to receiving our funding? Could you please send us your most recent audited financials?

Marketing: How have the marketing efforts the project supported helped you increase your marketing to rural customers? How has this translated to increase in number of customers and sales?

Processing: By how much has your company increased the volume/value of products supported under the project? How many more rural customers have been targeted both as producers and consumers?

Supply Chains: In what ways have you strengthened your supply chain operations? What was the result both in terms of increased production, sales, and/or reduced time from production to sale?

13) Within the value chain/related to the activities ACDI/VOCA funded, how many other organizations - such as vendors, producers, finance institutions, donors - do you currently partner with? Please list them below.

Original Companies (collaborated with them before receiving partnership funding):

Company/Institution	Purpose	Continued?	Why/Why not?

New Companies (only started collaborating with them after receiving partnership funding):

Company/Institution	Purpose	Intend to continue?	Why/Why not?

14) Have you developed new products or services for sale in rural markets since the partnership began? If so, can you describe what it is and how it fits in your medium- and long-term business plans?

15) Have you hired new staff due to growth of the products or services ACDI/VOCA supported through the partnership funding? If so, how many and what type of staff?

16) Since you first received funding, are there new competitors or are you cooperating with actors for your products/services in [describe targeted markets – such as rural or specific value chain]? If so, can you provide details (company name, product)? What has been the impact of this competition and/or cooperation?

17) What market challenges remain unresolved for you? How do you plan to address them independent of ACDI/VOCA support?

18) What business challenges do you need to resolve? How do you plan to address them?

19) Do you have any other comments or suggestions to share?