

BULLETIN 13

PARTNERING

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Partnering is a recognized process on a number of Canadian construction projects. Partnering arrangements represent commitments by the participants to work co-operatively for the benefit of the project.

Partnering is basically an approach to establishing common goals, and to implement construction projects by building trust and respect between the participants in the process. It should not be confused with joint ventures, nor with legal arrangements between partners in a partnership. It is a process whereby the participants (owners, consultants, sub-consultants, prime contractors and subcontractors) establish mutually acceptable working relationships aimed at improving communications and solving problems and disputes during the work. The Contract establishes the legal relationships, the Partnering Agreement identifies the participants' commitment to work together towards the successful completion of the project.

Following facilitated work sessions, the parties involved issue a 'charter' which indicates the needs, responsibilities and objectives of all participants, and declares a commitment to open communication, trust, and co-operation in meeting the requirements of the project.

The benefits to participants in the partnering process can include reductions in decision times, reduced risk of cost and schedule overruns, reduced administrative costs, and less risk of disagreements regarding contract interpretations. In addition, the process may produce less tangible benefits which make the progress of the works smoother and more efficient, i.e., better project team morale, more effective project management activities, and the knowledge that person-to-person alternate dispute resolution processes could enable differences to be resolved without recourse to expensive formal litigation.

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