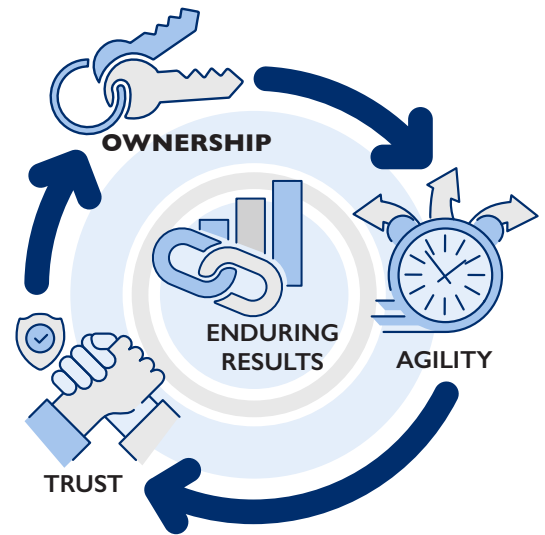# ENDURING RESULTS STUDY 4.0
## INTRODUCTION TO ERS 4.0 THEMATIC BRIEFS

## INTRODUCTION TO ERS 4.0: **THEMATIC BRIEFS**

USAID's fourth Enduring Results Study examined 17 diverse partnerships around the globe whose operational period ended in 2019, with a goal of further understanding what drives *enduring results* within these partnerships. A partnership was considered to have produced enduring results when a significant part of its activities - or activities stemming from the partnership - continued (and potentially grew in scale) beyond its operational period to produce ongoing impact. As ERS 4.0 explored broader questions of why and how different types of partnerships produced enduring results, stakeholders repeatedly pointed to the importance of **ownership, trust,** and **agility** as foundational 'building blocks' in driving enduring results across all types of partnerships. These concepts are often complementary, enabling and reinforcing one another within partnerships that go on to have enduring results. These 'thematic briefs' aim to consolidate learnings on these concepts in the partnership context to support USAID staff, implementing partners, and private sector partners in building strong partnerships positioned for enduring impact.



OWNERSHIP

ENDURING RESULTS

AGILITY

TRUST

## ENDURING RESULTS: **KEY DEFINITIONS**

*ERS 4.0 considered a partnership to have produced **enduring results** when:*

Within this context, ERS 4.0 considered the ways in which partnerships have *sustained* and *scaled* their work in the years following the partnership operational period. Sustainability as per USAID's PSE policy can be understood as the *ability of a local system to produce desired outcomes over time by obtaining the resources necessary to produce those outcomes.* Scale refers to *growth from increasing the size and/or effect of activities and outcomes that stem from the partnership operational period.* Additional definitions that may be helpful in reading these thematic briefs include:

Each of the partnerships assessed had at least some activities that continued beyond the USAID partnership operational period. This qualifier helped to distinguish those partnerships with *no or few continuing activities* from those that achieved enduring results in much of their work

ERS 4.0 focuses squarely on continuing activities as it offers a more precise standard for the work the partners, participants, governments, or other partnership stakeholders lead following USAID's partnership operational period in order to achieve enduring results

Acknowledges that not all partnership activities are meant to continue indefinitely, and accounts for related activities that reinforce and extend the core work of the partnership

**ERS 4.0** considered a partnership to have produced **enduring results** when:

a significant part of its activities – or activities stemming from the partnership – continue (and potentially grow in scale) beyond its operational period to produce ongoing impact

While not necessary to meet the 'bar' for enduring results, ERS' also consider the extent to which partnership activities scale as a valuable input into analysis

Specifies that continuing activities should reinforce positive impacts in communities in order to support enduring results

Enduring Results Studies examines the results of partnerships in the 2 years following the formal partnership operational period
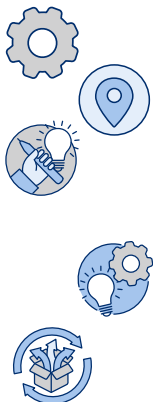
- **Activities:** distinct interventions and actions that partners take on to advance identified development result(s)

- **Local partners:** ERS 4.0 follows the Agency's New Partnership Initiative definition for Local Entities

- **Design phase:** refers to the planning, designing, and structuring phase of the private sector partnership. Relevant processes include legal contract development, partner solicitations, and personnel identification, activity planning, etc.

- **Implementation phase:** refers to the execution phase of the private sector partnership where project plans from the design phase are carried out. Relevant processes include research, trainings, convenings, etc.

- **Post-partnership phase:** refers to the phase after the official partnership operational period. Relevant processes include check-ins and status updates

*Sourcing for these briefs include Dalberg interviews and analysis, selected partnership documentation, and internal report including past Enduring Results Studies and the USAID PSE Policy*

# ENDURING RESULTS STUDY 4.0
## THEMATIC BRIEF | THE ROLE OF OWNERSHIP IN SUSTAINING AND SCALING THE WORK OF PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

## OVERVIEW OF OWNERSHIP IN DRIVING ENDURING RESULTS

- **Ownership refers to the commitment and capacity to sustain (and potentially scale) partnership activities financially and / or operationally after the formal partnership operational period.** Ownership can be cultivated among a wide range of actors with strong links to the mission and work of the partnership, and may indeed reside in a coalition of multiple actors playing complementary roles in sustaining a partnership's activities.

- **Among partnerships studied in ERS 4.0, ownership was the most common factor in driving enduring results,** as it was cited as having a strong influence on driving sustainability in 65% of the 17 partnerships studied. Two primary pathways to ownership were observed among these partnerships. The first was structuring a partnership to directly support the work of a partner organization, thereby organically ensuring a continuous owner for the work. In other cases, the partnership team needed to identify and cultivate appropriate owner(s) among the group of partners or a third party (e.g., government, community group).

- **Ownership can also be cultivated through careful planning** across several dimensions, both early on and at key points throughout the partnership lifecycle. Dimensions include:

| **WHAT does successful ownership look like?** | **WHO is best positioned to own this work?** | **WHY are they incentivized to own?** | **HOW can we set up the partnership to build ownership?** | **WHEN do we build or transfer ownership?** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| *Defining the types of stewardship (e.g., financial, political) and depth of involvement needed to ensure enduring results* | *Identifying actor(s) with the organizational profile, capabilities and reputation, institutional knowledge, etc. to lead ongoing activities* | *Understanding what could motivate actors to drive the continued work of partnerships (e.g., reputational benefit, alignment of priorities)* | *Exploring the processes, roles, capacity building activities, knowledge management, etc. needed to identify and cultivate owners* | *Finding natural or deliberate transition points to shift ownership responsibilities (e.g., annually, at project extension, when certain targets are met)* |
| Some projects may sustain through ownership from a **coalition of partners** that bring complementary capabilities | | **Capacity building** is a core strength of USAID's, and can be leveraged as an incentive and tool to promote ownership among capacitated partner organizations | | USAID reporting or contract extension periods may be used as **pre-set transition points** for transferring activity ownership |

## LEARNINGS FROM ERS 4.0 FEATURED PARTNERSHIPS

*ERS 4.0 zoomed in on four private sector partnerships that past ERSes have shown to play a role in shaping partnerships' enduring results. Ownership plays a role across each of these dimensions:*

### Partnership Duration

While shorter partnerships (>2 years) generally drive enduring results when partnering directly with an organization that is naturally positioned to own the work into the future, ownership can also be cultivated among community members through **deliberate program design efforts**

*A WASH partnership in Nigeria identified and capacitated local citizen committees ("WASHCOMs") to look after the upkeep of sanitation infrastructure built into schools and other community gathering places following USAID's 2-year operational period. The committees included women, mechanics, and others who were trusted and well positioned to monitor these spaces and address community needs*

# ENDURING RESULTS STUDY 4.0

## THEMATIC BRIEF | THE ROLE OF OWNERSHIP IN SUSTAINING AND SCALING THE WORK OF PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

## LEARNINGS FROM ERS 4.0 FEATURED PARTNERSHIPS *continued*

*ERS 4.0 zoomed in on four private sector partnerships that past ERSes have shown to play a role in shaping partnerships' enduring results. Ownership plays a role across each of these dimensions:*

### Local vs. Global Partners

Ownership played a heightened role in enabling enduring results in partnerships with **non-local** private sector partners, where success hinged in part on finding a reliable **local** partner with deep history and commitments with the communities to steward work beyond the partnership.

*A girls' mentorship program in Kenya – led by a global NGO - engaged participants in crafting 'give-back commitments' in exchange for the scholarships and support the program provided, creating an expectation and self-articulated plan for community ownership from the project's outset. Following USAID's involvement, participants continue to steward the partnership's activities through a registered alumni organization and as leaders of mentorship programming within a private sector partner.*

> *"What the give-back commitment does is connect that beneficiary closer to the community and [get her] thinking about the needs and types of commitments she wants to make."*
>
> *– Global implementing partner, Kenya*

### Market Orientation

By **playing to commercial incentives,** market-oriented partnerships can find natural ownership in those actors positioned to reap continuous rewards from championing the work of a project, leading to enduring results

*As part of an agriculture partnership in Egypt, the USAID and IP team cultivated ownership for its smallholder initiative among a major export association. The association was initially hesitant to include smallholders among its members, but the team was able to make the case that building smallholder capacity would reap significant commercial benefit. Following the partnership, the association remains "invested in the journey" – investing their own resources to continue building smallholder capacity*

However, when commercial incentives shift or are **disrupted by external events** (e.g., COVID), the continued work of partnerships can be left without a committed partner and organizational infrastructure to secure its sustainability

*Several broad, market-building partnerships studied in the agricultural sector did not sustain programming in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly as the end of USAID funding (which often included substantial subsidies to targeted products or sectors) coincided with broader market and ecosystem disruptions, making it challenging for private sector partners to increase their investment in the activities launched through the partnership*

### Private Sector Contribution

Private sector actors - particularly local ones - are often an appropriate owner for the continued work of partnerships when the project is strategically aligned and built around or pulling from their **distinctive assets and capabilities** (e.g., technical advising, training facilitation, etc.)

*A sustainable infrastructure partnership in the Dominican Republic pulled in a local private sector actor with a community development mission and deep local networks and knowledge. These contributions positioned the local organization as leaders of the initiative long-term, and in turn bolstered its organizational credibility and technical capacity*

> *"In this case it helped a lot to have this local institution with local credibility that would take ownership of the system…now, five years later, they are still working in the community and are able to continue the project. It gave them a sense of long-term sustainability but also ownership…"*
>
> *– Implementing partner, Dominican Republic*

# LASER PULSE

**Delivering Practical, Research-Driven Solutions to Global Development Challenges**

# ENDURING RESULTS STUDY 4.0
## THEMATIC BRIEF | THE ROLE OF OWNERSHIP IN SUSTAINING AND SCALING THE WORK OF PRIVATE SECTOR PARTNERSHIPS

## CONSIDERATION FOR BUILDING OWNERSHIP INTO PARTNERSHIPS

*Guidance below is targeted specifically for USAID teams (indicated by the 🏛 icon), implementing partners (indicated by the 🤝 icon), and private sector partners (indicated by the 💼 icon) to drive enduring results through strengthening trust*

| DESIGN | IMPLEMENTATION | POST-PARTNERSHIP |
|---|---|---|
| 🏛 Where appropriate, **institutionalize partnerships** within a larger initiative or network to build in a strong infrastructure for ownership from the outset | 🏛 Facilitate a conversation among partners to **proactively align on their foundational 'building blocks'** of sustainability and other partnership principles that could drive enduring results | 🏛 Ensure **natural continuity of activities** by putting systems in place to foster connections between partners, participants and stakeholders (e.g., virtual networks, alumni programming) |
| 🏛 Within longer partnerships, consider selecting local implementers with whom USAID has not worked before and **invest in building their capacity** to empower long-term, sustainable ownership while strengthening the local ecosystem of development actors | 🏛 Ensure predictability and **transparency around potential funding extensions** to promote partners' ownership and financial planning and reduce risk of overdependence on USAID funding | 🏛 Conduct **light-touch evaluation activities** in the years following the partnership to track program ownership to inform approaches for future partnerships |
| 🤝 **Assess best-fit owners for ongoing project activities** according to their fit across key dimensions, such as technical capabilities, networks and reputation, longevity in the community/sector, and presence of continued incentives to both sustain and scale up activities | 🏛 Engage partners in **co-creating plan for cultivating financial and operational ownership** among identified owner(s) on an incremental schedule according to defined milestones | 🤝 Continue to **serve as an ambassador for partners** after the end of the funding period (e.g., making connections, uplifting successes) while maintaining space for partners to fully drive continuing activities |
| 🤝 **Account for gaps in capacity** when identifying likely owners for ongoing work, and consider how to structure capacity building efforts to shift responsibility incrementally (e.g., building partner capacity in a technical area over a defined period, after which the partner takes greater ownership over relevant workstreams) | 🤝 **Revisit resource planning at key points** to identify where funding sources could come from post-USAID; consider multiple options and scenarios to account for contextual shifts and contingencies | |
| 🤝 **Engage private sector partners** in shaping partnership objectives and activities to build trust through engaged collaboration and begin establishing a foundation for partners' ownership of ongoing activities | 🤝 Where ownership is anchored on commercial incentives, help insulate enduring results from market shocks by building in other structures (e.g., external-facing initiatives, coalitions) to **embed programmatic activities and incentivize continued commitment from partners** | |
| | 💼 Support partnership activities that are **well-aligned with emerging commercial priorities** and invest in marketing and narrative-building internally to cultivate buy-in from leadership and plant the seeds for deeper investment and ownership of activities | |

## FURTHER RESOURCES
## FOR DRIVING ENDURING RESULTS

*Enduring Results Study 3.0 (2020) Summary*
*An overview of key findings from ERS 3.0, conducted in 2020*

*Building Blocks of Successful Shared-Value Partnerships (2022)*
*Report summarizing private sector perspectives on what drives success in USAID's P4I partnerships*

*Multi-stakeholder Initiatives with the Private Sector*
*Guidance on developing successful multi-stakeholder initiatives with the private sector*

*Literature Review PSE: A Generalizable Framework (2021)*
*Report synthesizing existing evidence into a Partnership Capacity Theory*

*USAID Local Capacity Development Draft Policy (2021)*
*Agency-wide vision and common approach towards developing local capacity*

*Locally Led Development Spectrum and Checklist (2021)*
*Instruments developed to help USAID and partners think about locally led development in practice*

*Local Private Sector Partnerships: Assessing the State of Practice (2015)*
*Resource to support engagement with local PS companies*

*Learning Brief: PSE Relationship Quality (2021)*
*Guidance on developing relationship quality to improve private sector partnership results*

For more information on positioning partnerships for enduring results, please reach out to globalpartnerships@usaid.gov , visit the USAID Private Sector engagement page, and/or reach out to any of the Private Sector Engagement Point of Contact (POC).