Competitiveness partnerships consist of structured dialogue between the government and private sector to improve the investment climate. This checklist is provided as a quick way for those involved in the design or running of a competitiveness partnership to see how it shapes up against the main factors we have identified. The checklist follows the structure of part two of the paper, incorporating also some ideas from part three.

While the checklist addresses issues in detail, the summary table enable practitioners to quickly assess partnerships by using a more convenient matrix format.
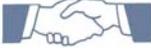
	Range of issues to identify and tackle while designing or maintaining partnerships					
1- Ignition	Government willingness	Cross-spectrum support	Business priorities	Linkages with existing organizations	Sense of urgency	Establishing credibility
2- Participation	Selection mechanisms	Terms of membership	Choosing key individuals	Striking a balance in representation	Including SMEs	Civil society participation
3- Structure	Permanent secretariat	Individual leadership	Working groups	Government structure	Transparency and rules of engagement	Institutional flexibility
4- Goals & outputs	Mission statements	Managing expectations	Quantifiable outcomes	Reform type and importance	Monitoring and accountability	Clarity and credibility
5- Role of donors	Type and level of support	Public image	Quality control	Avoiding favoritism	Sponsorship v. direction	Ownership transfer
6- Outreach	Branding and marketing	Using the media	Engaging the grassroots	Enlisting the public	Targeting decision-makers	Sharing experience

1. Ignition

– Government willingness
Are government leaders personally enthusiastic about dialogue?

– Cross-spectrum support
Have key opposition leaders been persuaded that dialogue is intended to be politically neutral?

– Business priorities
Are businesses organised into associations which can provide a representative list of areas of concern? Is field research needed to determine priority areas?

– Existing organisations
Can dialogue be established through harnessing existing structures which are moribund or ineffective or successful but only in a limited sphere? If a new structure is required to fill a vacuum, does it avoid duplicating or undermining the work of existing organizations?

– Sense of urgency
Is there a sense of urgency arising from a commonly-recognized need to solve a pressing problem? Can such a sense be generated by focusing public awareness on a commonly-recognized problem? Can it be generated through PR, media management, holding a high-profile forum, or imposition of artificial deadlines?

– Establishing credibility
Is there a need or scope for the government to build trust by making a visible commitment which can be verified in a short time? Have respected individuals in the business community been enlisted to act as "champions" among their peers? Is the sponsor credible in terms of providing sufficient funds without undermining legitimacy?

2. Organizing participation

– Selection mechanisms
What is the mechanism for deciding who will be invited to participate? Are there clear and explicit criteria for membership which minimize the risk of resentment from those who are excluded? Are there credible safeguards against the possibility of privileged access to ministers conferring unfair business advantages?

– Terms of membership
Will membership be permanent or ad hoc, or a combination such as permanent membership of plenary body with ad hoc invitations to join issue-driven working groups? Will members attend as representatives of their organizations or as private individuals? Are members required to make commitments, such as organizations being represented by the same individuals, or membership lapsing with poor attendance?

– Choosing key individuals
Are public sector representatives drawn from the highest possible levels of government? Has every effort been made to involve companies which enjoy a good reputation for social responsibility? Are individuals involved who are widely respected, dynamic, open-minded, unafraid to speak their minds, and who seem likely to be motivated as much by public spirit as their own personal financial interests? Are enough women involved?

– Striking a balance
Is the membership small enough to create a reasonable probability of cohesion and efficiency, while broad enough to reduce the risk of institutional capture and to have legitimacy in the eyes of the public?

– Including SMEs
Are home-grown SMEs adequately represented? Has the partnership made adequate efforts to harness existing business member organizations and chambers of commerce? If no strong, credible and representative business associations exist, can existing associations be strengthened or new ones formed?

– Civil society
Has adequate consideration been given to the pros and cons, in terms of logistics versus legitimacy, of involving representatives of civil society, such as labor unions, consumer groups, environmental groups, NGOs, academics, media and research institutes?

3. Structure

– Permanent secretariat
Is there a permanent secretariat – either free-standing or lodged within a participating organization – responsible for arranging meetings, distributing agendas and minutes, operating as contact point, etc? Does the secretariat have sufficient funding, logistical capacity and experience among its staff experience to establish credibility?

– Individual leadership
Is the head of the secretariat a dynamic, experienced and well-informed individual who will be able to command the trust and respect of all participants?

– Working groups
Are working groups to be organized by issue, by industry, by region or by some combination of factors? What is the mechanism for deciding on the agenda and composition of each working group, and for deciding when specific working groups need to be reformed or disbanded and new ones set up?

– Government structure
Has the structure of the partnership been designed to mesh with the government's decision-making structure? Are technical staff from relevant ministries invited to give input? Has sufficient consideration been given to establishing dialogue with decision-making entities at local, regional and cross-national levels?

– Setting the tone
Is there an explicit commitment to supporting transparency, openness and the ability to speak freely? Is there a commitment to no items being off-limits for discussion?

– Managing commitment
Is there a clear timetable for meetings, publicized well in advance? Are agendas clear and focused and accompanied by thorough advance research, allowing meetings to proceed quickly and efficiently? Are efforts made to minimize demands on time so as to be reasonable to expect from busy individuals?

– Flexibility
Does the structure include the flexibility to reform itself if its initial set-up proves to be insufficiently effective? Has thought been given to possible ways of handling scenarios in which the partnership needs to be dissolved?

4. Setting the goals – and reaching them

– Mission statements
Are general objectives clearly defined, such as improving competitiveness and building relationships?

– Managing expectations
Has the partnership avoided the risk of raising expectations too high and setting the stage for disillusionment?

– Quantifiable outcomes
Are there specific targets – for example, achieving legislative reforms, publishing "business roadblocks" and "business roadmaps", holding conferences, improving a country's position in international league tables – which are concrete enough for stakeholders to be able to assess the partnership's effectiveness?

– Low-hanging fruit
Have specific reforms been set as immediate priorities which are achievable in the short term, affect the private sector broadly and command wide social acceptance?

– Monitoring and accountability
Are monitoring and accountability mechanisms in place to ensure that agreements in principle translate into action on the ground? Do these mechanisms also serve to build public confidence by increasing transparency and reducing the risk of subversion into rent-seeking activities?

– Clarity and credibility
Is sufficient expertise available to ensure that policy papers and reform proposals are clear, credible, thoroughly researched and compellingly argued?

5. Role of donors

– Public image
Is the donor organization's role commensurate with its public image – ie a cheerleader role if it is trusted and respected, a behind-the-scenes role if it is the object of public suspicion?

– Avoiding favoritism
Does the donor's involvement raise any prospect of emphasizing the interests of some stakeholders above those of others?

– Backseat driving
To what extent is the donor willing to provide funding, logistical support and advice while leaving it up to the participants to decide on recommendations and reforms? Is the donor's sponsorship primarily a means of getting its own agenda implemented, and does this create credibility and legitimacy problems?

– Transferring ownership
Is funding committed for a sufficiently long period to establish credibility in the partnership's sustainability? Does the donor have a long-term plan for helping the partnership ultimately to generate its own means of support?

6. Outreach

– Branding and marketing
Has the partnership been given a strong brand identity with a name that succinctly captures its aims, and a logo that features prominently on all press releases, documents, photo opportunities etc?

– Using the media
Is there a policy of open and active engagement with journalists? Are public announcements of aims used as a way of creating pressure on the participants to live up to expectations?

– Engaging the grassroots
Have efforts been made to engage SMEs, through existing business associations and/or directly through eg mail-outs, field research, travelling roadshows? Is there a quick, simple and well-publicised method for stakeholders to submit recommendations for inclusion in the reform agenda?

– Enlisting the public
Has a website been set up to disseminate information and request feedback? Is there a marketing strategy to drum up support for reform among the general public, by explaining in easy-to-grasp terms the benefits of reform for ordinary people?

– Targeting decision-makers
Are there specific efforts to reach out to parliamentarians and local-level politicians whose motivations can be critical in the practical implementation of reforms?

– Sharing experience
Are mechanisms in place to share experience and best practice with other competitiveness partnerships, at subregional, regional and global levels?