

# Unified Partnering Playbook: All Players!

# SPEAKER



## Michael Blount AECOM

Senior Vice President

- All about the Florida Gators
- Retired Seabee
- Swimming, Hiking, Biking and Camping

# SPEAKER



## Angie Martinez, P.E. MARTINEZ

Vice President

- Not a Gator 🤪 LOVE Auburn sports and fantasy football
- Was a DJ on my college radio station (WEGL FM 91.1)
- Drove a Yugo in High School (ask me for a story!)
- Don't make me pick between the beach and mountains

# Partnering with in DoD

Why are we here!

## Unified Partnering Directive

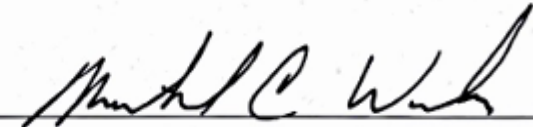
**Task** - The Unified Partnering Directive initiative aims to consolidate the partnering guidance for projects involving USACE and NAVFAC construction contracts into a single document, as industry stakeholders prefer a unified set of terms and rules. The comparison of existing USACE and NAVFAC partnering documents revealed significant similarities, making the task feasible.

**Difficulty** – SAME's Construction Community of Interest (subgroup on Partnering) submitted USACE's and NAVFAC's Partnering Guidance into an AI engine (<https://chat-v2.niprpt.mil/>) to compare. The documents were found to be very similar. Documents: USACE (Engineering Pamphlet 34-1-1 - Partnering Playbook: Building Strong Relationships Across the Construction Project Delivery Life Cycle) and NAVFAC (Project Partnering Implementation Guide V2.0). So, the task is not difficult. The comparison is attached.

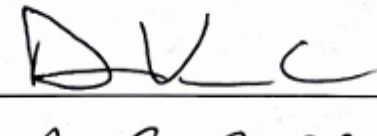
**Action** – SAME will provide/sponsor a task team to create a Unified Partnering Directive to be used by USACE and NAVFAC. The task team will be comprised of Industry and Government members, with USACE and NAVFAC leading the direction of the team and providing final approval of the product.

**Task Charter** – SAME commits a team of industry volunteers to assist USACE and NAVFAC in the task of producing a Unified Partnering Directive that will promulgate how both agencies execute partnering. USACE commits team members familiar with their Partnering Playbook and Partnering in general. NAVFAC commits team members familiar with their Partnering Implementation Guide and Partnering in general.

Mike Wehr, Executive Director SAME



Rear Admiral Dean VanderLey, NAVFAC



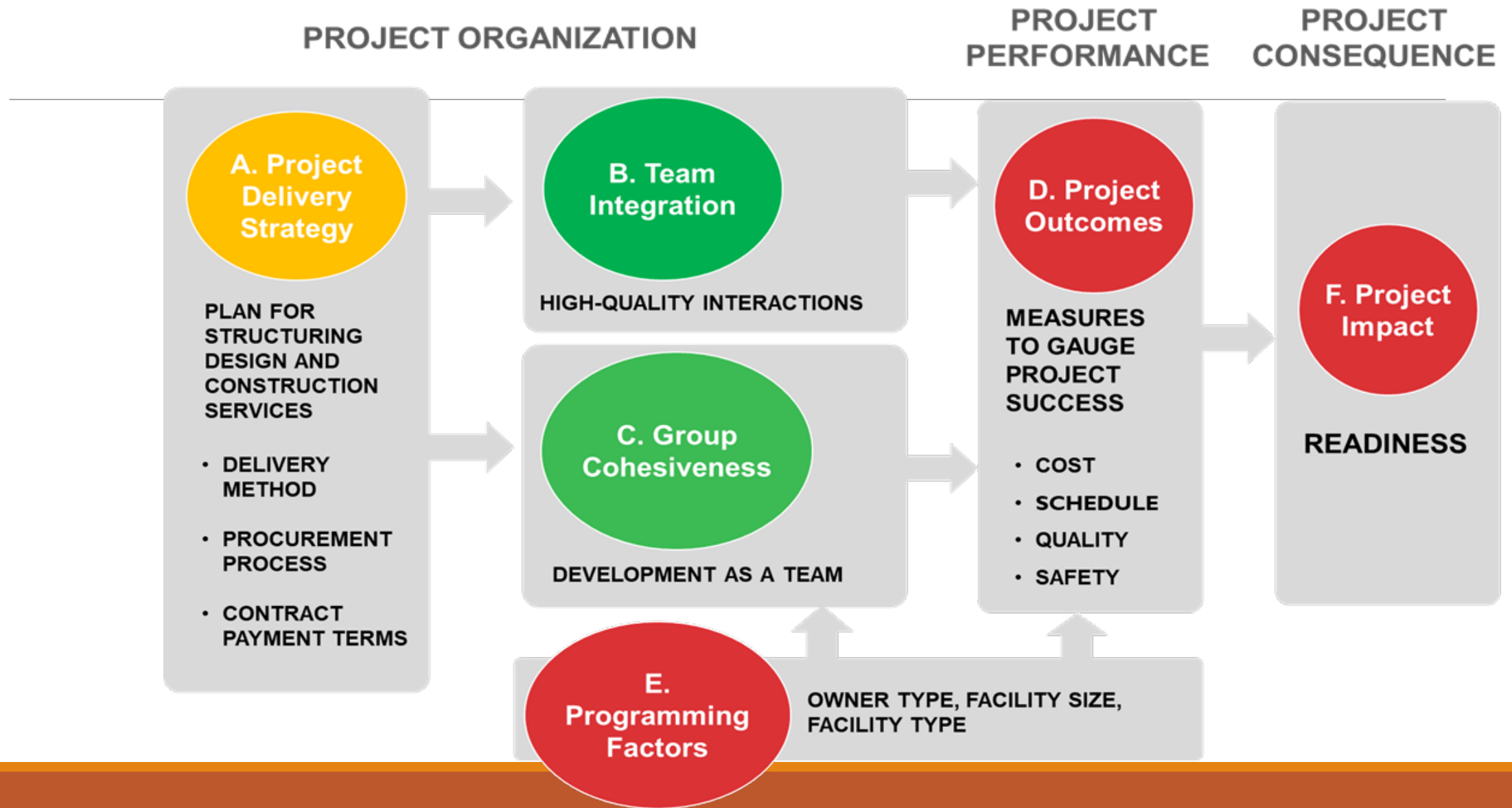
15 May 2025

Brigadier General Kirk E. Gibbs, USACE



15 May 2025

# Partnering Continuum



## 3 Cs of Successful Relationships: A Mindset

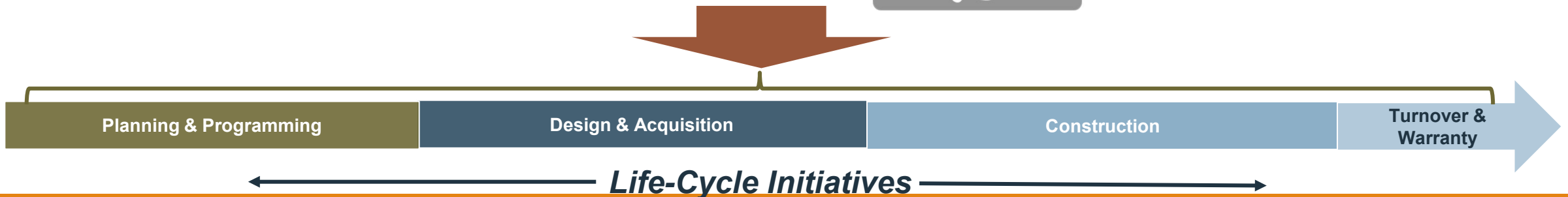


Consistent  
Application



## Strategic Relationships

- ✓ Value-Driven
- ✓ High Trust
- ✓ Stakeholder-Focused
- ✓ Shared Risk & Reward
- ✓ Common Vision & Goals
- ✓ Mutual Accountability
- ✓ Principled Delivery



# Partnering Plan

The **Partnering Plan** is a living document that outlines how the team will implement the partnering philosophy across the project delivery life cycle.

It has six required components.

## PARTNERING PLAN

Partnering Charter

Partnering Intensity Assessment

Communication Protocols

Shared Risk Register

Issue Resolution Ladder

Relationship Maintenance Plan

# Partnering Done Right – An Industry Perspective

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# Why but more important Why Not?

Partnering is about agreeing what success looks like – beyond just “follow the contract.”

When trust is present, we solve problems together; when distrust is present, projects stall

When projects stall the mission is affected and everyone loses

# Tailored Partnering

Partnering Intensity Assessment lets us scale effort to project risk & complexity.

Trusted, qualifications-based partners can be managed differently than low-bid projects.

Tailored approach = more efficient use of time, fewer meetings for low-risk projects, more structure for high-risk ones.

# Shared Risk Register – Turning Complaints into Action

## Examples of Contractor Risks:

- Delays in building access / security escorts
- Government review times exceeding schedule
- Conflicting or ambiguous requirements
- Funding obligation delays (cash flow risk)
- Stakeholder misalignment or personnel turnover

## Examples of Government Risks:

- Contractor schedule slippage causing mission impacts
- Safety incidents or poor QC requiring rework
- Submittals or RFIs of poor quality slowing review
- Incomplete design packages leading to change orders
- Financial instability of contractor impacting performance

# Governance + Training + Accountability

- Needs:
  - Training: Ensure everyone understands partnering philosophy and tools.
  - Consequences: Use team health assessments as feedback to leadership.
  - Follow-through: Address negative behaviors that undermine partnering.
- - Goal: decisions made collaboratively, based on shared vision, not fear of worst-case scenarios.
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# Partnering Done Right = Better Outcomes

- Better communication, faster issue resolution, fewer claims.
- Focus on solving problems, not defending positions.
- Shared commitment leads to mission success for the warfighter.

And of course, partnering isn't always easy — Jenn will walk us through common barriers and how to overcome them so we can make this vision a reality.

# Barriers to Partnering

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# Organizational Culture Barriers

Examples:

Commitments made in partnering sessions aren't carried through

Past negative experiences → lasting distrust

Organizations disagree on what “partnering” means

Documentation > problem-solving

# Individual Resistance to Partnering

Examples:

Rigid contract interpretations > mutually beneficial solutions

Late in communicating risks, mistakes, or road blocks

Refusing to compromise

Hoarding information

“We” and “they” language

# Poor Team Integration

Examples:

Silos: minimal cross-functional collaboration

Little effort to understand partners' challenges or constraints

Lack of joint problem-solving or shared accountability

Infrequent communication between different orgs or disciplines

# Leadership Not Walking the Talk

## Examples:

Unclear success criteria; unaligned incentives

Frequent staff turnover prevents relationship building

Decision-making authority isn't pushed down to field level

No consequences for team members who resist partnering behaviors

Leaders resolve conflicts > coaching team members to resolve them

# Taking Action

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When barriers are identified, teams should:

1. **Address them immediately** through candid team discussions
2. **Bring in a neutral facilitator** for significant/systemic issues
3. **Focus on specific behaviors** rather than personality conflicts
4. **Align incentives and accountability measures** with partnering goals

Remember: **Successful partnering requires commitment at all levels**—from individual team members changing daily practices to organizations restructuring how they measure success.



Download Top 5  
Partnering Practices



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