



BS 11000  
Collaborative Business Relationships  
It's your choice  
Your implementation guide

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...making excellence a habit.™

# Background

**BS 11000** is a recognized standard for ensuring mutually beneficial business collaboration. The standard helps organizations choose appropriate business partners and develop a working relationship based on joint trust. BS 11000 can also improve business performance by reducing costs, encouraging the shared use of resources, reducing risk and enhancing opportunities for innovation. As a result partnership projects are more likely to be delivered efficiently, within budget and to a consistently high standard.

This guide will help you understand how BS 11000 helps you improve your business. BSI can support you all the way along this journey – through guidance, training, independent assessment and software solutions. Let us help you demonstrate your integrity and credentials as a sound business partner and secure commercial longevity.



# Reaping the benefits of collaborative working and encouraging business trust

Relationships impact every aspect of business operations. In the context of BS 11000 collaboration may occur as individual one-to-one partnerships or it may involve multiple parties working together such as external alliance partners, suppliers, internal divisions and customers. An organization must therefore take a structured approach to partnering and be confident that the relationship will complement and enhance existing business activities.

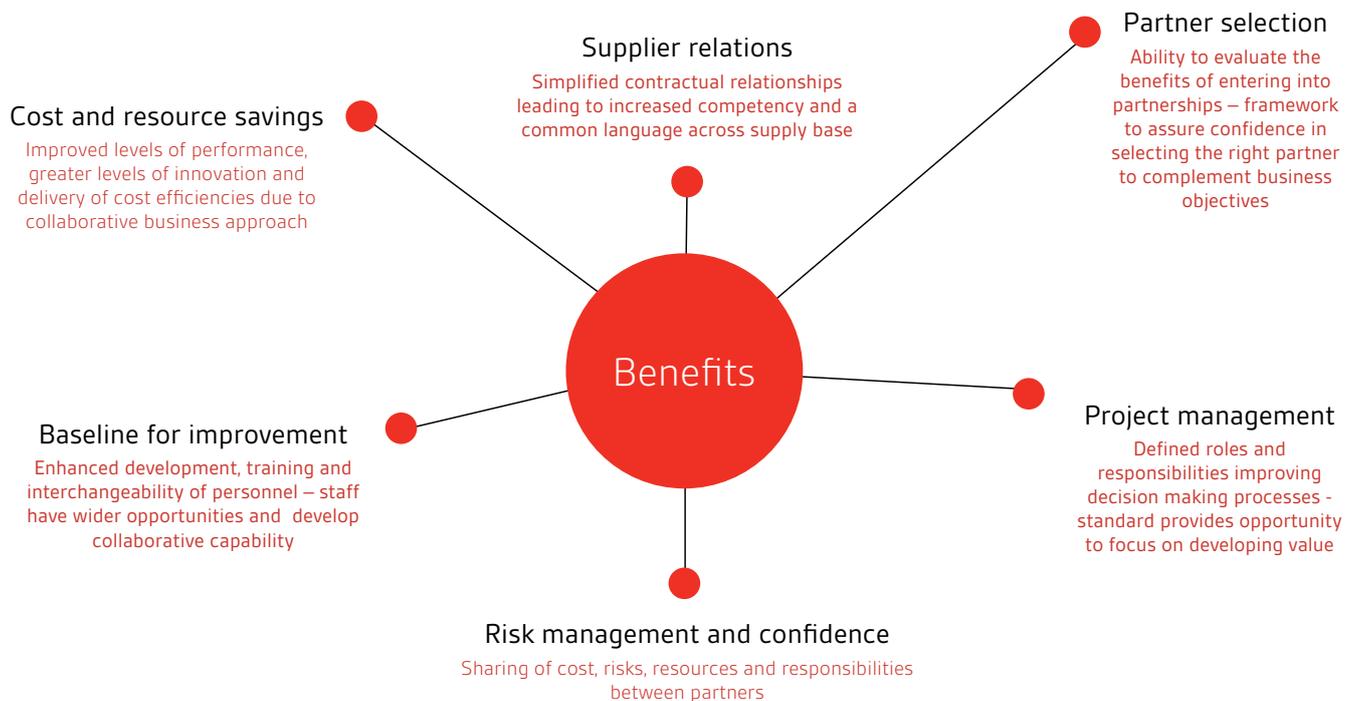
The following themes are fundamental to the success of any collaborative venture:

- Alignment with business objectives and desired outcomes, both internal and those agreed with external partners
- Agreement, governance and alignment of common operations and activities
- The creation of value and delivery of mutual benefits
- Effective integration of appropriate risk management

Firstly you need to understand the standard and the task in hand. Purchasing a copy of the standard is the way to start as this provides lots of information and guidance on implementation.

Learn more about the standards and guides available from BSI [bsigroup.com/shop](https://www.bsigroup.com/shop)

## Benefits which BSI clients have experienced as a result of implementing BS 11000 Collaborative Business Relationships:



Understanding and communicating the benefits above will help you structure your processes and secure commitment and support from your organization - these are critical factors for ensuring the success of your Collaborative Business Relationships system.

# Understanding BS 11000

Collaboration is now a popular business tool for promoting shared knowledge and driving innovation. However the joining of company cultures, the misalignment of corporate goals and disparity in readiness for partnership remain potential pitfalls - that's where BS 11000 can help.

The standard is based on an eight stage framework which reflects the overall lifecycle of a collaborative relationship. The model helps organizations to assess and develop their own particular approach to partnerships and is structured in three distinct phases -Strategic, Engagement and Management.

## Strategic

**Awareness** – includes the review of strategic policy and processes for collaborative working

**Knowledge** – helps the production of a business case and benefits analysis against a partnership opportunity

**Internal assessment** – identifies the capability and readiness of an organization for partner engagement

## Engagement

**Partner selection** – encourages a structured approach to identify, evaluate and select partners

**Working together** – establishes the operational structure, governance, roles and responsibilities to achieve collaborative business objectives

**Value creation** – determines an appropriate approach to ensure mutual benefit from the relationship

## Management

**Staying together** – ensures effective measurement and monitoring of the relationship for optimal performance

**Exit strategy** – addresses the need to develop and maintain an effective strategy for disengagement where appropriate.

There is a need to focus on building a project champion and supporting team and ensuring that you get commitment and buy-in to the project from your organization. It is important that they all understand why you are implementing the system and the benefits it will bring the business.

At the heart of a successful collaborative approach is a Relationship Management Plan (RMP). The RMP identifies how the partnership will be applied within an organization and establishes open, honest lines of communication between collaborators. The plan should be updated as the collaboration evolves in order to provide a record and working platform for all involved in the partnership.

“Gaining the certification for BS 11000 has benefitted our business. It provides our clients with clear evidence of our collaborative intent and our capability. This was a key objective for the company and we are delighted with the results.”

**John Tuite**, Managing Director,  
Kelly Integrated Transport Services Limited





## Understanding the eight stage framework

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# Strategic – knowledge and internal assessment

### Awareness

If you are considering initiating a collaborative partnership it is important to consider the true value of the engagement - collaboration may sometimes be counterproductive. You must ensure that you focus your efforts on those relationships where collaboration will deliver tangible benefits.

- Appoint a Senior Executive Responsible (SER) for the development and implementation of the management system
- Define and agree the policy, objectives and scope for your collaborative partnership
- Identify the potential benefits that could be realized as a result of collaboration and base your objectives around them
- Clarify procedures for choosing internal and external business partners, then segment and prioritize these relationships
- Create competency models to ensure that appropriate behaviours are adhered to at all times
- Establish, implement and maintain a defined procedure for conducting and quantifying the initial risks against the potential benefits of partnering
- Develop an action plan for each significant business relationship (ensure it includes market propositions, activity sectors, customer types and geographic segments)
- Produce an overview document describing how your system meets the requirements of the standard
- Initiate the relationship management plan (RMP) which should include the scope and core elements of the management system.

# Strategic – knowledge and internal assessment

## Knowledge

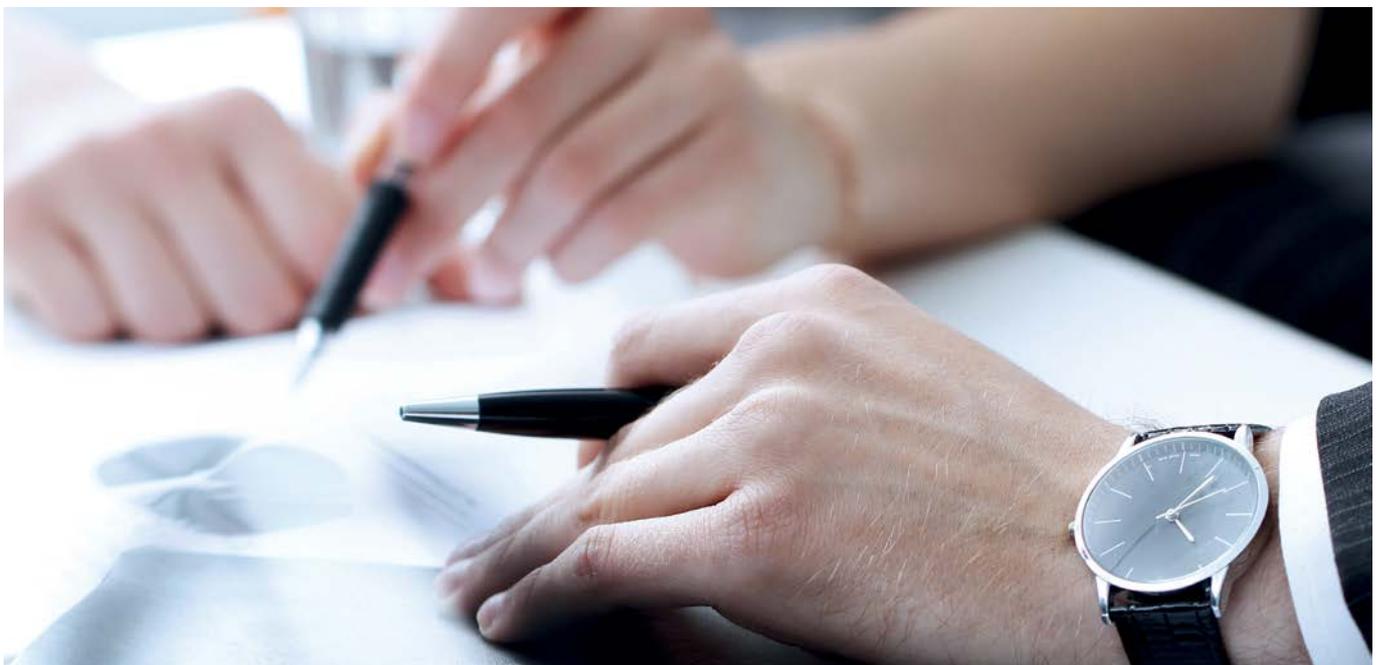
Your collaboration strategy needs to be based on knowledge and be aligned to your business objectives. You may possibly decide at this point that collaboration is not the appropriate way forward for your business.

- Evaluate each opportunity to understand whether a partnership is appropriate
  - Ensure key individuals involved in the process are adequately trained and knowledgeable
  - Capture knowledge learnt from partnerships and establish guidelines for sharing that information
  - Define the procedure for developing a strategy and business case for each opportunity
  - Identify objectives and get organizational focus approved – make sure this is communicated within the business
- Analyse possible implications of the relationship on the market and customers
  - Evaluate the potential value of the relationship at each stage of the strategy
  - Carry out an initial exit strategy assessment
  - Maintain a procedure for assessing and managing risks and identifying opportunities as a result of the partnership
  - Establish and review interdependencies for each collaborative relationship
  - Review and update the RMP accordingly.

## Internal assessment

Understanding the strength and weaknesses of your own organization is critical if collaboration is to be successful. It is important that collaboration is not biased towards the performance of the external partner.

- Ensure policies and processes are in place and are reviewed and updated to monitor the effectiveness of the partnership
- Appoint appropriate leadership to take the strategy forward
- Establish the criteria for partner selection
- Assess the skillset within the organization and recruit or develop people as necessary
- Develop an internal action plan with specific responsibilities and deadlines
- Get the SER to review the management system regularly to ensure its on-going suitability, effectiveness and relevance
- Update the RMP to incorporate the output of the internal assessment.





# Engagement – partner selection, working together and value creation

## Partner selection

Finding the right partner is essential. Too often the choice of partner is based on assumptions or long standing relationships that simply migrate. It is therefore important to understand the partner profile you are looking for and how you will evaluate their capability to collaborate.

- Nominate and evaluate potential partners against the agreed selection criteria
- Create partner selection plans with specific measures to address short, medium and long term issues expected from the relationship
- Create common and joint objectives between partners
- Establish a negotiation strategy to facilitate collaboration
- Select appropriate partners after careful evaluation
- Update the RMP accordingly.

## Working together

A joint approach to determine the way you and your partners work together should now be established. Contractual frameworks, agreements, roles and responsibilities should also be defined.

- Identify parameters for governance - gain mutual agreement to support the joint programme, establish common objectives and appoint multi-party leadership.

- Establish an appropriate organizational structure including a joint management team and clearly defined roles and responsibilities
- Adopt and maintain a clear and effective communications strategy
- Set, agree and document a joint risk management policy. Agree a process for determining and approving contracting arrangements
- Establish, implement and maintain processes to monitor and measure performance and take corrective action for continual improvement
- Evaluate on-going value of the collaboration and competencies required for successful partnering
- Include all the above elements in the RMP.

## Value creation

The key to maintaining a strong business relationship is to ensure that your management system remains relevant to the project and continues to deliver additional value to all partners through joint improvement programmes.

- Make sure you and your partners continue to learn from experience and establish mechanisms for generating new ideas and encouraging innovation
- Update your RMP accordingly.

# Management – staying together and exit strategy

## Staying together

This stage focuses on ensuring your relationship is maintained at its most effective level. Here there is a focus on continual improvement and the development of a dispute resolution process is addressed.

- Continue to monitor and measure the relationship, document the outputs and address corrective actions
- Ensure your business delivers your part of the agreed governance process
- Continue to generate fresh ideas and revitalize the relationship for on-going partner success
- Measure performance and analyse results of the reviews
- Define and implement a procedure for issue resolution
- Update the RMP accordingly.

## Exit strategy

Successful partnerships are built on honesty and integrity and the ability to evolve with changing market conditions. Where there is a need for partners to disengage, an agreed exit strategy will ensure the separation is mutually respectful.

- Determine, maintain and review an agreed exit strategy considering impacts on both internal and external stakeholders
- Establish the boundaries of the relationship and potential areas for conflict
- Regularly evaluate changes to the organization, business environment, performance and market and their impact on the business relationship
- Define a process and responsibilities for initiating the exit strategy deployment and disengaging from the relationship
- Incorporate a business continuity plan in case of premature exit by a partner
- Consider future joint working opportunities
- Update the RMP accordingly.



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## tips to make BS 11000 work for you

- 1 Top management commitment is vital if the system is to be introduced successfully. Make sure senior managers are actively involved, approve resources and agree the key processes of the business.
- 2 Review systems, policies, procedures and processes you have in place at the moment. Then compare those with what BS 11000 asks for. You may be surprised how much you already do. The standard will allow you to keep the things that work for you while refining those that don't.
- 3 Make sure you have good internal communication channels and processes within the organization. Your employees need to be involved and kept informed of what's going on.
- 4 Give some thought to how departments work together. It's important that the people within your organization don't work in isolation but work as a team for the benefit of the customers and the business.
- 5 Don't ignore the impact that introducing these systems will have on your customers and suppliers. Speak to them to gain insight as to how they view your service and how they feel improvements could be made.
- 6 Clearly lay out a well-communicated plan of activities and timescales. Make sure everybody understands them and their role in achieving them.
- 7 Consider using your IT systems or software such as BSI's Entropy™ Software to manage your system and documentation more efficiently. The nature and complexity of your documentation will depend on the nature and complexity of your organization.
- 8 Make the achievement of BS 11000 as engaging and as inclusive as possible. This will increase motivation.
- 9 Train your staff to carry out internal audits of your system. Auditing can help with an individual's development and understanding as well as providing valuable feedback on potential problems and opportunities for improvement.
- 10 And lastly if you feel you are doing something just for the sake of the standard and it doesn't add value to your business – question whether it's necessary.

“As part of our strategy to widen our scope of offering to key clients with more front end design, and more aftercare and maintenance we are needing to form relationships with ‘non-construction’ partners who we may have little knowledge about. BS 11000 is helping to ensure these are the right partners and the relationships are set up correctly.”

**Tony Blanch**, Business Improvement Director, Costain

“BS 11000 gives us the strategic framework to develop, with our key suppliers, the policies and processes, the culture and behaviours required to establish successful collaborative relations and to drive continual improvement. Maintaining collaborative business relations can only lead to benefits for Network Rail and its suppliers, for the rail industry and for Britain.”

**Simon Kirby**, Managing Director,  
Network Rail Infrastructure Projects

# How BSI supports you throughout your implementation of BS 11000

## Speak to someone at BSI to help you understand the process

If you are new to standards then we know it may seem rather daunting at first. But don't worry - just pick up the phone to speak to one of our people. We can turn jargon into English and put you on the right track for success.

– **simply call +971 4 336 4917.**

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## Commit to best practice and start making excellence a habit

Once we have received your application, we will identify the best people to assist you on your journey – those that know your industry sector and will clearly understand your specific challenges. We also have some useful self-assessment tools to help you get started.

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## Engage your team and the rest of the organization

Success will depend on a team effort so get the backing of your organization by helping them understand how they can contribute to the system. Consider whether people have the necessary skills and if not equip them accordingly. BSI offers a number of courses and workshops to help you plug this knowledge gap.

**Call our training team on +971 4 336 4917 .**

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## Gain better management control with easy reporting

BS 11000 requires that you hold and make documents and information available. You can make life easier by using BSI's web-based business improvement software which allows you to track and report all of your key metrics in real-time.

– **call +971 4 336 4917 to find out more.**

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## Get ahead with pre-assessment and identify potential loopholes

Many BSI customers like to get reassurance that they are on the right track before committing to the official stage 1 assessment. At your discretion BSI will carry out an optional 'gap-analysis' or pre-assessment visit to help you identify any weaknesses or omissions prior to formal assessment. **Call our team on +971 4 336 4917 to book a pre-assessment**

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## Celebrate the achievement of your official BS 11000 certificate

BSI will assess your Collaborative Business Relationships system in two stages. Our Stage 1 visit will involve the review of the system against the requirements of the standard. Stage 2 verifies that your management system has been effectively implemented and that any issues raised during Stage 1 have been satisfactorily addressed. Now it is time to celebrate your success.

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## Use your certificate to promote your business

Once certified you will be able to make your own mark by displaying the BSI Assurance Mark. It's a valuable marketing tool that you can use to promote your organization; differentiate you from your competitors and win new business.

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## Help for continuous improvement

BSI's support extends far beyond the issue of a certificate. Your certificate is valid for three years, however our team will continue to work with you to ensure that your business remains compliant and you strive for continual improvement.

**Call +971 4 336 4917 to find out more about BSI's Entropy™ Software which can help you manage your systems**

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## We know BS 11000; BSI shaped the original standard.

BSI...

- Shaped the original BS 11000 standard
- Has the most highly trained and knowledgeable assessors
- Offers the widest range of support solutions in the market place
- Is the number one certification body in the UK, USA and Korea
- Looks after more than 70,000 global clients
- Has an unrivalled International reputation for excellence

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