



# Private Sector Engagement Spotlight on Co-creation: Alliance for Inclusive and Nutritious Food Processing

**Co-creation** can take many forms, ranging from a series of phone calls with a prospective partner to a structured, facilitated series of workshops with many partners.

**A Global Development Alliance (GDA)** is one way USAID works with the private sector to co-create and implement market-based solutions to key development challenges.

**The GDA Annual Program Statement (APS)** is an invitation to the private sector and other potential partners to co-create such solutions with USAID. After exploring whether and how their interests align, USAID and the private sector jointly develop market-based approaches aimed at achieving their business and development interests.

**To learn more** about the co-creation process under the GDA APS, visit [www.usaid.gov/gda/co-creation-process](http://www.usaid.gov/gda/co-creation-process) or contact [gda@usaid.gov](mailto:gda@usaid.gov).

**To Explore** additional Private Sector Engagement (PSE) resources visit [www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/private-sector-engagement](http://www.usaid.gov/work-usaid/private-sector-engagement) or contact the USAID PSE Hub at [globalpartnerships@usaid.gov](mailto:globalpartnerships@usaid.gov).

## Solidifying Shared Interests Through a Growing Alliance

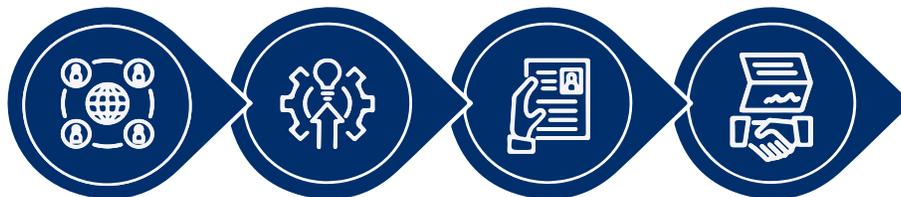
How did **Partners in Food Solutions** — representing member companies General Mills (GM), Cargill, DSM, Bühler, The Hershey Company, Ardent Mills, and The J.M. Smucker Company — and **TechnoServe** work with USAID to build upon two previous partnerships to broaden the scale and scope of their collaboration through a new GDA, the **Alliance for Inclusive and Nutritious Food Processing (AINFP)**?

## Opportunities, Challenges, and Aligned Interests

The AINFP model evolved from 2009 when GM, TechnoServe, and USAID partnered through the African Alliance for Improved Food Processing (AAIFP). The 2009 AAIFP GDA set out to support the production of affordable, healthy, fortified foods in Sub-Saharan Africa, in cooperation with small- and medium-sized food processors.

Three years later, the AAIFP pilot ushered in the **Solutions for African Food Enterprises (SAFE)**, GDA with Partners in Food Solutions, which included GM and additional global food companies, and TechnoServe as implementer. SAFE aimed to increase the competitiveness of the African food processing sector to expand availability of affordable and nutritious foods to local populations.

By 2018, Partners in Food Solutions, representing seven global food companies, including GM, came together with USAID and TechnoServe to pursue a broader set of outcomes under AINFP. This time, the **Initiative for Smallholder Finance** joined the alliance to improve diets by helping to finance improved food processing in Tanzania, Kenya, Ethiopia, Zambia, and Malawi. The alliance has brought world-class technical and business expertise to build the capacity of African food processors, improving the availability of nutritious foods and creating market opportunities for smallholder farmers in the countries where USAID works.



**INITIATE**  
Do we have something to talk about?

**EXPLORE**  
Identify aligned interests

**DIG DEEPER**  
Develop market-based approaches

**MAKE A PLAN**  
Determine roles and responsibilities

**COMMIT**  
Formalize partnership with appropriate agreements

**COLLABORATE**  
Continue co-creative spirit throughout implementation

*Phases of co-creation*



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## Good Co-creation Practices

**Build on what works.** By co-creating a new GDA with past partners, AINFP had access to data, knowledge and know-how of more than 100 food processors in five countries to draw upon. Partners had a collective experience in how to work with and support small and medium food processors to produce more safe, nutritious, and affordable foods.

**Include new partners and evolve approaches based on learning and context.** While partners began discussions based on HIV/AIDS-focused priorities, the USAID team quickly realized the importance of processed food production, so the Bureau for Food Security (the predecessor of the Bureau for Resilience and Food Security) was tapped to lead on the USAID side. By including both remote and local partners such as TechnoServe, AINFP benefited from a good mix of essential capabilities and networks.

**Exercise patience.** Take the time to get to know each partner's constraints and priorities during the co-creation process. The outcomes achieved from 12 years of partnership could not have been achieved by a single meeting or conversation.



## Lessons Learned

**Appoint a single relationship manager within USAID.** Private sector partners, especially new partners, need a clear and reliable communication channel with USAID to quickly respond to questions, make decisions, and “translate” Agency language and processes. In 2009, GM struggled to get unified Agency communication from the 15 USAID contacts. After a single relationship manager was appointed, a functioning partnership with co-creation capacities emerged.

**Evolving beyond the Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) Model.** In 2007, a meeting between the CEO of GM, Ken Powell, and the United Nations' Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, sparked Powell to volunteer GM expertise for African food production in Africa. GM staff have developed new skills and perspectives, including those employees who were able to connect with this initiative without leaving Minneapolis. What started as a CSR initiative has now become Partners in Food Solutions — a non-profit organization — demonstrating the sustainability of enterprise-driven initiatives for public good.



## The Co-creation Value Proposition

Continuous conversations with co-creation partners led to an exponential development outcome where partners were able to learn together, adapt, and adopt new partners and approaches.

Learn more about the [Alliance for Inclusive and Nutritious Food Processing](#)



### About the United States Agency for International Development

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