

# Advancing collaboration practice fact sheets



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**aracy**



# What is collaboration?

## Fact sheet 1

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Collaborative practice is now central to the way we work, deliver services and produce innovations. Collaboration generally refers to individuals or organisations working together to address problems and deliver outcomes that are not easily or effectively achieved by working alone. Collaborative relationships are attractive to organisations because the synergies realised by combining effort and expertise produce benefits greater than those achieved through individual effort. The superior benefits created by combined effort are known as collaborative advantage.

Key drivers for a collaborative approach include:

- reduction of duplication and overlap
- accessing limited resources and expanding opportunities
- increasing efficiency and effectiveness
- organisational legitimacy
- resolving intractable social problems and completing complex projects.

Collaboration is part of a continuum of joint working relationships that are defined by:

- the intensity of the relationship
- communication flows and distribution of power between the participants
- length of relationship
- level of risk and reward.

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The continuum shown in Table 1 reviews the various characteristics of cooperation, coordination and collaboration. Collaboration has distinct characteristics that differentiate it from cooperation and coordination.<sup>1</sup>

Exploring the features of the 3Cs—cooperation, coordination and collaboration—highlights their different purposes, the level of integration between participants and the contributions required of participants in the relationship. This also provides a clearer understanding of what collaboration is and when it should and should not be used.<sup>2</sup>

**Cooperation:** In cooperative endeavours, the focus is primarily on sharing information and expertise. In this type of relationship participants are loosely connected so their contribution to the relationship is low. Each participant remains completely independent from the others. There are only minor changes in how each participant does business, but they have the advantage of learning from others and being able to modify the way they work. Cooperation is characterised by low

- 1 Himmelman, A.T. (2002). *Collaboration for a change: Definitions, decision-making roles, and collaboration process guide*. Minneapolis: Himmelman Consulting; Konrad, E. (1996). A multidimensional framework for conceptualising human service integration initiatives, in J. Marquart & E. Konrad (eds). *Evaluating initiatives to integrate Human Services: A publication of the American Evaluation Association*. 69. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- 2 Keast, R., Brown, K. & Mandell, M. (2007). Getting the right mix: Unpacking integration meanings and strategies. *International Public Management Journal*. 10:1 (pp. 9–33).

levels of risk and reward since it emphasises reaching agreement to adjust specific actions rather than making changes to the organisation's operations.

**Coordination** is based on a greater sense of interdependence between organisations. In coordinated approaches, the parties realise the need to work together to meet a set goal. This process requires participants to tightly align resources and effort. Although involved in set joint policies and programs, organisations retain control over their own operations. Coordination requires a higher level of contribution and commitment as well as stronger relationships between participants. These stronger relationships are often based on prior relationships and experiences between participants.

**Collaboration** is characterised by strong and highly interdependent relationships. Participants realise that to achieve outcomes they have to agree to radically alter the way they think, behave and operate. Collaboration is not about making adjustments at the periphery; it is about systems change and as such participants are involved in a high-risk, high-stakes and volatile environment that can produce results significantly different from those originally intended. This requires a high level of trust and extensive dialogue between participants, however, it can be highly rewarding for those willing to take the risks. For a

collaboration to work there can no longer be 'business as usual'. Collaboration demands participants forge new relationships and learn new ways of dealing with each other.

Each of these relationships has merit and usefulness. They should be viewed as complementary ways of achieving integration and joint working modes.

The challenge for practitioners is to match the type of joint working relationship with the identified purpose or required outcome of their project or program. If the goal is sharing information or expertise and adjusting actions, cooperative effort should be sufficient. Alternatively, if alignment of resources and activities is needed to achieve joint actions, then coordination becomes the appropriate mode. In this way, both cooperation and coordination are essentially about operating as normal but more efficiently. However, if working as usual is no longer sufficient, or the problem is so intractable that total systems change and innovation is required, collaboration is necessary.

Despite its many advantages collaboration is not a panacea to all social problems. It is one of a suite of possible strategies to enable individuals and organisations to work together more effectively. However, when implemented wisely, collaborations can be very powerful and effective mechanisms for social change.

**Table 1: Relationship continuum: characteristics of the 3Cs**

COOPERATION	COORDINATION	COLLABORATION
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Loose connections, low trust</li> <li>• Tacit information sharing</li> <li>• Ad hoc communication flows</li> <li>• Independent goals</li> <li>• Adapting to each other, or accommodating others' actions and goals</li> <li>• Power remains with organisations</li> <li>• Resources remain with organisations</li> <li>• Commitment and accountability to own organisation</li> <li>• Relational timeframe short</li> <li>• Low risk/low reward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Medium connections, work-based trust</li> <li>• Structured communication flows, formalised project-based information sharing</li> <li>• Joint policies, programs and aligned resources</li> <li>• Semi-interdependent goals</li> <li>• Power remains with parent organisations</li> <li>• Commitment and accountability to parent organisation and project</li> <li>• Relational timeframe medium-based on prior projects</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dense interdependent connections, high trust</li> <li>• Frequent communication</li> <li>• Tactical information sharing</li> <li>• Systems change</li> <li>• Collective resources</li> <li>• Negotiated shared goals</li> <li>• Power is shared between organisations</li> <li>• Commitment and accountability to network first then community and parent organisation</li> <li>• Relational timeframe—long term (3 years)</li> <li>• High risk/high reward</li> </ul>

# Why collaborate, and why now?

## Fact sheet 2

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Some of the biggest challenges facing contemporary society involve complex and intractable social problems, such as poverty, unemployment, homelessness, illicit drug use and abuse, climate change and environmental degradation. These issues continue to plague many communities despite concerted efforts to address them.

Complex social problems—sometimes referred to as ‘wicked problems’—share a number of characteristics.<sup>1</sup>  
Wicked problems:

- are socially complex with multiple layers of stakeholders
- are difficult to clearly define, and there is often disagreement about the causes of the problem
- have no clear or correct solution
- are interdependent and are often multi-causal
- defy conventional approaches to problem solving
- are cross-cutting, that is, they do not fit into neat functional, organisational boundaries
- are beyond the capacity of any one organisation or sector to respond to effectively.

Complex problems call for a different approach to problem identification, solution setting and action. In this context collaboration is considered the most appropriate and effective approach. Collaboration has core characteristics that challenge conventional individual and organisational thinking and practice. These characteristics include:

- trusting relationships
- a holistic problem perspective
- pooling of resources
- harnessing collective synergies and expanded skills.

## Trust

The higher degree of trust required in collaborative arrangements creates the environment needed to address complex problems. This trust environment permits increased levels of information sharing between collaboration members and the pooling of resources (knowledge, human resources and financial resources) to meet common goals. Stronger relationships between collaboration members also enhance their commitment to actively work together to meet their common objectives.

## Create a holistic view of the problem

By bringing together a diverse set of people and perspectives, collaborative approaches enable development of a holistic view of a complex problem. Such ‘big picture’ and inclusive thinking helps to identify the many causes of problems, how those causes are connected and how they build on each

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<sup>1</sup> Rittel, H. W. J. & Webber, M. M. (1973). Dilemmas in a general theory of planning. *Policy Sciences*. 4:2 (pp. 155–69).



other (are interdependent). By approaching a complex problem with a view to collaboration, members share information and conduct genuine dialogue to develop an understanding of the complexity of the problem and each other's position in relation to the problem. Members are able to consider the problem in a different light so that it can be tackled more effectively through a joint effort.

Collaboration allows member organisations to combine their different views, objectives, philosophies, resources and working practices to address a common challenge. There are also compelling financial reasons for collaboration. Pooling resources enables members to get extra mileage from existing organisational resources.

## Synergies

Collaboration draws individual and organisational knowledge, expertise and resources into a 'collective space' that sits between organisations and sectors.

The synergies identified and created from this pooling of resources can be harnessed to create innovative responses and ideas for social change, as well as generate outcomes beyond the members' initial investment. This synergistic process is the real advantage of collaboration, as it creates something that could not have been achieved by any one of the member organisations working in isolation.

## Individual and organisational learning

A further benefit of collaboration is capacity-building of participating individuals and organisations, as a result of the expanded skill set brought to the collaborative table, coupled with shared learning and the experience of working together.

## Key collaboration advantages

Key advantages of the collaborative approach include:

- a focused application of knowledge and expertise
- more effective use of resources
- a higher level of commitment to action
- more relevant and effective solutions.

Collaboration is a promising means of developing effective responses to many of the problems confronting our communities. Taking the first steps forward requires people and organisations to adjust their ways of thinking and behaving. It also means establishing new systems and processes within our organisations to facilitate and sustain collaborative efforts. We have reached a critical point in how we address the wellbeing of children and young people and a critical mass of knowledge has been established to shape action. The question is whether we are willing to make the changes necessary to establish collaborative practice as a legitimate reform goal and process.

# Collaboration and services

## Fact sheet 3

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All Australians want our children and youth to achieve their full potential and contribute constructively to the communities in which they live. To achieve this vision we need to reform the way we design and deliver services for children and youth. We have to build effective collaborations of policy administrators, practitioners and the research community—within and across their functional boundaries—to convert our shared desire into reality.

Despite best intentions and ongoing attention many children and youth in Australia still experience the multiple disadvantages of poverty, inadequate health care, poor educational outcomes, and the effects of dysfunctional family relationships. These problems are generally inter-related and difficult to respond to effectively. To better address the complex issues affecting our children and young people, we must work together to build a broad understanding of the scope of these problems and to identify and implement innovative solutions that will achieve sustainable outcomes for children and youth.

## Policy

Collaboration is central to the development and effective implementation of a consistent policy framework. Bringing together people with diverse expertise and experiences ensures policy development is informed by a greater knowledge base; policy makers gain a broader understanding of a complex issue, are better able to identify and target problem areas and identify innovative ideas to address those problem areas. Collaboration enables the development of a policy framework that addresses a problem holistically and includes interventions and policy solutions that have greater acceptance and traction in the community.

## Services

The traditional service model is for each agency to deal with one particular issue or problem at a time,

rather than considering the presenting child or young person holistically. This approach has resulted in many different services being assigned responsibility for various elements of a person's care package. Such a fragmented intervention approach has been found to deliver poor client outcomes, especially for children and youth. Parents and young people are often bewildered about how to access and manage the support of agencies. Often the agencies delivering services do not communicate with each other. At best this means children and youth (or their families) have to repeat their story to each agency they are referred to; at worst, the client falls between the services and their needs are not met. Furthermore, each agency has its own culture, language, aims and priorities. This makes it difficult for practitioners to see the young person as a whole and to offer a seamless service.

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Effective intervention calls for a comprehensive service approach that addresses the needs of the whole person, their family and community, in a seamless service delivery model, rather than dividing issues into separate functions and expecting children and youth to access different services for each of their 'needs'. To achieve this, services for children and youth need to share common aims, needs analysis, research, understanding and priorities. Rather than operating independently, service providers must form strategic partnerships with a range of other organisations that are providing services to the same target groups. Sharing information and making referrals is an essential part of this approach, but not enough. What is called for is a comprehensive and collaborative approach to strategic planning with partners, creating opportunities for the engaged participation of users. Collaboration will enable the development of new and flexible models of service development and delivery that cross disciplines and organisational boundaries.

## Research

There is a large body of knowledge about the development, needs and required services for children and youth. Much of this knowledge has been created by individual researchers or individual research bodies. However, increasingly it is understood that 'breakthrough' research and innovation occurs through collaborative practices, where groups of people share

information and pool knowledge and resources to create added value. The resulting synergies create novel spaces where people can interact and facilitate new knowledge that can be more broadly applied. Collaboration in research can also lead to mutual learning across agencies and sectors, add to the research capacity of participants, and open up avenues for exploration.

## Bringing it all together

Collaboration focuses the collective capacity of policy makers, service providers and researchers on addressing the needs of children and youth. It puts young people firmly at the centre of services and the need for individual services to compete for time, money and resources. Many initiatives have already made good progress in developing collaborations to benefit children. These services are now well positioned to build on the collaborative efforts that have been implemented to further develop their services and achieve the best possible outcomes.

Successful collaboration requires transformational leaders and services teams who work across service and professional boundaries and in close contact with local partners and communities, to reform the way we design and deliver services to meet the multifaceted needs of children and youth.

# When to collaborate?

## Fact sheet 4

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There are many benefits of collaboration, as outlined in ARACY's fact sheet 'Why collaborate?'. But collaboration is only one form of joint working relationship. It is most effective in particular circumstances and can be challenging to implement, hence it is not appropriate in every situation. The challenge for individuals and organisations wanting to work together is determining when to use collaboration and when to choose a simpler approach.

The Relationship Continuum presented in ARACY's 'What is collaboration?' fact sheet outlined three progressively more intense types of working relationship. These three types of relationship are called the 3Cs: cooperation, coordination and collaboration. All three approaches are useful and can be very effective. However, each has different purposes, is best used in different situations and, as you move up the continuum from cooperation to collaboration, presents progressively higher or riskier stakes for participants.

In many circumstances, it is sufficient just to share information, expertise and referrals on an ongoing basis. In other contexts rather than forging a new collaboration it may be beneficial to develop more efficient ways of working together by better aligning existing resources and effort, such as using taskforces and inter-agency committees. Equally, there are

some situations where single agency action remains appropriate.

This fact sheet presents criteria that can be used to decide whether to form a collaboration or whether one of the other forms of joint working relationship on the 3C continuum would be more appropriate.

## When to collaborate?

How, then, does a project manager or practitioner determine when collaboration is most appropriate and when other approaches to working together should be applied? Research suggests the decision to collaborate or not should be informed by:

- the nature and complexity of the presenting problem/s
- the sense of interdependency between involved agencies and individual members
- the willingness of members and parent organisations to engage in and sponsor new thinking and behaviours
- the level of collective commitment to change action.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Gray, B. (1989). *Finding common ground for multi-party problems*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Keast, R., Brown, K., Mandell, M.P. & Woolcock, G. (2004). Network structures: Working differently and changing expectations. *Public Administration Review*. 64:3 (pp. 363-371).



Although each of these factors is inter-related, for ease of understanding they are explained separately below.

### Level of complexity

Collaborations are formed to solve complex problems. Complex problems comprise multiple, interconnected elements that are hard to untangle. They defy precise problem definition, do not have clear solutions, cut across policy and service areas and resist solutions offered by single agencies. Since they are beyond the capacity of any one organisation or sector, complex problems require a more holistic and integrated approach that brings together the resources, knowledge, skills and capabilities of multiple organisations and people to devise solutions. Problems that don't meet these criteria can most likely be tackled through a cooperative or coordinated method. The more complex a problem the more likely collaboration is the best approach.

### Sense of interdependency

Collaboration is best used by organisations that recognise they need to work together – synchronising their time, knowledge and resources – to meet their individual and collective goals. This interdependence is based on the realisation collaboration will achieve a better outcome than can be achieved by an organisation working alone.

However, organisations that share a common goal, or want to address the same problem, often do not seek exactly the same outcomes. Each participant may have a different agenda, for example financial security, increased profile, development of knowledge and capacity or the opportunity to expand services, but they realise they cannot achieve their desired outcome unless they work with the other organisations in the collaboration. Hence each participant is not just *dependent* on the others, they are *interdependent*.

When deciding what sort of joint relationship is best, project managers should consider the depth of interdependency between organisations: the greater the interdependency the more likely a collaborative approach is required.

### Willingness to change

Collaboration is used to change existing systems and processes or to pursue a new creation or reform of some type. Collaboration enables – and requires – the participating organisations to develop a shared purpose and approach to addressing the issue or problem. Collaboration requires members to share not just resources, but also power and authority. Each participant must be willing to change their attitudes and working processes to consider their partners and the new working relationships. They also need to reconsider and redefine their various roles within the broader sector.

Systems change is a very risky proposition for all participants in a new working relationship. For a collaboration to be effective, each member must accept the need to change the way they have operated previously. Participating organisations must be willing to demonstrate their 'buy-in' and legitimise changes before they can occur. Their demonstrated commitment to change and to sharing power and resources is fundamental to a collaboration's success.

The volume and level of change required for collaboration will not always be appreciated and will sometimes be met with resistance from within the organisation and even from stakeholders. Project managers must carefully assess an organisation's capacity to change and adapt to the new working environment to determine if it will be an effective participant in a collaborative relationship.

### Level of collective commitment

Collaboration is not just about organisations reaching shared agreement on what they will work on. It requires participants to recognise the overriding need to provide the resources necessary for the collaboration to be successful, stay with and champion the collaboration's initiatives, and most importantly embed and sustain the new ways of working within individual organisations and the collaboration itself. Collaboration does not happen by magic! It requires members to make a collective commitment to change the ways they operate.<sup>2</sup>

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2 Mandell, M.P. (1994). Managing interdependencies through program structures: A revised paradigm. *American Review of Public Administration*. 24:91 (pp. 99-121).

Collaboration does not always result in the expected gains; therefore, members must have high tolerance for risk and be committed to pushing through problems and advocating for both the initiatives and the collaborative process. Strong relationships are needed to maintain this commitment and facilitate participation that, in turn, builds a sense of ownership among members. Project managers must consider the level of commitment their organisations are willing to contribute to any joint working effort, particularly if they are considering forming a collaboration.

## Conclusion

While the benefits of collaboration are many, developing an effective collaboration is complex and challenging. Selecting the most appropriate relationship for working together requires the potential members to assess and define the problem, be clear and in agreement about what it is they hope to accomplish by working together and be realistic about their organisational capacity to follow through. To optimise the advantages of collaboration over other 'joined-up' or integrative approaches requires commitment and discipline. Despite the rhetoric, collaboration should be undertaken only after careful consideration and acceptance of the four elements detailed above, at a minimum.



# Key elements of collaboration

## Fact sheet 5

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Despite its established value, collaboration remains difficult to define and achieve. A review of the literature identifies three elements that are key to successful collaboration: the interaction process, governance structures, and systems and processes.<sup>1</sup>

### Interaction process

Collaboration is a means of producing something joined and new, from the interactions of people or organisations, their knowledge and resources. These interactions are facilitated by relationships—the personal bonds or ‘connections’—that are established and maintained by the people and organisations participating in the collaboration. Relationships give a collaboration strength, allowing it to form and function effectively. The quality of those relationships is determined by three primary factors: trust, reciprocity and mutuality.

**Trust** has been described as a lubricant to collaborative action because it reduces complexity and the costs of exchanges between members of the collaboration. A higher level of trust leads to more information and resource sharing and a willingness to commit to joint and potentially risky efforts to achieve outcomes.

There are several types of trust that relate to collaborative processes:

- companion trust - resulting from goodwill and friendship and based on benevolence and association
- competence trust - having confidence in the capacity of others to fulfil agreed tasks
- commitment trust - derived from contractual or other enforceable cross-institutional agreements.

However, it is argued, trust generated from shared values, language and vision is most essential in building commitment to a collaboration and its goals. This type of trust is required for participants to ‘step back and let go’ of control of their own agendas and to accept and give up control of the collaboration’s new, shared agenda to the collective. This willingness to share power, and to trust others not to take advantage of it, cannot be overestimated.

Developing trust takes time and investment up front as well as throughout the collaborative process. Trust must be nurtured, worked on and revisited to keep it going. This requires regular, preferably personal, contact, dialogue and quality monitoring to be established and maintained as part of the collaboration’s usual practices and joint activities.<sup>2</sup>

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- 1 Ostrom, E. (1990). *Governing the commons: the evolution of institutions for collective action*. Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press; Keast, R., Brown, K., Mandell, M. & Woolcock, G. (2004). Network structures: working differently and changing expectations. *Public Administration Review*. 64:3 (pp. 363–371); Thompson, A., Perry, J. & Miller, T. (2009). Conceptualising and measuring collaboration. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. 19:1 (pp. 23–56).
- 2 Powell, W. (1996). Trust based forms of governance. In R. Kramer and T. Tyler (eds). *Trust in organizations*. Thousand Oaks: Sage (pp.51–67).

**Reciprocity** is a loose process of give and take in which members can expect a return of equal value on their contribution. There is a 'generalised' expectation that everyone gives freely to others, knowing they will be recipients as often as givers.<sup>3</sup> Effective collaboration requires participants to shift from a self-interested and cautious approach ('I will if you do') to a longer-term, more collective and established practice of reciprocity. Often the breakthrough for collaboration comes from the simple act of one partner taking a risk and putting something onto the table and others following. Underpinning both trust and reciprocity is reputation. Reputation refers to the overall estimation of the character or quality of an individual or a group. Reputation is a key consideration when selecting or agreeing to participants in a collaboration, and establishes their roles within the collaboration. Behaviours that help participants form a good reputation as a collaborator are:

- complying with established practices for collective action
- helping to identify or define shared problems and devise solutions
- promoting mutual rather than self-interested outcomes.

**Mutuality** occurs when members agree to replace independent interests with collective interests and activities. In collaborations, mutuality grows from the participants' shared beliefs and/or common purpose, and their acknowledgement they are interdependent and therefore rely on each other to achieve their jointly agreed or collective goals. Forming and sustaining collaboration requires each participant to adopt the shared vision, change their ways of working and commit to achieving collective as well as individual goals.

Strong and productive relationships between participants—based on trust, reciprocity and mutuality—are essential for successful collaborations. Research has highlighted a tendency for collaborations to focus on established relationships and overlook the potential contribution of new participants. While valuing and nurturing existing relationships, it is also important to

identify resource gaps and potential participants who share, and could help achieve, the collaboration's goals.

## Governance structures

Collaboration requires governance structures that enable participants to work together most effectively: to negotiate and decide how to solve collective problems, and jointly set their own working rules and procedures for involvement, decision making and contributions. In general, too loose a structure hampers cohesive action while too heavy stifles participation, initiative and innovation. So the emphasis is on having the minimal structure and rules necessary to do the work while allowing participants the space to interact and be dynamic.

## Systems and processes

Although we often think of collaborative efforts as discrete activities, the reality is participants are part of a broader system of organisations and/or groups. This system operates very differently from the way collaborative efforts need to operate. Therefore, the organisations and/or groups in this broader system will have to make adjustments to accommodate the operations of collaborative networks, such as:

- establishing flexible recruitment and hiring processes that encourage cross-boundary working
- changing organisational norms and culture to support collaboration, in particular gearing reward systems toward collaboration
- including the requirement for collaborative behaviour in job descriptions, setting goals related to cross-boundary work, and acknowledging those who exhibit collaborative behaviours
- introducing arrangements that facilitate the work of the collaboration—for example, open access to funding and resource supports
- developing accountability and reporting regimes that reflect shared effort and responsibility, including performance indicators for collaborative behaviour and actions, the formation of shared revenue streams and establishing agreed reporting criteria.

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<sup>3</sup> Thompson, A., Perry, J., & Miller, T. (2009). Conceptualising and measuring collaboration. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*. 19:1 (pp. 23–56).



These system-wide changes will be needed to legitimise and sustain the efforts of individuals working in collaborative networks.

Formation of collaboration necessitates changes within and among participating organisations including:

- shifting emphasis from completing tasks to building and nurturing the relationships needed to facilitate joint work;
- altering the structure and operation of the participating groups to reflect collaborative ideas; and
- encouraging shared decision making.

Finally, it should be remembered any collaboration is as complex as the issues it deals with; there is no one-size-fits-all model. Instead, successful collaboration rests on the ability of members and administrators to be aware of the key elements of collaboration provided here as a basis for responses that best fit their problem context.

# Collaboration—Getting going!

## Fact sheet 6

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In the start-up phase of a collaboration there is a set of activities that should be completed to ensure the collaboration is properly structured and managed to achieve its purpose. The founding members must: clarify the purpose and create the structure of the collaboration; determine the membership composition; set the terms of engagement and agreed outcomes; build functional relationships; and determine how the collaborative group will be organised and managed.

### Clarify the purpose and ensure collaboration is the correct approach

Collaboration can be a risky undertaking and should not be entered into lightly. It is important that members of the collaboration have an agreed common purpose or understanding of what they expect to achieve. Further, members must agree that collaboration is the best way to accomplish their goals.

Establishing an agreed or shared purpose is different to broadly scoping a problem or reaching universal agreement on the problem confronting members. It requires members to craft a clear, specific and unambiguous statement of the purpose of the collaboration. That is, clarifying exactly what is to be achieved and how should it be achieved.

A key part of this process is a genuine and informed exploration of alternatives for achieving the stated goals.

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Collaboration for the sake of collaboration is not enough; it is likely to lead to unsuccessful outcomes and may well negatively impact the relationship between partners. A range of options for joint working arrangements and actions to guide the process of matching purpose to structure have been presented in previous ARACY Fact Sheets.

### Determine collaboration membership

Having decided what is to be achieved, and that collaboration is the best mechanism to achieve it, the next step is to determine who should be involved and at what level. This involves identifying necessary participants and their resources (skills, knowledge and assets) and securing their buy-in (and the commitment of their parent organisation). It is also important that within the membership there are people who will actively champion the work of the collaboration through active engagement and support of projects. A careful assessment and enlistment of outside support (including relevant stakeholders) with sufficient clout, ie sponsors, is also necessary to make sure that the collaboration has the greatest chance for sustainability over a long period of time.<sup>1</sup>

1 Bryson, J. (1995). *Strategic planning for public and nonprofit organizations*, San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Keast, R., Brown, K., Mandell, M. & Woolcock, G. (2004). Network structures: working differently and changing expectations *Public Administration Review*. 64:3 (pp. 363–371).

## Negotiate terms of engagement and collaboration outcomes

In order to achieve joint goals, collaboration members need to achieve a level of consensus on how they will work together (the 'terms of engagement') and what they will work towards (the outcomes). The terms of engagement are the rules, standards, roles and behaviours that guide the way the members will interact with each other. Examples include treating members and their opinions with respect, and acknowledging differences but agreeing to work together on common concerns. Sanctions may be specified in the terms to encourage cooperation with agreed principles and practices. Typical sanctions could include exclusion from the collaboration, restriction of influence or social isolation from other members.

Once the terms of engagement are established, members engage in ongoing rounds of dialogue, discussion and negotiation to identify interests and determine agreed goals. Through this process decisions and directions are shaped and reshaped, and issues are framed in different ways, helping members to interpret problems from different perspectives, analyse information and develop solutions. These ongoing interactions enable members to jointly agree on the way forward and the goals to be achieved.

## Build and nurture relationships

Effective relationships are central to successful collaboration. A relationship is a bond or a sense of connectedness between people that enables interactions to take place and work to be completed. Relationships take time and effort to establish, nurture and sustain. There are a number of informal and formal processes that can be drawn upon to strengthen and deepen the essential bonds of trust and confidence necessary for collaborative action.

Some useful informal relationship-building methods that can impact on members' perceptions about one another include shared meals, organised social events, team- and trust-building retreats and other activities that focus less on the business of the collaboration and member interests and more on helping members to set power and perception differences aside and

see one another as real people. Site visits to other members' organisations can further enhance members' perceptions and understandings of issues confronting them and the limitations of their action/contributions. As well as establishing formal rules, roles and routines to guide collaborative action, other formalised mechanisms such as effective meeting procedures and decision-making processes, including the appointment of skilled facilitators and training programs, have been found to be effective for building relationships.

## Organise and manage

Collaborations operate on the basis of collective rather than single authority. Hence a collaboration's organisational structure must reflect this principle yet still allow members to manage actions to achieve outcomes. There are a number of well-accepted organising structures that could be adopted or adapted to best suit each collaboration's needs. Some management options include:

- self-governing general assembly, based on designated work groups or action teams
- a lead organisational structure, where one institution is nominally 'in charge' and responsible for managing the project but the terms of equal partnership apply, such as shared direction setting and decision making
- a core administrative structure, in which there is a separate, dedicated administrative body that represents all members and is responsible for the implementation and management of the project's direction
- a collaboration manager, working under the direction of the collaboration members.

These five activities form a platform for effective collaborations. Evidence from the literature and from successful collaborations (see the case studies below) shows time and effort spent planning, organising and building agreement in the set-up phase is essential to forming a collaboration that will achieve members' collective goals.



## The steps in action: case studies

The Sacramento Water Forum and the Services Integration Project (SIP) Goodna are two good case studies of the application of these early steps in collaboration.<sup>2</sup> In both cases members spent time understanding the issues to be addressed before determining the purpose and collaborative process. They were strategic in composing their membership, successfully drawing on the efforts of both champions and sponsors to develop and sustain their collaborative processes and secure desired outcomes.

Both projects highlight the importance of relationship building and processes to support collaborative working. Participants in both projects realised from the outset that better relationships were essential to achieve their shared goals, but achieving and sustaining good relationships would not be easy. To overcome the problems caused by their previously adversarial way of working, all SIP members participated in a Graduate Certificate in Inter-professional Leadership course, which taught them how to relate to each other, work together and capitalise on their collective capabilities. In the Water Forum an external consultant used interest-based negotiation methods to help members better understand and appreciate each other, while SIP used a specialist facilitator to encourage dialogue and consensus building as a key mechanism for achieving goals.

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2 Connick, S. (2006). *The Sacramento Water Forum: a case study*. Institute of Urban & Regional Development, IURD Working Paper Series 2006-06, University of California, Berkeley; Keast et al. (2004). Network structures: Working differently and changing expectations. *Public Administration Review*. 64:3 (pp. 363–371).

# Are we ready to collaborate?

## Fact sheet 7

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Collaboration brings organisations together to achieve something that cannot be delivered by any organisation's individual efforts. For collaboration to be effective, participating organisations have to let go of some of their autonomy, share resources and power, and be willing to work for the collective good. For many organisations, making such a shift in functioning is not easy. Consider the following questions before committing your organisation to a collaborative endeavour.

### Do we really need to do this?

As previous Fact Sheets have explained, there are a number of ways for organisations to work together. Before forming or joining a collaboration an organisation should assess whether collaboration is the best approach to addressing the identified problem. Think about the benefits you expect participation in the collaboration to bring to your organisation, and whether you could achieve those gains without joining the collaboration. Although the primary purpose of a collaboration is to achieve collective goals, each participant also expects the collaboration's actions will contribute to their organisational goals.

### Are we open and willing to change?

Being part of a collaboration usually demands or results in some degree of change in the way organisations work and their institutional relationships, policies, programs and funding streams. Assess whether your organisation is willing to enable and sustain the systems change necessary for the collaboration to thrive and prosper. Does it have the organisational structures, management commitment and resources needed to commit to long-term collaborative action?

If your organisation tends to resist change, or may be unable to generate the type or degree of change required, be certain this can be overcome before you commit to a collaboration.

### Do we have both the capability and capacity to work collaboratively?

Collaborations require considerable investments of staff effort and contribution of funds and materials that could be used beneficially elsewhere within the participating organisations. Assess your organisation's capacity to contribute sufficient resources to the collaboration. Further, since the return on these investments will probably take some time to accrue, consider whether your organisation is able and prepared to plan for a long-term commitment.

Collaboration requires a particular set of skills, which are often quite different to those needed in everyday working situations. Working effectively across organisational and disciplinary boundaries calls for expertise in relationship building, facilitation and negotiation, as well as the ability to take part in and shape shared planning and action. Organisations that

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have experience working in successful collaborative arrangements are generally able to bring those skills and experiences to new initiatives. When considering participation in a collaboration, organisations must conduct a collaboration skills assessment, including a review of their previous behaviour within a collaborative endeavour.

Time is a critical collaboration resource. This includes both the time invested in building new relationships and sustaining existing ones and time redirected from other organisational activities to the collaborative activities. Collaborations also demand a high level of intellectual energy from the contributing staff members (organisational representatives), which may reduce their focus on their parent organisation's activities. Your organisation needs to weigh its needs against the needs of the collaboration and decide whether the time staff members spend on collaborative activities will be worth the investment.

### **Are we able and willing to delegate decision making?**

It is important that the individual representatives of organisations in collaborations have sufficient decision-making authority. The level of each individual member's decision-making authority in their parent organisation is indicative of the organisation's broader commitment to the collaboration's purpose. In making agreements, deliberating issues, negotiating interests or taking action, a representative's ability to directly make decisions is critical. This does not mean organisational representatives will not have to consult or confer with their parent organisations from time to time. Indeed, the support of the parent organisations is critical to the sustainability of the collaboration.

A representative's authority should be commensurate with the issues the collaboration is addressing: the higher the stakes, the higher the representative's authority should be. Organisations must accept their representatives need to be accountable to the collaboration as well as to the organisation. This dual responsibility is likely to cause some tensions between organisational and collaborative expectations and functions. Organisational representatives need the explicit support of their parent organisations to legitimately work outside of the parent organisation's boundaries.

### **Are we willing to have our organisation exposed to the scrutiny of other participants?**

Ongoing interaction and continuous time together at the collaborative table invariably leads to critical examination of each participating organisation's values, interests and efficacy. Organisations must be prepared to accept a frank exchange of views and engage in discussions with the intent to foster improved outcomes rather than 'score points' against others. It is very clear which participants are contributing to the collaboration and which are 'fence sitting', that is, not actively contributing to and yet benefiting from the collaboration process. Such action will often undermine the effectiveness of the collaborative effort and quickly damage an organisation's reputation. Each organisation and its representative must commit, up front, to actively contribute and share with other participants in the collaboration.

### **Are we prepared to hold ourselves accountable to collaborative agreements?**

When an organisation joins a collaboration, there is an implicit expectation that it will genuinely strive to achieve the collective goals. The key question for an organisation to consider is whether it has sufficient and appropriate structures and processes in place to support and sustain the collaboration. As indicated previously, this means member organisations must be willing and able to make changes required within their own organisations to ensure the collaboration will be successful. Each organisation must balance its organisational priorities and commitments against those of the collaboration.

### **Conclusion**

Most collaborations will face challenges. Simply forming a collaboration does not make a problem immediately disappear or easy to resolve. Collaborations provide an opportunity for cross-organisational and cross-sectoral relationships but may also create greater complexity and uncertainty for member organisations. The potential benefits, and challenges, of collaboration must be weighed against the certainties of business as usual.



Given both the advantages and risks, no organisation should enter lightly into creating, or participating in, a collaboration. Your organisation's ongoing viability and credibility depend on its ability to understand and know what to look for in a collaboration; determine its level of commitment, capacity and willingness to act; and assess internal tolerances for participation and risk. For a collaboration to be successful, member organisations cannot be 'fence sitters'; each must have the capacity, and be willing, to make a strong commitment to the process.

If your organisation can effectively negotiate various interests, identify and act on trade offs, and generally work in a collaborative spirit, your contribution to a collaboration can achieve both your organisational goals and the collective goals.

# Managing collaborations

## Fact sheet 8

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There are many advantages of working collaboratively but the effectiveness of collaborations depends heavily on good management, both before the collaboration is formed, and during the operation of the collaboration. Good management in the first stage includes making sure conditions are appropriate, to enable the collaboration to be as effective as possible. In the second stage, the management focus is on building relationships and trust among the participants and leveraging these to achieve the collaboration's aims. At both of these stages, there must be movement away from traditional management methods and into new ways of thinking and managing.

Management in collaborations relies on having someone who is referred to as a 'network driver'.<sup>1</sup> The network driver is not focused on accomplishing tasks as their primary goal, as is the case with traditional management. Instead the network driver's role is to help shape new relationships, move participants from discussion to dialogue and change attitudes, perceptions and norms.

## Shaping new relationships

Shaping new relationships is a key task in the formation and operation of a collaboration. Before the collaboration is formed the network driver acts to make sure relevant and influential people are committed to the collaboration.<sup>2</sup> Although a collaboration may be set up by a specific agency or organisation, there will be other influential participants. Shaping new relationships involves working with the collaboration participants to de-activate 'fence sitters' or detractors and better align members.

There also will be prominent individuals and/or groups who have an interest in the collaboration but may not be part of it. They can be either strong advocates or detractors of the purpose or nature of the collaboration. These stakeholders need to be made aware of the advantages and needs of the collaboration. The network driver should help promote the vision of the collaboration to these stakeholders to gain their support.

The parent organisations of the participants need to be aware of what is occurring within the collaboration, but should also be willing to give participants the support and authority they need to work effectively. The role of a network driver is to ensure the ongoing relationship between the collaboration and the parent

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- 1 Keast, R. (2004). *Integrated Human Services: The role of networked arrangements*. unpublished PhD dissertation, Faculty of Business, Queensland University of Technology.
- 2 This has been referred to as mobilisation. See: Agranoff, R., & McGuire, M. (2001). After the network is formed: Power and performance, in M. Mandell (Ed). *Getting results through collaboration: Networks and network structures for public policy and management*. Westport: Quorum Books (pp. 11–29).

organisations. This is accomplished by keeping the parent organisations well informed at all times and bringing their concerns back to the collaboration participants in order to resolve any differences.

Shaping new relationships also relies on the network driver identifying all relevant participants and tapping into their expertise.<sup>3</sup> This is critical because the effectiveness of the collaboration relies on all participants understanding they are only one piece of a larger whole. The network driver must work with all participants to ensure all interests are discussed and to help them develop new ways of dealing with each other based on their understanding of other participants' positions and motivations. In Fact Sheet 6 it was pointed out this 'getting to know each other' task can be accomplished through informal social interactions that help to build stronger relationships. The role of the network driver therefore is to ensure enough time and space is afforded to the participants of collaborations to engage each other, not as representatives of their organisations, per se, but just as individuals who have come together to address common concerns. Based on these interactions new relationships are formed that can provide the foundation for more effective and sustained collaborations.

## Moving from discussion to dialogue

Discussion involves making decisions whereas dialogue involves exploring options.<sup>4</sup> Unlike traditional management where the emphasis is on making decisions, in collaborations the emphasis is on making sure all participants are heard in order to build relationships. Building relationships among participants who may come from a variety of organisations and/or groups is not an easy task. It requires participants to develop trust and learn to deal with each other in new ways. To accomplish this, the network driver is involved in establishing the collaboration's operating rules (often different from those of traditional organisations) and influencing the prevailing values of participants to build

a common value set for the collaboration.<sup>5</sup> Rather than trying to make decisions based on conflicting interests, the network driver needs to ensure all interests are presented and explored.

In this way, the network driver helps create a favourable environment for dialogue that can lead to mutually agreeable and innovative solutions.<sup>6</sup> This requires changing participants' level of engagement, from just representing their own organisations and/or groups to understanding how they fit into a larger whole. This can be achieved by making sure all information is put on the table and developing new procedures of interaction and communicating early in the process (and throughout the process) so no one participant, regardless of formal power, thinks they are the only critical player in the collaboration.

## Changing attitudes, perceptions and norms

All of the techniques described above provide the foundation for moving away from traditional, organisational interactions to the non-traditional, more interdependent interactions needed for collaborations to be effective. These techniques address two key challenges in managing collaborations.

Firstly, participants come into the collaboration from a variety of very different organisations and/or groups. Their ways of operating and their educational backgrounds lead them to think in different ways. These different views need to be meshed to form a new cohesive whole. This cannot be forced. Instead, the role of the network driver is to get participants to learn how to talk to each other, not *around* each other or *at* each other. This requires participants to develop the ability to 'step into each others' shoes' and adjust their behaviour accordingly.<sup>7</sup> The network driver, therefore, must take on the role of facilitator, allowing participants to set the pace and providing guidance and assistance when needed.

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3 This has been referred to as activation. See Agranoff & McGuire (2001).

4 Innes, J.E. & Booher, D. (1999). Consensus building as role playing and bricolage: Toward a theory of collaborative planning. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 65:1 (pp. 9–24).

5 This has been referred to as framing. See Agranoff & McGuire (2001).

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6 This has been referred to as synthesising. See Agranoff & McGuire (2001).

7 Mandell, M.P. (2001). The impact of network structures on community-building efforts: The Los Angeles roundtable for children studies. In M. Mandell (ed). *Getting results through collaboration: networks and network structures for public policy and management*. Westport: Quorum Books (pp. 11–29).

The second challenge involves changing expectations.<sup>8</sup> Participants need to be clear about their expectations of the collaboration and its potential to create innovative approaches to solving complex problems. To be effective, participants should understand they cannot continue to work as usual and no one individual, organisation or group can control the effort. Good management, in this case, involves two strategies.

First, parent organisations must give their representatives the authority they need to operate in the collaboration, and then they must step back and let the process take place. Parent organisations need to understand this does not mean they are losing control over their representatives. Instead, it means they are willing to give their representatives the flexibility needed to develop innovative, systematic change and to feel comfortable taking the risks they will have to take.

Second, participants need to feel comfortable with the new non-traditional operating procedures that are required in collaborations. The network driver should help participants understand the key results in collaborations stem from building new relationships, not just generating programs. This will take time and, as indicated previously, the network driver's role is to help participants revise and adjust their relationships with each other and feel more comfortable working in new ways.

While shaping relationships and helping participants feel part of a coherent whole is an important management task, collaborative advantage is only achieved when these relationships are actively leveraged and guided.<sup>9</sup> Without this directed focus collaborations run the risk of being little more than 'cups of tea, a bit of a chat and feel good results' (see [Fact Sheet 2](#)).

## Putting it together

In essence, collaborative management involves building coalitions, mobilising support and developing new ways to cope with strategic and operational complexity. Traditional management techniques are replaced by an emphasis on shaping and influencing relationships and driving these toward collaborative advantage and achieving the collaboration's goals. Most importantly, collaborative management is focused on leveraging strong relationships to create better outcomes.

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8 Keast, R., Mandell, M.P., Brown, K. & Woolcock, G. Network structures: Working differently and changing expectations. *Public Administration Review*. 64:3 (pp. 363–371).

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9 Keast, R. (2004). *Integrated public services: The role of networked arrangements*. unpublished PhD dissertation, Faculty of Business, Queensland University of Technology.



# Collaborative leadership

## Fact sheet 9

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Collaborations require a type of leadership that differs from conventional leadership in several ways. In collaborations those in leadership roles are not 'in charge'; their role is to get all members to interact in new ways that tap into, and leverage, individual strengths to create collective outcomes. In this context leadership is focused on facilitating — rather than directing — and safeguarding the collaborative process.<sup>1</sup> It is about making connections between the right people, bridging diverse cultures and getting members used to sharing ideas, resources and power.

Another feature of leadership within collaborations is that the role can be shared among multiple participants. The leadership role can shift depending on (a) the phase of the collaboration and (b) the types of expertise of collaboration members. For example, in its early phase a collaboration may need leadership capacity in visioning and relationship building and moulding; latter stages may require expertise in acquiring resources and identifying and leveraging synergies. It is also likely there will be multiple leaders within the collaboration at any one time. The aim is for these participants to read the context and respond when necessary; that is, 'step up to' and 'step back' from the leadership role as required.

Leadership in collaborations involves creating the conditions and processes to enable participants to learn about and from each other, appreciate individual strengths and limitations, and look for areas of commonality and joint effort. Most importantly it is about facilitating and maximising synergies between agencies and pushing system and behavioural boundaries to have these realised. "In collaborative leadership the emphasis is less on producing a solution to a known problem and more on developing new ways to reframe situations and develop unanticipated combinations of actions".<sup>2</sup>

Effective collaborations nurture and build on relationships to produce mutually beneficial outcomes. Collaborative leaders sustain a balance between their facilitative or nurturing functions and the need to drive outcomes.

Clearly collaborative leadership calls for a different skill set, including abilities to:

- initiate and nurture relationships
- be trustworthy
- build agreement around a collaborative vision
- articulate and communicate the collaborative vision and the advantages of working that way
- network within and across sectors to build support for both the initiative and collaborative ways of working

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1 Chrislip, D. & Larson, C. (1994). *Collaborative leadership: How citizens and civic leaders make a difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.  
2 Innes, J. & Booher, D. (1999). Consensus building as role playing and bricolage. *Journal of the American Planning Association*. 65:1 (pp. 9–26).

- influence within the collaboration as well as upwards and outwards to other groups and decision makers
- read and diagnose collaborative processes and actions and know when and how to intervene
- see the 'big picture': how members are connected and the opportunities for synergistic actions
- take risks and encourage others to be comfortable with taking risks.

The term *process catalyst* has been used to describe this new type of collaborative leadership.<sup>3</sup>

### Key aspects of the process catalyst role

The process catalyst style of leadership draws on the ability to make connections among collaboration participants. This involves articulating what the participants can achieve together and how their joint action can benefit both their individual agencies and the broader community. To do this, the process catalyst needs to focus on building trust and respect among participants. They also need to have a broad vision for what can be achieved and be able to influence members to further shape this vision. Such 'influencing' is achieved not through positional authority but by creating a sense of a 'new whole' that participants can embrace.

Process catalysts must also create an environment that supports inclusiveness and openness and in which differences of opinion can be voiced and conflict can be effectively managed, harnessed and directed toward goals. The role of the process catalyst leader(s) is to encourage members to learn new ways of behaving and dealing with each other. This can take considerable time and effort, so collaborative leaders must keep members engaged and committed to the vision through a regular process of checking-in.

As process minders, collaborative leaders must also constantly monitor and review the interactions and processes. If the collaboration is struggling, the interaction has become stagnant or stale, or commitment is wavering, leaders need to be able to respond — for example, by reinvigorating it with new ideas or implementing new processes. Similarly, there is a need to remain alert for interaction blockages and 'toxic' members, including 'fence sitters', who contribute little and can undermine the collaborative spirit of other participants.

Collaborative leadership also requires an understanding of, and focus on, the constraints and opportunities that result from the environment in which collaborations operate. This includes getting buy in, not only from participants within the collaboration, but also from their parent organisations and other key stakeholders that could have an impact on the success of the endeavour. Collaborative leaders will also be actively engaged in 'selling' the advantages of the initiative and promoting the spirit of collaboration to influential decision makers within government, business and the community sector.

### Conclusion

Effective collaborative leadership requires the ability to recognise, and capitalise on, the unique features of the collaboration process. This is not the type of leadership most sectors or professions are producing or demanding. But when this type of leadership is enacted in a collaboration, it can make a difference to the success and outcomes of the effort.

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3 Mandell, M. & Keast, R. (2009). A new look at leadership in collaborative networks: process catalysts. In J. Raffel, P. Lesink, & A. Middlebrooks (eds). *Public sector leadership: International challenges and perspectives*. Cheltenham: Edward Elgar. (pp. 163–178).

# Evaluating collaborations

## Fact sheet 10

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Collaborations are a different way of working and thus require a different approach to evaluation. The focus in collaborations is building relationships and processes that enable organisations to work together in different ways to produce creative or innovative solutions to 'wicked problems'. When evaluating collaborations, the aim is to assess these relationships and processes and how they facilitate both the collaboration and its outcomes.<sup>1</sup>

The effectiveness of a collaboration is not simply seen in traditional outcomes, as any successful collaboration is reliant upon a range of relational and communication aspects. This is not to say traditional performance measures should not be used to measure product-related outcomes. But there should be an emphasis on using relational or non-traditional performance measures to assess:

- the relationships and processes that enable collaboration
- the level of participation and engagement of collaboration members
- how well the structure of the collaboration allows participants to contribute to and influence the collaboration's work and outcomes

This fact sheet provides some examples of evaluation tools that have been developed to assess the overall success of collaborations.<sup>2</sup>

## Collaboration checklist

This is a guide to assess the overall functioning of the collaboration, including how it fosters participation by its members, how the interactions add value to the work of participants and contribute to broader collective goals, and how linking members and their work can mobilise greater forces for change.

The collaboration checklist should include questions about relationships and processes, participation and structure and control, such as those in the table overleaf.

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**For more information please contact ARACY on 02 6204 1610.**

1 Mandel, M. & Keast, R. (2007). Evaluating network arrangements: Toward revised performance measures. *Public Performance & Management Review*. 30:4 (pp. 574–597).  
2 Church, M. et al. (2003). *Participation, relationships and dynamic change: New thinking on evaluating the work of international networks*. London: Development Planning Unit, University College London.

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**Relationships and processes**

- Are there good relationships between the members?
- What is the trust level?
- Is time spent on members getting to know each other and their problems/limitations?
- Do members feel a strong or weak bond, or commitment, to each other?
- Are there processes in place to enable these bonds?
- Is relationship building (internal and external) an accepted part of the work program?
- Do members communicate openly and frequently?
- Do members have a sense of commitment to the collaboration as well as their own organisation?
- What are the power relations? Is power shared or does it appear to rest with specific members of the collaboration?
- Are there mechanisms to resolve conflict?
- Is there a culture of learning?

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**Participation level**

- Do all members participate in the collaboration, in terms of decision-making and resource provision?
- Are there barriers to participation?
- Are there processes in place to check 'engagement level'?
- Are people participating as much as they can/wish?

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**Structure and control**

- Is the way the collaboration is set up appropriate for the aims? (See Fact Sheet 1)
  - Is the structure too tight (strangling), too loose (lacks cohesion) or just right (facilitates action)?
  - Where/how are most decisions made?
    - Democratically or centralised?
  - Is there support for the collaboration by key actors outside the collaboration, for example:
    - parent organisations
    - powerful stakeholders
    - respected people in the community?
-



## Contributions assessment

This tool helps to uncover and understand the level of contribution and commitment members make to the collaboration, what resources (financial, skill, expertise, knowledge and materials) are available to the collaboration, and where (or with whom) they are located and how they can be used. The tool:

- identifies the contributors to the collaboration, for example, the individual members of the collaboration, their parent organisation or stakeholder groups
- specifies the aims of the collaboration and the types of contributions/resources required
- asks members to indicate their actual and potential contributions and how they will deliver on this e.g. by participation or funding
- considers how easily the collaboration facilitator has been able to shift resources around the collaboration or leverage from resources to generate added value.

Assessment can then be done to evaluate:

- whether the collaboration has generated the appropriate resources (time, money, participation of key people, staff time, support of the parent organisation)
- whether the collaboration has been successful in facilitating the sharing of these resources between members.

## Participatory evaluation

Participatory evaluation involves collaboration members more directly through a process of self-reflection on actions and behaviours as well as uncovering the critical stages and events of the collaboration. Members are asked to reflect on issues such as:

- how far strategies and understandings of the collaboration context are shared
- how far the information, ideas, documents and resources and analysis circulating within the collaboration have been distributed and their impact on critical moments
- how members have been able to work creatively and collaboratively
- how connected members are to others in the collaboration 'network'.

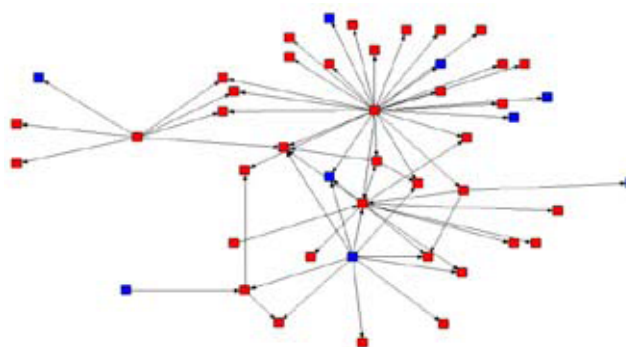
This process also helps to show what added benefit can be reasonably assumed from the collaborative effort.

## Social Network Analysis (SNA)

SNA is an observational tool that maps and measures the various types of relationships within collaborations in terms of their strength, frequency and quality. In this way, it uncovers and specifies the 'intangible' relationship outcomes of collaborative performance. The graphical 'maps' produced also provide a way for collaboration members to shift from basing their evaluation on what they *think* is happening to identifying what is actually happening within the collaboration.

SNA can be used to assess the degree to which a collaboration has achieved its goals for more joined-up approaches to their work and whether it has built stronger and more durable relationships. It can track the changes in the nature and types of exchanges between collaboration members over time.

SNA has particular benefit as a collaboration diagnostic tool.<sup>3</sup> Collaboration managers and practitioners can look at the network maps produced (Figure 1) and immediately see the connection patterns and flows between members and identify the collaboration's structure as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the relationships. These insights will help to inform collaboration design, structure and processes as well as enable members to strengthen relationships to better meet their purpose.



**Figure 1: Example of a Social Network Analysis map**

<sup>3</sup> Provan, K. et al. (2005). The use of network analysis to strengthen community partnerships. *Public Administration Review*. 65:5 (pp. 603–614).

Questions that could be considered include:

- Which agencies are linked to each other?
  - Are all relevant organisations participating?  
If not, who should be included?
- Which agencies are the more central and which are peripheral?
  - Is this appropriate to meet the collaboration's goals?
- Have relationships been strengthened over time?
- What strategies could be employed to 'ramp up' relationships?
- Are there tenuous links/relationships between core organisations?
  - What are the implications for this?
- What is the resource flow (between which organisations)?
  - Who has links to important resources/information?
  - Are there bottlenecks and how might they be removed?

## Implications

Collaborative evaluation is not without its challenges, including the need to change expectations of how it should be done. The value of alternative performance measures needs to be accepted by all involved in collaborations including funding bodies. A more flexible and longer-term approach to evaluation outcomes is required. This can be difficult because we often work in short-term accountability and reporting cycles.

Collaborative evaluation also changes the roles of sponsoring agencies. In conventional projects sponsors are able to dictate the types of outcomes to be accomplished. In collaborative evaluation processes they are no longer solely 'in control' of setting the evaluation agenda and must be willing to step back and share this task with the collaboration participants.

## Conclusions

When evaluating the effectiveness of collaboration the question is not so much whether by working through them participants are able to do a better job of delivering services. Instead, it is whether by working through collaboration participants can build the new capacities and relationships needed to work in different ways. Collaborative evaluation involves assessing the achievement of intangible outcomes, and thus new approaches are required.

# Consensus building and facilitation

## Fact sheet 11

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Building consensus is critical to effective collaboration, but can be difficult to achieve. Consensus does not mean an absence of disagreement; it means members with diverse views and often competing goals agree to work together towards their shared goals — even when the proposed course of action is not their preferred one.<sup>1</sup>

Reaching consensus requires good relationships and communications between members. It requires high levels of respect and trust, and effective dialogue that allows members to explore the issues, consider other members' interests and challenge assumptions before they reach agreement. As a result, agreements made by consensus are often more creative and more readily implemented than decisions made by vote.

The role of the facilitator is to 'make easy' the dialogue that enables different views to be aired and discussed in a constructive way. An effective facilitator knows that a diversity of opinions and perspectives is useful in working towards creative solutions and does not prevent consensus.

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## Facilitation

Often the facilitation function falls to the collaboration leader as a natural part of their role.

While a collaboration leader can guide the process for consensus — setting the ground rules for dialogue and interaction, reminding members of their common goals and their importance, and helping them reach decisions that are mutually acceptable — they are often constrained by their own membership of the collaboration and personal agenda. Often a professional facilitator (or neutral outsider skilled in facilitation), who has no vested interest in the content of the discussion, is better able to help collaboration members reach consensus.<sup>2</sup>

The Sacramento Water Forum and the Services Integration Project (SIP) Goodna are two good examples of the use of external facilitation to help collaboration members build the consensus required to work together.<sup>3</sup>

- 1 Gray, B. (1989). *Collaborating*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- 2 Keast, R., Mandell, M., Brown, K. & Woolcock, G. (2004). Network structures: Working differently and changing expectations. *Public Administration Review*, 64:3 (pp. 353–361); Connick, S. (2006). *The Sacramento area water forum*. Berkeley: Institute of Urban and Regional Development, University of California.
- 3 ARACY. (2013). Advancing Collaboration Practice Fact Sheet 6.

Independent facilitators manage and guide the processes that enable participants to focus on the substantial issues and goals that need to be addressed. They use group facilitation skills to help participants — especially those who don't know each other well or have significantly different points of view — to communicate, build relations, and address difficult issues. Facilitators often use these processes to help groups reach consensus agreements although in some cases, where issues are contentious, their role may be only to ensure productive deliberation.

Facilitators are responsible for getting the consensus-building 'talking-listening-deciding sequence' right.<sup>4</sup> The facilitator develops an agenda and process for a meeting, ensures ground rules of conduct are developed and adhered to, promotes interaction and communication, and brings issues to closure. Their role is not to voice an opinion or contribute to the content of a discussion, but rather to guide the process. However, while the role of facilitation may be to 'make easy' the consensus-building process, it is not an easy role to play. The facilitator does not have ultimate control or ownership of the decision-making process: the 'job of reaching consensus belongs to the group'.<sup>5</sup> Their aim is to ensure that at the end of the process the members of the group own the process and its outcomes, and the facilitator becomes an almost 'invisible' figure.

Facilitators use two key types of processes: 'preventions' and 'interventions'.<sup>6</sup> Preventions are measures a facilitator may take before and during meetings to avoid potential obstacles to success. They plan the process ahead of time to ensure the group can adequately explore the issues and generate relevant outcomes within the available timeframe. Interventions are the actions a facilitator takes to get a group back on track should difficulties emerge during a meeting. Here the focus is on the use of problem solving tools to bring the group back to productive discussion.

Effective facilitators need to be able to :

- create a climate in which participants are motivated and feel confident to participate and share information, sometimes referred to as a 'safe' environment for robust discussion
- effectively guide and manage group interactions
- enable and encourage people to fully contribute their ideas
- guide structured activities and processes
- organise, summarise and connect ideas
- give and receive feedback
- manage logistics, including time, materials, etc.<sup>7</sup>

The attributes of an effective facilitator include:

- *a sense of humour*: Things will not always go according to plan. It is much easier to handle the unexpected if you can do so with confidence and a smile.
- *assertiveness*: You need to have the ability and courage to speak honestly with participants. The challenge is knowing when to push and when to pull back, when to intervene and when to let the group work things out for themselves. There is a big difference between being assertive and being aggressive.
- *intuition*: Often there is no 'right answer' in terms of what to do in a given situation when facilitating a group. You need to be able to quickly assess the situation and use your intuition to determine the best way to respond.
- *flexibility*: As a facilitator you need to be able to think on your feet, and accept new ideas from others. Facilitators who are strongly attached to their own view on how things should be done will almost always encounter difficulties.

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4 Susskind, L. (1999). A short guide to consensus building. in L. Susskind, S. McKernan & J. Thomas-Larner (eds). *The consensus building handbook: A comprehensive guide to reaching agreement*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications (pp. 3–57).

5 Straus, D. (1999) Designing a consensus building process using a graphic road map. in L. Susskind, S. McKernan & J. Thomas-Larner J. (eds) *The consensus building handbook*. Thousand Oaks: Sage (p. 137).

6 Straus, D. (1999). (p. 137).

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7 Adapted from the National Extension Water Outreach Program's Facilitation Skills, Advanced Dynamics <http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/education/facskills.cfm> ; Perry, I. (1995). Effective facilitators – a key element in successful continuous improvement processes. *Training for quality*. 3:4 (p. 9)



- *confidence and enthusiasm*: You need to appear credible, articulate and knowledgeable in front of others from the start, and need to be able to sustain the energy throughout.
- *high self-esteem*: If aspects of a facilitation process don't go well, the facilitator is likely to be blamed, whether or not it was their fault. It is important you do not take this personally, but accept the criticism without becoming defensive.
- *sincerity*: As a facilitator you need to demonstrate your commitment to the process, and to ensuring participants get as much as they possibly can out of it.
- *sensitivity*: You need to be sensitive to your participants, their needs and how they are feeling. You need to be able to pick up on the cues and respond to them appropriately.<sup>8</sup>

## Conclusion

Collaboration leaders or members who have a natural task-oriented style may find it difficult to be thrust into a situation where they need to facilitate rather than contribute to or control a discussion. It is not always easy to give up the 'expert' position in a group. Examine your involvement in group activities, whether as a formal leader or group member, and determine whether or not you have the competencies listed above and can separate your role as group leader and/or content expert from your role as facilitator of a group discussion. If you are unsure, consider undertaking some formal training in facilitation, or engaging an independent facilitator, to ensure group discussions are as constructive, and likely to lead to consensus, as possible.

*The authors acknowledge the generous contribution of Carolyn Peterken and Christine Flynn of Advanced Dynamics in expanding our understanding of the facilitation process.*

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<sup>8</sup> Adapted from Advanced Dynamics  
<http://wateroutreach.uwex.edu/education/facskills.cfm>

# Collaboration negotiation

## Fact sheet 12

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Collaboration involves two types of negotiation: (a) negotiation about what the problem to be solved really is and how members are going to work together, and (b) what the solutions might be and the final agreed goals for action. Negotiation is often presented as an adversarial process – based on ‘I win’ or ‘I win better than you’ objectives and tactics. However, there is a form of negotiation which has very similar properties and outcomes to collaboration where everyone wins (win/win). This is called integrative or interest based negotiation.

## Negotiations: focusing on interests

Integrative/interest based negotiation focuses on identifying and responding to underlying interests – finding out what is really important to people so they can find some common ground with others. For example, instead of approaching an issue from the standpoint “I represent the child education centre” the approach would be “I am interested in better education for children”. This encourages a broader consideration of the issue and allows everyone to better understand one another’s perspective.

Understanding why people feel the way they do and what interests underlie their stated positions and demands is the key to successful integrative negotiation. Underlying interests include needs, desires, concerns, limitations and fears.<sup>1</sup> The way to get beyond stated positions and to underlying interests is to ask questions which dig for the information people often do not immediately present to others.

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Such questions include:

- What is the issue for you?
- What do you hope to achieve?
- Why can’t you do this?
- What are your limitations?
- Why do you need to do this?

‘Framing and reframing’ are useful tactics in gathering interest based information. Framing highlights the good points of a particular position, while reframing allows a problem or issue to be examined from a range of perspectives. Framing and reframing can be used to present a problem or issue in a way which encourages members to see things in a new light. This helps to reconcile differences and generate new solutions.<sup>2</sup>

Ideally, questions and issue framing, and the ensuing discussion, should be conducted face to face. In circumstances where this is not feasible there needs to be an alternative process to gather information. This process may involve a moderator or interpreter.

1 Fisher, R., & Ury, W. (1981). *Getting to yes: Negotiating agreement without giving in*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin.

2 Thomson, L. (2009). *The mind and heart of the negotiator* (4th edition). New Jersey: Pearson Education Limited.

## Dealing with facts, not opinions

Integrative negotiation involves establishing a process which allows members with different viewpoints and interests to work together to develop and share information, analyse facts, develop common assumptions and use this information to reach an informed decision.<sup>3</sup>

Factual data can facilitate this process.

Data that is based on independent research is more likely to be impartial and acceptable to network members.

A good way to build factual, impartial information into negotiation is for collaborative members to discuss and agree on underpinning assumptions that are acceptable, which data are appropriate and how they will go about checking and monitoring the relevance of the information available.<sup>4</sup> The development of an agreed data or fact set enables parties to feel confident in the quality of the information.

## Creative problem-solving

Integrative negotiations, especially those that are complex, require creative thinking to generate new ideas and solutions. Going beyond the obvious effectively expands the 'negotiation pie' by increasing the potential pool of resources and options available and makes a win-win solution more possible.

Consider, for example, the case of the Goodna swimming pool. Goodna is a socially disadvantaged region in south-east Queensland, Australia, which has very hot summers. The local citizens had been agitating to government to provide a community swimming pool. After conducting a feasibility study, the state government provided a community centre, without a pool. The result was stalemate. The community was perplexed and angry at the government's response to their needs. The government was annoyed at the lack of appreciation demonstrated by the citizens. This led to a disconnect between the community and government, which impacted on further negotiations for local resources.

The local primary school had a swimming pool that was not used outside school hours. Agreement was reached that this pool could be transformed into a local community pool. The department responsible for employment offered traineeships for gardeners and the Department of Sport and Recreation provided life saving traineeships. Community organisations formed voluntary committees to manage the new facility.

By thinking 'outside the box' this community was able to draw on existing local and government resources to secure a swimming pool. The members of this community used a number of conventional tools to reshape their thinking and action, including brainstorming and divergent thinking. As with many successful social entrepreneurs they were prepared to be risk takers, to shift outside conventional responses to find new ways forward.<sup>5</sup>

## Claiming value

Once you have built a solid relationship, explored each other's interests and creatively expanded the negotiation pie, the final negotiation step is to slice up and claim resources or other value. This can be particularly tricky because collaborative behaviour is used to solve problems while competitive action is necessary to claim that slice of pie.

The challenge for collaborative negotiators lies in finding a balance between maintaining the relationship and leveraging benefit for themselves.

## Conclusion

Blending diverse organisations and their resources to create collaborative advantage relies on iterative rounds of negotiation directed at establishing how members will work together (the rules of the game) and what they will work on (outcomes).

Although the emphasis of integrative/interest based negotiation is on achieving mutually agreed (win/win) outcomes, collaboration members must not lose focus of the need to seek and acquire value for their own organisation. This means being aware of and open to opportunities as they emerge and working to realise these opportunities.

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3 Ehrmann, J. R. & Stinson, B.L. (1999). Joint fact-finding and the use of technical experts. in L. Susskind, S. McKernan & J. Thomas-Larmer (eds). *The consensus building handbook: A comprehensive guide to reaching agreement*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications

4 deBruijn, H. & ten Heuvelhof, E. (2000). *Networks and decision making*. LEMMA Publishers: Utrecht.

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5 Keast, R. (2004). Integrated public services: The role of networked arrangements. unpublished PhD thesis, Faculty of Business, Queensland University of Technology; Waterhouse, J.M., Keast, R. & Brown, K.A. (2011). *Negotiating the business environment: Theory, practice for all governance styles*. (Chapter 7: Negotiating in Network) Prahan: Tilde University Press.

# Power and collaboration

## Fact sheet 13

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Generally defined as the ability to influence, control or resist the activities of others, power is an important, yet often unrecognised element of collaboration.

Power means different things to different people. For some, it lies in an organisation's ability to control relationships with others, so activities and outcomes align more directly with their purpose. Some regard the power of joint action as an important outcome of productive relations between organisations. For others, power means using the collaboration process to engage and empower groups not generally included in decision-making processes.

The differing perspectives identified above have led to three main considerations for power in collaborations: *power over*, *power with/to* and *power for*.<sup>1</sup> Each of these must be considered and addressed to secure genuine and effective collaboration.

## Collaborative power types

*Power over* strives to gain the upper hand to secure control over resources brought to the collaboration. *Power over* can be enacted via force, coercion or threat, for example, loss of funding. This pursuit of bargaining power denotes an adversarial, rather than collaborative, approach. It is an approach where the collaboration process is regarded purely as a tool to be used to benefit the needs of one organisation rather than the whole. Numerous studies have identified a powerful stakeholder, frequently government, seeking to exert power over the collaboration agenda at the expense of the collective.<sup>2</sup>

*Power over* can be contained by assessing relationships within the collaboration and identifying who holds power (legitimacy, information, critical resources etc). A management strategy can be developed to keep the powerful relationship at arm's length or to strengthen its collaborative focus.

*Power with* or *power to*, lies in the ability of a collaboration to achieve its ends by drawing on the individual and collective capabilities/capacities of members. Tapping into combined intellect, resources, knowledge and persistence provides the *power to* accomplish things *with* others. By relying on one another the power resides within the group, not with individuals. *Power with/to* is best facilitated by understanding the processes taking place within the

- 1 Follet, M. (1924). *Creative experience*, New York: Longman Green and Co. (reprinted by Peter Owen, 1951); Boudling, K. (1989). *Three faces of power*, Newbury Park: Sage; Huxham, C. & Beech, N. (2008). Inter-organizational power. in S. Cropper, M. Ebers, C. Huxham & P. Smith-Ring (eds). *The Oxford handbook of inter-organizational relations*. Oxford: Oxford University Press (pp. 555–579).
- 2 Agranoff, R. & McGuire, M. (2001). After the network is formed: process, power and performance. in M. Mandell (ed). *Getting results through collaboration: networks and network structures for public policy and management*. Westport: Quorum Books (pp. 11–29).

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collaboration and using existing diagnostic tools and processes (see, for example Fact Sheet 10) to build on, strengthen and embed shared power as a core operating norm or value.

*Power for* extends collaborative membership and decision-making to stakeholders generally not included in the process. This integrative approach is based purely on the concept that it is “the right thing to do”<sup>3</sup>. It builds capacity for underpowered stakeholders, allowing them to participate at a higher level.

Although presented as separate categories, in reality most collaborations experience, to varying degrees, each of the three power types. This means in most collaborative endeavours there is potential for the use of some force, some mutual exchange (or negotiation) and some additional inclusion.

## Personal and positional power types

Two additional types of power can impact on inter-organisational working at the micro level: personal and positional.<sup>4</sup>

*Personal power* lies in the characteristics of individuals. These characteristics can be used to influence others. It can comprise expertise, referent authority, access to information and/or a network of important connections. Expert power comes when a person holds knowledge or task expertise that is valued by other organisations or individuals. Referent power is based on the individual’s ability to generate admiration and loyalty which can be leveraged to influence others. Charismatic leaders have referent power because they are able to convince people of their visions and are perceived by their followers as agents of change.

The power of important connections, networking, lies in who you know, vertically and horizontally, both within and outside an organisation and in how these connections can be used.

*Information power* is created by the level of need others have for reliable information. Whether sourced via the organisation hierarchy, or via the employee ‘grapevine,’ the person in the organisation with the most reliable information can be considered powerful.

*Positional Power* is conferred on people by the position they hold within an organisation or society and often includes some elements of legitimacy, coercion and reward. Legitimate power exists because organisations assign certain powers to individuals so they can do their jobs effectively. Reward power is based on the individual’s ability to reward desirable behaviour by, for example, pay increases, promotions, work schedules, status symbols and recognition awards. By contrast, coercive power is based on the ability of the individual to sanction (punish) or prevent someone from obtaining desirable rewards. Rewards and punishment are powerful motivational tools. Leaders are generally better served by the exercise of reward power than by the exercise of coercive power.

## Conclusion

Power is a tool which can be used for positive or negative outcomes. For effective collaboration, all types of power must be identified, acknowledged, continually assessed and managed so as to find a balance which suits all collaboration members.

<sup>3</sup> Boulding, K. (1989). *Three faces of power*. Newbury Park: Sage.

<sup>4</sup> French, J. P. R. Jr. & Raven, B. (1960). The bases of social power. in D. Cartwright & A. Zander (eds). *Group dynamics*. New York: Harper and Row (pp. 607-623).



# Collaborative competencies/capabilities

## Fact sheet 14

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Collaboration comprises four core components: governance and structure; systems and processes; managing and leveraging relationships; and people and culture. For genuine collaboration to occur each of these must be addressed and be successful. These components operate in concert to create a collaborative model.<sup>1</sup> It is, however, increasingly considered that it is the competencies and capabilities of collaboration members which provide the real scaffolding for these elements to be enacted.<sup>2</sup>

Research has distilled a core set of competencies and capabilities for collaborative practice;<sup>3</sup> an ability to work skilfully across boundaries, to frame the operating context in a way that prepares members for joint working, and the nimbleness to work with an emerging set of norms, roles and values.

Excellent collaborators have the ability to mobilise and energise others to create a common vision to solve problems.<sup>4</sup> They facilitate the work of others, can read a situation as it unfolds and are instinctively resourceful in that they can identify and tap into the array of assets held by members. Successful collaborators listen and take time to learn about the problem before launching into solutions. In so doing, they 'step into others' shoes' and try to appreciate the various perspectives and experiences of members.<sup>5</sup>

The best collaborators can identify and constructively resolve conflict. They have excellent communication and group facilitation skills and are capable of big picture thinking, modelling collaborative behaviour and can coach others to work in more collective styles. They can build coalitions around issues by identifying the right mix of people to come together and by subtly influencing partnership formation, and can leverage these relationships to achieve outcomes. Importantly, they know when to exercise 'political savvy', to identify and understand the internal and external politics that may impact on the work of the collaboration. They can align top-down policies and bottom-up issues, know who to include in the collaboration, and can gain the support of people who can legitimise the effort.

- 1 Keast, R. (2011). Joined up governance in Australia: How the past can inform the future. *International Journal of Public Administration*. 34:4 (pp. 221-231).
- 2 Huxham, C. (1996). (ed.) *Creating collaborative advantage*. London: Sage Publications.
- 3 Chrislip, D.D. & Larson, C.E. (1994). *Collaborative leadership: how citizens and civic leaders can make a difference*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass; Agranoff, R. (2008). Enhancing performance through public sector networks: mobilising human capital in communities of practice. *Public Performance and Management Review*. 31:1 (p. 329).
- 4 O'Leary, R. Gerard, C. & Choi, Y. (2011). Empirical examination of collaboration as a management strategy. paper presented Public Management Research Association Conference, 2-4 June, Syracuse, USA; Keast, R. & Mandell, M. (2011). The collaborative push: pushing beyond rhetoric and gaining evidence. Paper presented at the International Research Association Conference, 11-14 April, Trinity College, Dublin.
- 5 Mandell, M.P. (1994). Managing interdependencies through program structures: a revised paradigm. *The American Review of Public Administration*. 24:1 (pp. 99-122).

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Add to all that, mediation and negotiating skills, (especially interest-based negotiation which encourages win/win outcomes), risk analysis and strategic thinking and managing task assignment and responsibilities, and you have all the essential elements of the collaborative tool box.

Many of the personal attributes of emotional intelligence may also have strong resonance with collaboration, for example; trustworthiness, sense of humour, empathy, integrity, comfortable with ambiguity and uncertainty, a dynamic or charismatic personality and a strong commitment to the collaborative process.<sup>6</sup>

Table 1 categorises the core competencies/capabilities and characteristics into four fields. Collectively these four fields provide the nucleus for collaborative practice.

The set of competencies and capabilities necessary for effective collaboration is extensive and can take time to develop. Collaborative capabilities are generally very different to the set of competencies and capabilities enshrined in most work programs and are rarely valued or rewarded at the same level as conventional performance modes. For collaboration to become core practice, organisations may need to review their modus operandi. New human resources policies may be

needed, and a revised training agenda may be required with an emphasis on skills and practices that help people and organisations to work together, including, for example, developing a greater sense and commitment to 'the whole' or the collective, rather than to single agencies' approaches.

The skills and characteristics of collaborators are different to the norm. While some people inherently possess collaborative competencies and characteristics, they can be learnt if members are willing to step outside the comfort zones of usual practice.<sup>7</sup>

Everyday skills used to manage public and non-profit agency connections are also transferable to collaborative work, especially with regard to the implementation stages. For example, managing human and financial resources, managing the structure and rules that guide operations, and designing and implementing effective communication, information and strategies are common in both hierarchical and collaborative contexts.<sup>8</sup> The challenge is translating these everyday skills to a collaborative context which is inherently more complex, fragile and idiosyncratic than conventional organisational settings and therefore difficult to control.

**Table1: Summary of core collaboration competencies/capabilities and characteristics**

Getting things done through others	Analysis and planning	Driving the process	Personal attributes
Communication skills	Listening and learning	Vision setting	Able to 'read' interactions and exchanges
Relationship skills	Problem assessment	Resources	Trustworthy
Build and maintain	Strategic planning	Linking and leveraging relationships	Sense of humour
Nurturing	Strategic relationship building	Getting 'buy-in' from members	Empathy (step in shoes)
Leadership skills	Work planning	Energise and mobilise	Flexibility
Process catalyst	Performance measurement and evaluation	Building coalitions	Patience
Group Process skills	Alignment of top down and bottom up processes	Modelling elaborative practice	Perseverance
Change Management skills		Community building	Commitment
Negotiation skills (interest based)		Managing relationships/expectations	Cooperative spirit
Deal constructively with conflict		Assignment of tasks and people	Strong personal presence
			Politically astute/savvy

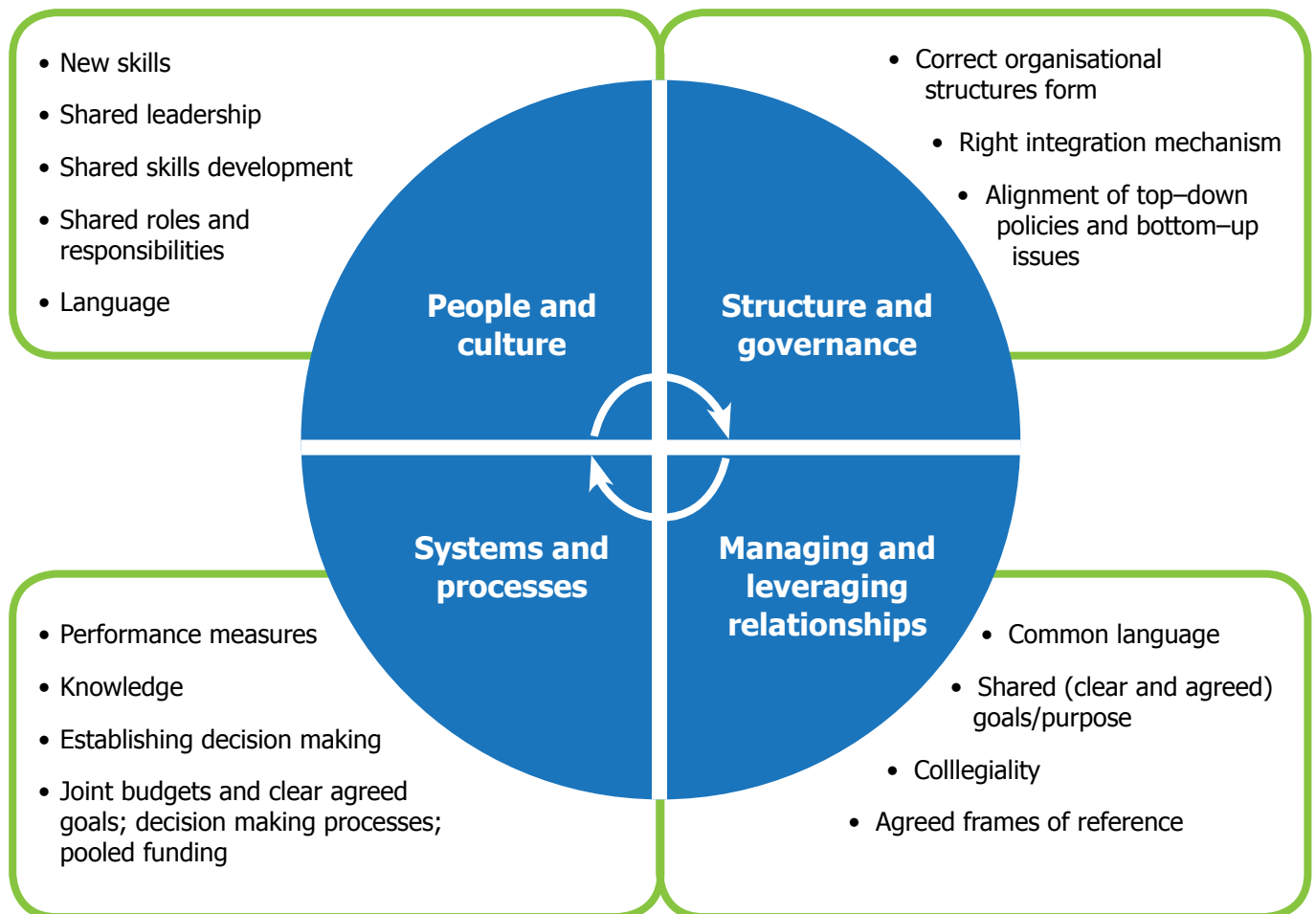
6 Goleman, D. (1998). *Working with Emotional Intelligence*, London: Bloomsbury Publishing.

7 Goleman, D. (2004) What makes a leader? *Harvard Business Review*. 82:1 (pp. 1–10).

8 McGuire, M. (2006). Collaborative public management: assessing what we know and how we know it. *Public Administration Review*. 66: s1 (pp. 33-43).

## Conclusion

Collaborative practice is generating demand for collaborative competency. The difficulty is people with collaborative skills are not currently highly rewarded nor valued for these skills. This needs to be changed if collaborations are to become more effective. Working in collaborations will require trying out new skills and expanding current competencies, often in new settings, all of which will involve risk taking, but the reward will be the ability to achieve innovative and sustainable solutions to complex problems.



# Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth

The Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY) is a national, non-government organisation which focuses on bringing together researchers, policymakers and practitioners, to turn the best evidence on 'what works' for child and youth wellbeing into practical, preventative action to benefit all young Australians. We are making this happen by creating collaborative opportunities, through our Networks, events, state convenor activities and regular publications, that work to break down traditional barriers in addressing the major problems affecting our young people.

## About the authors of this fact sheet

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